

Vic OE Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VIC OE AS A WORD DOCUMENT

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	LLB/BA
Major(s)	History and Music Studies
Exchange Institution	Bucerius Law School
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 2 2013

B: Finances

Please detail your basic costs in New Zealand dollars. This will help future students plan their own budgets. (Enter your number rounded to the nearest dollar.)

Books	\$150
Accommodation	\$3,500. I paid €530 a month. This was a bit more than I would have liked to have paid but the flat was great and location was very convenient. Others paid more or less. Staying in one of the dorms would be significantly cheaper, I think about €300 a month.
Return Airfare	\$2,500
Local Transportation	Free – you receive a free public transport card for Hamburg
Meals	Probably spent about €30 a week on groceries. Also often ate at the cafeteria or coffee shop on campus which were affordable – about €3-4 for lunch. At cheapish restaurants mains were about €10.
Visa	I have European passport so didn't need a visa
Health & Insurance	\$500
Personal Spending	I did quite a lot of travelling both before and after my exchange so this figure is quite high. Several thousand dollars, not sure exactly.
Communications (phone, etc.)	Sim card for 4 months cost €60/\$100
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	

How did your financial expenses compare to what you originally expected to spend?

About the same.

By what means did you maintain your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, foreign bank account, travelers checks, etc)?

I opened a German bank account. The International Office helps you set this up so it's all ready to go when you arrive. I also used a preloaded foreign currency card called a cash passport – I think this is available

from most NZ banks.

What financial advice would you give students attending the same university as you?

What was the average cost of a can of coke or coffee in your host country?

€1-2

C: Visas & Insurance **Please note this information is recommended by VUW students & current at the time of their exchange. For all up-to-date visa information you must check with the embassy/consulate of your host university.*

Did you have to apply for a visa? If so, was it difficult? What was the process, how long did it take and how much did it cost?

I have a British passport so didn't need a visa for Germany.

You also need to register as living in Hamburg, this is very easy to do and the international office help with this.

Do you have any advice for future students when applying for visas to your host country?

The international office were very good at helping people with their visas.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance? Or a particular insurance they recommended? If Yes, what was it and how much did it cost?

Yes. They did have an insurance company you could get insurance through in Germany but because I was doing a lot of travelling it was better just to get travel insurance in NZ to cover my whole time. If you sublet a room from a Bucerius student you also need to get the compulsory housing insurance, but this wasn't expensive.

What insurance company did you use and would you recommend it to future students?

Travelsure – they beat a competitors quote so it was the cheapest I could find. Never made a claim so don't have anything good or bad to say.

D: Academics at Host University

Which courses did you take while on exchange? Please rate the difficulty of each course (1-5, 1 = Very Easy & 5 = Extremely Difficult) and leave any comments you may have.

Course Title	Language of Instruction	VUW course equivalent or elective	VUW points/credits value	Rating (1-5)	Comments
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR 2013					
The Private Law of International Trade	English		8	3	A lot of material covered. Can be a bit boring at times. Lecturer marks easy.
International	English		8	5	One of my favourite

Conflict of laws					courses, very interesting. Focuses on US and EU.
Introduction to Comparative Intellectual Property	English		4	3	Material is interesting but lecturer isn't very good.
Global Trends in Intellectual Property	English		4	3	A follow on course to the above.
International Commercial Arbitration	English		8	2	Very complex. Quite a lot to learn. If you do the moot you don't have to sit the exam.
Introduction to the Law of the EU	English		4	4	Interesting content, not too difficult.
International and Comparative Competition Law	English		8	5	Great lecturer, very interesting content. You will get asked about NZ competition law so worth doing a little bit of background reading.
Leading Cases of International Arbitral Tribunals	English		4	5	The best course I did at BLS. In depth study of ICJ cases. Lecturer was great, very small class, lots of discussion. If you've studied international law and liked it do this course.
International Commercial Transactions	English		4	2	Quite dull and has quite a bit of overlap with trade law and conflicts. Mostly on the CISG. Exam was easy.
German Law Survey Course	English		8	1	The one compulsory course. Different aspects of German law.

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Course Registration/Enrolment

Please describe the registration process at your host university. What kind of help was available?

Registration done online through the intranet. Places in classes allocated randomly if over full.

How successful were you in registering/enrolling for classes you wanted? What advice would you offer to next year's exchange students about registration at your host university?

There were a couple of classes I wanted I didn't get into but no big deal.

Do you have any advice for future students when choosing and applying for courses?

Find out which classes don't have exams. I ended up with a crazy week of exams at the end. Others had hardly any because they had picked more strategically. Also look at the time table which choosing – you can end up with lots of long weekends to travel if you do it right!

Academic Experience

How did your academic experience differ from your time spend at Victoria? Did the academic experience meet your expectations?

