

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)	International Relations & Religious Studies
Exchange Institution	Dalhousie University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Tri 2 2014

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	\$0
Accommodation	\$166 per week
Return Airfare	\$2400
Local Transportation	\$50
Meals	\$30 per week
Visa	\$0
Health & Insurance	\$1200
Personal Spending	\$3000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$200
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Canada is ridiculously expensive to travel domestically. As a result, saw very little of Canada.

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

- About what I expected except for domestic travel costs.

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

- Studylink & budgeting

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

- If you want to see Canada, bring a lot of money or go to a different country
- Definitely open a local bank account and get a travel card. It will save a lot on unneeded fees.

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

- Same as NZ

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?

- No, one semester did not need one

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

- Don't need one unless doing a full year

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, but could opt out if you had travel insurance. Both were very expensive. Did not use it once.

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

- Can't remember

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 1/YEAR					
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR 2014					

POLS 3224	English	200 level	20 points	1	Way easier than back home
Reli 2361	English	100/200	20 points	2	Way easier than back home
Reli 2203	English	100/200	20 points	2	Way easier than back home
POLS 3321	English	200 level	20 points	1	Awesome paper

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

- Help was pretty limited.
- It is done all online through mydal.
- It is quite a long process.

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?

- They were not very good at keeping track. Constantly call them to make sure it's on track.

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

- Classes at Dalhousie are far easier than back home.
- They focus more on regurgitation rather than original thought. So if you do the readings and go to class for tests you'll ace it and if your essay has a thesis and a supported article you will do very well.
- If you are concerned about difficult classes potentially impeding your fun, don't be. The lecturers are lovely and the examinations are very basic.

Academic Experience

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

- Thought it would be easier. It was.

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?

- No original thought, all they wanted was regurgitation.
- Lecturers are lovely and are very kind to exchange students. Really make you feel involved. Even got invited for dinner.

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?

- 4 papers. You're on exchange. Don't stress yourself out.

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

- If you do the readings, you will ace it.

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

- Excellent.
- Very modern computer and printing facilities. Library is a very good place to study.

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?

- NA

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

- Flatting

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

- Was awesome. Seemed way better than hostels or residence.
- Meet either more exchange kids or locals.
- Can also have space to yourself
- Cheap
- The only negative is that it can be difficult to find places and apply since you cannot view the houses before getting to Canada. So you just have to hope that it is well maintained.
- Fortunately kajiji is a very good site for flatting, their equivalent of trademe.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

- Flatting

How early can you move into accommodation?

- Straight away

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

- There were meals plans available at the local student residences but very expensive. Super markets are very cheap and quality of food is good.

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

- Was a bit difficult. You get limited assistance from either universities. I got lucky in that someone else on exchange organized it.
- Fortunately, Dal has a facebook for incoming exchange students that allows you to communicate and organize flatting arrangements.

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

- Be very active on that facebook group page and get onto it early. Otherwise you'll find yourself in potentially very average living arrangements.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

- Very successful. New Zealand's are pretty much celebrities in Canada. It is ridiculous.
- People are lovely and are very welcoming to foreigners.

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

- Sarcasm is not as appreciated as in New Zealand. But our sense of humour is a very welcomed alternative.
- Otherwise very easy. Not that much different than back home.
- To begin with being surrounded by Canadian accents is quite funny, but it very quickly becomes the norm.

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

- There weren't any

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

- Very polite and kind.

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

- Very warmly received. They were wonderful and kind.
- Cannot endorse them enough. Especially the faculty.

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?

- Very liberal and inclusive.

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

- No discrimination what so ever.

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?

- Many activities. Definitely get involved. Just ask around.
- Go by the Dalplex (uni gym) and ask about signing up for sport teams.

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

- Halifax has very little to offer once winter hits. Get all your outside activities done before October. Otherwise all there is are bars and socializing (which isn't a bad thing at all).
- You don't get a holiday break, but if you have the money there is some great opportunity to travel. New York is a 90 minute flight away and Quebec is 2 hours.
- Unfortunately, flights in Canada are very expensive. Quebec, while only 2 hours away, is, at best, a \$500 dollar return trip.

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

- Minimum wage is very low, potentially not worth it.
- You also have to get a visa, which is expensive. So unless you are planning to stay for a while after exchange, it is not worth it.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

- They were out there, but you would have to be very proactive.
- For instance, if you are a law student, there a local law offices where you could assist. Just frame your email to them exploiting how high ranked Vic's law school is. It was ranked 19th in the world in 2013. Far higher than any other Canadian law school. The people I talked to were quite impressed by this.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Warm clothes.
2	Lots of money.
3	Don't take too much. It is very easy to find cheap clothing and bedding options.

4	Laptop.
5	A plug adapter and a volt converter. While laptop and iphone adapters will work fine, things like shavers don't naturally convert to their lower voltage.

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

1	A lot easier than back home.
2	University staff and students are very welcoming.
3	Other students will love you. Make sure to get involved and meet as many locals as possible.
4	They have a lot of OE events.
5	Really cool university.

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Whitewater rafting.
2	Partying at the many bars there. Cheers will become a second home.
3	Haunted corn maze was amazing.
4	A lot of outdoors things to do.
5	Local restaurants are affordable. Eat out.

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 an incredible time. My exchange crew was a very big group of incredible people. A lot of Australians so it did have a touch of home. However, if the exchange crew were not as amazing as they were, Halifax itself can be a boring place as it is very isolated. So do take that into consideration. If your desire is to see a lot of variety and have an experience very different from New Zealand, I would recommend going to Europe. The entire continent of west Europe is the size of Australia. Travelling there is very cheap and short. Canada is massive and you do not appreciate its size until you get there. Actually travelling within it is very expensive. So definitely take those factors into consideration.