

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 Commerce
Major(s)	Accounting, Commercial Law
Exchange Institution	EBS Business School
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Tri 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	\$10 (only had to buy a book for writing notes)
Accommodation	300Euro per month (this was very cheap)
Return Airfare	\$3000 (was a very flexible flight so that I could change the return dates)
Local Transportation	\$200 (for 100Euro the uni provided a free transport card for whole region)
Meals	\$300 month approx.
Visa	\$100 one off cost
Health & Insurance	\$600 (German requires specific health insurance by an international provider)
Personal Spending	no idea sorry, about \$400 a month perhaps as I travelled a lot.
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$30 month for phone
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Food was a lot cheaper than I thought, Germany has a lot of cheaper supermarkets which keep cost down. Beer is super cheap. We had to buy water as the area we lived in had water that was undrinkable. But it was 11c a bottle so affordable.

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

I saved a lot of money at least \$10,000 so that I was financial able to do what I wanted to do during my exchange. Overall I feel I budgeted well each month and came out at the end with some remaining money. I spent what I expected to.

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

As part of the visa I was required to have a blocked bank account. For each month I had 670 euro in the account. This was great as I didn't have as many international fees. Using my new Zealand bank account to withdrawl additional money was very expensive!

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

The blocked account was a good way to have easy access to money and avoid international fees. However it

was a pain when I ran out during the month and wasn't able to access the next 650 euro until the following month. If you know you'll spend more than that each month make sure you have access to another money source.

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

A basic coffee is 2.50 euro approx, so less than \$5.

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?

The whole visa application was very challenging. EBS recommended we apply for the visa from home as it can be faster than in Germany. However applying at home involves setting up the blocked bank account from NZ and putting the money in, having all flights booked, filling out a lot of forms etc. The visa also took a lot longer to process and I had already left the country before it arrived. Then because it was sent to a different immigration office to where I was living I ended up having to reapply for the whole thing again in Germany. In future students should just wait until they get to Germany and apply, it saves a lot of time and hassle.

The process in Germany is a lot simpler, the uni help you, only costs 50 euro and is processed within a month of being there.

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

See above

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?

The university required all students to hold a specific internationally recognised insurance. Mine was through the CareMed provider. It cost 400 euro for the 6 months.

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

See above. I would recommend, easy to purchase. Don't know how easy making a claim is.

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					
Economics III	English	Econ140	15	4	This course was a module. So within it was two classes, macroeconomics and economics of the firm. The macro class was more of a 2 nd /3 rd year course but

					the teacher was very thorough. The economics of the firm was all theory and very boring. You must do the entire module together (cannot split it)
Organisational Behaviour	English	Mgmt101	15	4	Course was very easy but interesting. Presentation and in class quizzes make up a lot of points.
Supply Chain Management	English	Info101	15	3	This was also a module of 2 classes: an ICT based one and a supply chain theory based one. The ICT lecturer was boring and the class too theory based. The computer project within was interesting. The supply chain was all theory based but interesting and not too challenging.
Business German	German	Germ315	15	2	The german class was not very business focused as it was listed. We did a lot of grammar which although improved my knowledge there was no writing and very little speaking which I would have preferred to focus on.

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

The uni and registration process online was simple to follow, just required a lot of information which you needed to pre prepare (e.g. photos, insurance, identification etc). Once I was at uni I just had to pick up my ID card and pay the 100 euro for the train pass. Was all very easy. All course registrations were done online.

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?

It took a while to understand how the course system worked. Rather than having just singular courses the university offers both modules and standalone courses. The modules usually involve 2 different courses that are linked in their content. You cannot take just one of the courses within a module. If I wanted to change a course (within the change period) it was very easy, just had to send an email to the coordinator and it was sorted within the day.

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

Make sure you're flexible in the courses you take on exchange, as sometimes the tentative course list changes and they don't offer the course you wanted to take.

Academic Experience

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

The level of teaching varied a lot between the papers I took. This was mostly due to the different style of teaching by the lecturer and their level of English. The classes were 1.5 hours which took some getting used to, some friends even had classes that lasted all day, or even on the weekends. There were no tutorial classes so a lot of self-learning was required to keep up.

