

# Vic OE Evaluation Form

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

## A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Design Innovation
Major(s)	Industrial Design with Minor in Media Design
Exchange Institution	Carnegie Mellon University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	2013 Trimester 1 & 2

## 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	\$100
Accommodation	\$10,000
Return Airfare	\$1800
Local Transportation	\$100
Meals	\$3000
Visa	\$800
Health & Insurance	\$1000
Personal Spending	\$2500
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$360
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	I had unexpected visa issues which cost more than expected.

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

Besides the extra cost of the visa I spent around what I had anticipated

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

I used my NZ debit card to draw out large cash whenever I needed it. While this is certainly not the cheapest option it was the most convenient. I also opened a bank of America account to use for online purchases when my NZ card was not accepted. I DO NOT recommend bank of America if you are going to study at CMU as they do not have any branches that are conveniently located to the campus.

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

Make sure to save more than your budget just in case.

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

You can get cheap on campus coffee for \$1.10

**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?

Applying for a visa is easy but time consuming. You have to fly to the Consulate in Auckland to have a quick 2minute interview. All information will be given to you by CMU. Apply ASAP. The cost for a visa is around \$400

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

Nothing exceptional – do what the form tells you.

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?

They had strict insurance requirements. I could not find a NZ provided that met all of them. Ultimately I was forced to take out their insurance. Around \$500 per semester. Look at their insurance requirements and try to find a provided in NZ before leaving.

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

CMU insurance.

## 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
<b>VUW Trimester 1/YEAR</b>					
Products in Systems	English	Brand Identity +		4	Excellent course
Critical Robotics	“	Nothing		4	Brilliant
Computing for the arts	“	Creative coding		3	Essential
Methodology of	“	none		4	Don't do it.

Vizualization					
Advanced Digital prototyping	“	none		2	Not worth it
<b>VUW Trimester 2/YEAR</b>					
Senior Studio	“	Nope		4	Mind expanding
Freshman Drawing	“	nada			Fantastic
Electronic Media Studio	“	Physical Computing		4	DO IT

### Course Registration/Enrolment

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

Registering for courses is a breeze using the online system called SIO. Make sure to sign up for courses as soon as possible. Also waitlist courses that you are interested in. I spent my first week sitting in on every class I could before finalizing my schedule. Also if you are very intersted in a full class email the instructor to see if they will let you in.

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?

I got into every class I wanted because I was proactive. I emailed and went to meet with instructors that taught classes that I was very interested in.

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

Apply early for as much as you can. Talk to EVERYONE at CMU about classes. Sit in on EVERYTHING. Google examples of past work. Then make decisions.

### Academic Experience

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

More thourough than Victoria. You are expected to work very hard. I spent most weekends in Studio. The more you put in the more you get out. The professors teaching at CMU are WORLD class. Befriend them and network as much as you can.

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?

Slightly more work. But you will be used to it. Similar teaching style.

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?

Around 45 – 62 CMU points is a good load. Talk to students in your studio to gauge the workload that you are looking at. Go to <https://enr-apps.as.cmu.edu/open/SOC/SOCServlet> look at every single course that CMU offers in every department. Make a shortlist. Google the courses to see what kind of work they do. Chose. CMU has amazing robotics, engineering, art and computer science departments – look what they teach. Take some of the classes offered by the art department – refreshing.

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

Work hard. Compare yourself to others to gauge how well you are doing.

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

Computer facilities are great. But if you are studying design you MUST take your own laptop. Library is incredible – make sure to visit the rare books room. Internet access is super fast.

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?

## **E: Accommodation**

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

First semester I was put into a giant apartment with other exchange students – this was fun.

Second semester – dorms.

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

The apartment was amazing

The dorm was not special.

Spend time in studio and out and about – not in a room

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Whatever is allocated for the first semester? If you stay longer try to get an apartment on Beeler street.

Or you speak to the exchange office and post on their facebook page if you want to try and find your own apartment.

How early can you move into accommodation?

A few days before class – they will tell you.

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

Meal plans are almost the same cost as just buying on campus food everyday. You can sign up to a meal plan anytime so start off without one. I cooked for myself the first semester. Second semester I just bought food on campus.

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

Talk to people in your studio and post on the overseas office facebook wall – ask them to help you find a place. OR use craigslist to find a room on Beeler street before you arrive. OR ask the overseas exchange office at CMU to help you.

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

If you are sharing a room, try and get an American NOT and exchange roommate. It will be much more enriching.

## **F: Personal & Cultural Connections**

What was it like making friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students? The same as anywhere. Don't be shy.

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

Easy.

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

Americans are confident – you should be too.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

America is the land where you can get what you want, when you want, where you want. Great!

Also a little disturbing.

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

Welcomed with open arms. I felt at home.

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? All of the buildings are fitted out for wheelchair access. Gays, Lesbians, Minorities, Bisexuals and Transexuals would be WELCOMED.

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 is a list of clubs and groups online. Look at it. I was part of the robotics club.

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

Use trip advisor to see what is available to do in Pittsburgh. There is also A LOT to do on campus. Explore it. There are museums, galleries, walks. Go see the Frank Lloyd Wright Falling Water house!

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

If you are talented you will be offered jobs by professors on campus – be proactive in this regard.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

If you are talented you will be offered jobs working for Professors. I also had an internship in Brooklyn. Work hard. Network and you will easily find work.

### **5 things to take to your host country or region**

1	Laptop
2	Cellphone
3	Camera
4	Warm Clothes
5	

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

1	Work hard
2	Be outgoing
3	Learn everything that you can about everything
4	NETWORK
5	

## Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Take art classes
2	Go to the guest lectures in the design department, Art department, HCI department and robotics department.
3	Learn everything about the labs that are on campus – visit them
4	Learn everything about the professors – talk to them.
5	Meet many students from other departments.

## H: Personal Experience

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

The Exchange to Carnegie Mellon was life changing. It is ranked as one of the best design schools in the world and you really do feel it. Every student is EXCEPTIONALLY talented. The Faculty are world class. They have regular guest lectures by distinguished people in their respective fields. The Art department is incredible and being able to do work across art and design is just magical. There are so many facilities and resources, it is up to you to find them. The job fair "confluence" that they hold in the fall is also incredible. Google, Facebook, Apple, Samsung, Microsoft are just some of the names that you will see turning up there looking to snap up young designers.