Quite different. A lot more time spent in lectures but less work required outside of class.

How did the style of teaching at your host university compare with that at VUW? How did the workload compare to what you would expect at VUW?

What would you recommend as an appropriate course load for other VUW students visiting your partner university? What specific courses would you recommend to visiting VUW students? Why?

I don't think the balance between VUW points and ECTS is right. Doing 30 ECTS for 60 VUW points is a lot. You will spend a lot of time in class. Most others were doing less. Try and negotiate with the law faculty to do less.

I would really recommend:

- Leading cases of international tribunals
- Competition law
- International Conflict of Laws
- EU law

What advice would you give VUW students about succeeding academically at your host university?

Standard required for good grades is probably a bit less than at VUW. They know you're on exchange and will be travelling.

What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, and internet access at your host university?

There are a few computer rooms across the campus and in the library. Wireless all over campus. The library is open 24/7 and is a good quiet place to study. There are group study rooms on the top floor of the law school.

If you went to a country where English is not the native language, how did you prepare for this? Were there any intensive language courses provided by the host university?

I took German103 at VUW the semester before that helped. I also did an intensive course in Hamburg before starting at BLS. And then also had 2 German classes a week while studying. These all helped a lot. But if you don't speak much German you can generally get by ok as everyone at BLS speaks REALLY good English.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Flat

What were the pros and cons of this form of accommodation?

Pros:

- Had a German flatmate.
- Close to U-bahn and shops. Very fast to get to law school
- Large room
- Subletted from a BLS student so room was furnished and didn't need to buy anything

Cons

- A bit more expensive than the student dorms
- Not as social, not living with lots of other international students

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Subletting from a Bucerius student. If you can find one for a good price and in a good location it's great.

If you go with the dorms beware that Kiwitsmoor is quite a long way from central Hamburg.

How early can you move into accommodation?

I moved in a week before classes started.

What options were available for meal plans or cooking facilities? How satisfied were you with the food?

Flat had a good kitchen.

If you lived in off-campus housing, how easy was it to find? What should future VUW exchange students know about living off-campus?

I found it very easy. The international office set up a page where Bucerius students who are going on their exchange will rent rooms to you while they are gone. It's a great way to do it.

Do you have any tips of advice for future students when applying for accommodation?

Whatever option you go for get in quick! Also Hamburg is an expensive city compared to others in Germany.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

What was it like making friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students?

Most German friends I made were at Law school. It's a small law school so you get to know people easily.

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange country/university?

Didn't find it too bad, knowing some German helped.

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences?

I guess the most difficult thing is the language.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

German efficiency lives up to its stereotype – everything works and runs on time! People are generally very friendly and often willing to speak English. The beer is great and so is the food.

How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?

Very well on the whole.

As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university? For students who are visible minorities in your host country? For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?

I think there's disabled access throughout the building. Don't think there would be any problems with discrimination, everyone is very welcoming.

Did you face any issues regarding discrimination in your host country? What were they, and what advice would you give to future students?

No

G: Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

There are sports teams and some music groups. A few different clubs that run events.

What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?

Do as much travel as you can. I managed to see quite a lot of Germany by doing trips from Hamburg.

Lots of cool things to do in Hamburg itself, it's a well known party city: Go to the Reeperbahn and then the Fish market on Sunday mornings!

What opportunities were there for students to work on-campus? Off-campus?

I think it would be difficult to work at the same time because the class schedule changes every week.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There were a few people who found internships in Hamburg. Talk to the career office. Probably easier if your German is good.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1 Don't take too much – otherwise you'll have way too much bring back

2 Something NZ themed – people are generally quite interested

3 Warm clothes – it gets quite cold by December

4

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5 pieces of useful advice would tell a VUW student going to your host university

1 **Learn some German**

2 Pick your courses carefully to allow for the maximum amount of travel and least number of exams

3 Do some of the events that the international office organizes. They organize a week long trip to Berlin.

4 See lots of Germany.

5 Enjoy it – you're on exchange, don't work too hard.

Top 5 Things to do

What are your 'Top 5 Things To Do' future VUW students at your host university or city/country?

1 **Explore Hamburg. Lots of cool areas of the city. Check out Hafencity, the Alster, the city centre, reeperbahn.**

2 Party of the reeperbahn on a Saturday night and try to make it to the fish market on Sunday morning

3 Travel! It's very easy to travel from Hamburg to other cities in Germany and Europe.

4 Make lots of friends with Germans and people from all over the world.

5

H: Personal Experience

Please write one paragraph about your exchange experience. Plus, don't forget to submit some photos to the exchange office!!

I had a fantastic time on exchange. I had an amazing time in Hamburg and made a lot of new friends. The courses were varied and generally quite interesting. I also had the opportunity to travel around a lot of Europe, Hamburg was a good base to do this from.