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?

Most of my courses were 100% exam based, and with 12 weeks of full on 1,5 hour classes a lot of content was covered. It meant by exam time I had a lot of content to learn. Some courses had presentation which were marked easily and the German students who I worked with were very thorough. Not all lecturers gave past exam papers (it was up to their discretion), some exams it was unknown the layout or what content would be covered which made it hard. The workload was different due to the large amount of content that had to be learnt but no midterm test. It meant you had to keep up from the beginning otherwise you had a lot to learn at the end.

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?

3 modules and a German course is definitely enough. That's effectively 7 courses but not all are as full on depending on the year level of the course. A key point is that the class time changes every week. It means each which you have to check when the classes are on to make sure there are no clashes and ensure you go to class. I would not recommend anymore as you want to be able to travel during semester and not be completely full on with classes.

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

The style of teaching requires the student to be very good with ensure they keep up weekly with the content. There are no weekly tutorials with practical questions, so a lot of self learning is required. If you don't understand something in class it is crucial that you go home and learn it as a lot of my courses tended to build upon each other content wise each week.

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

The EBS library is very small, is completely silent, no food, drinks or coats allowed. Books can only be used as reference within the library. There was enough computers to do printing but would recommend having your own laptop for additional internet use. All printing was provided. The wifi on campus did not always connect properly and the internet signal in Hattenheim is not very good.

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 had previously taken German at uni for 3 years so had a good knowledge of German. However you can get away with only basic German as most people in the community can speak some English and the uni was

completely in English. The intensive language course ran for 8 days before semester started. I did not particularly enjoy the course, it was very speaking focuses and a lot of worksheets. But for the students who were first learning German I heard they got a lot out of it.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

1 bedroom shared apartment with my boyfriend

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

Pros: Cheap rent, only 300 euro per month, very clean, tidy, new. Completely furnished. Was near my friends, supermarket and train station was 5 mins walking distance.

Cons: Was 1 hour by train away from uni and the commute every day was tiring.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Accommodation for EBS is very student driven. There is a flat hunt run 2 months before students come where they can apply online for housing that the uni has prechecked. However these are quite expensive and are filled up very quickly! Students should live in Oestrich, Winkel or Hattenheim if they want to be directly next to the uni. All of these are in walking distance. However there is not a lot to do in the weekend (only one small bar) and the trains do not run often. With a 20 min train ride, Wiesbaden is a large city which has a lot to do (many bars, restaurants, movies etc). However the dorms which the uni offers in Wiesbaden are not directly in the city but 2 bus changes and 20 mins commute. Avoid Hallgarten which is on a hill and only an hour bus runs to there. There is no supermarket there.

How early can you move into accommodation?

The only dorms offered by the uni are in Wiesbaden. They can be moved into a week before the intensive course starts. Other accommodation is personally found and a move in date would be determined with the landlord.

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

I had a full kitchen so organized my own food.

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

See comments above, it is very student focused, with not a lot of help giving unless you are really struggling.

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

See above. Apply to a lot of places early on so that if you don't get into one then you have other options.

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 university is very small, 1500 students including 200 international. With very few uni events for the whole uni it made it hard to make friends with locals. Friends I made were because we were in the same presentation group. Had no problem making international friends, a lot of events were put on that were heaps of fun.

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

Having been overseas before and stayed in Germany I already had a good knowledge of the German culture. I knew to expect the forward but bluntness of Germans, their strict punctuality, directness etc.

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

The German culture is quite different from the New Zealand culture. New Zealanders are a lot more open, expressive and relaxed. Germans are to the point and don't really do small talk. I was aware of this but other students may not be. Other students should just be open minded. Don't think a German is rude, they may just be direct!

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The food and drinking culture is a lot different to home. I enjoyed going out with friends for dinner enjoying the local foods and wine from the area. I really liked being able to speak the language and interact with locals. I worked hard to improve my German and believe it helped me to get to know locals and culture better. For Christmas a group of my German friends did Wichteln, like secret Santa which was a lot of fun. The traditions are a lot stronger held and interesting to experience.

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

The university staff were very helpful. As the uni is so small there are only about 10 key staff members and the ones I dealt with I got to know. The students were a bit more reserved and were harder to get to know. There weren't too many events for all students to mingle, so the only way to get to know people was if you worked with them in presentation groups. It also helped that I spoke German (although the uni is in English, the locals speak among themselves only in German). Once I got to know a few it became easier to meet others.

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?

A student who has a physical disability may struggle with the university. The train to uni is high with limited ramps, and the walk is up a hill. The uni itself has a lot of stairs and cobblestones and no lifts. The library is located on the top floor with only stair access.

I cannot comment on how a student of visible minorities would get on. All the international students were very friendly and accepting of others' various cultural differences. It depends on how much the person tried to integrate themselves.

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 and because there are so many ethnicities at the university and with so many international students everyone is very accepting.

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 was a volleyball team and soccer club but because I lived so far away it wasn't feasible for me to take part. The uni is also very business focused. There are very few sports club, but a lot of different other groups like business clubs that you could get involved in. I assume they are reasonably easily to join if you wished.

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

Europe is in your backyard!!! Frankfurt is the perfect location to literally go anywhere in Europe you desire! The trains are expensive but look for saver deals in advance or buy a 25 bahncard which gives a 25% discount. If you want to go further afield flying is cheap provided you do your research and look in advance. Ryanair flies to a lot of locations in Europe for very cheap (I flew to Mallorca island in Spain for 60 euro return, so \$120). But warning!!! Frankfurt Hahn is where the low cost airlines fly out of and it is 1.5 hours out of Frankfurt!!! It is easy to get a bus there and not too expensive but be aware when you book!

Don't forget to explore parts of Germany and the local areas that are free to visit on the train card. There are some amazing castles to see!

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

Students would need a high level of german to work off campus in the area as not much English is spoken. I don't know about on campus work. I doubt there would be anything as it is very small (no cafes)

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Internships are a large part of EBS for the local students. After enquiring, it was evident it was harder for international students, especially those not from the EU to apply due to visa, language requirements etc.

The only volunteering opportunity I had was when I held a stand at the exchange fair, promoting New Zealand to local students.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	An open mind
2	An umbrella (the rain catches you out)
3	A warm jacket for winter
4	Something that represents NZ
5	Camera!

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

1	Make sure you keep up with the work each week, don't fall behind!
2	Utilise how easy it is to go travelling!
3	Learn some German, even if its just how to order in a café

- 4 Look for an apartment in Oestich, Winkel, Hattenheim, avoid Hallgarten
- 5 Make an effort in the beginning to get to know the international students, some will become life long friends.

Top 5 Things to do

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

- 1 Travelling the region with the free train card, seeing the 'Rhine Valley' with all the castles, wineryard
- 2 Eat a lot of schnitzel, bratwurst, bratkartoffeln, Haribo lollies, bakery items
- 3 Take part in the exchange events held for the international students like the wine tasting, river cruise.
- 4 Take part in the 'Coaching @ EBS', being paired up with a high level business mentor.
- 5 Go to a local German football match or to Europa park

H: Personal Experience

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

My exchange semester is going to be one of the most memorable experiences of my life. I learnt so much about other cultures and myself that it is hard to put it words. I worked really hard to improve my german whilst on exchange, and am proud to say I am happy with what I have achieved. I took every opportunity to speak German when I could and through it I made a lot of friends I know will be friends ill always have on the other side of the world. The uni classes themselves were not too challenging and a good level for exchange. I learnt new things that perhaps I wouldn't have learnt taking the same classes in NZ but I also had the time to relax and travel as they weren't too full on. The travel experiences I had are unforgettable, running a half marathon in Mallorca with only 4 weeks training, Skiing in Austria, coffee and cake in Vienna, Koblenz river cruises, Koln with family friends, London for Christmas to list a few. I am so lucky to have had all the opportunities I did and pleased that I took all that were given to me. With the uni also being very business focused it helped me to realize what I want to do after uni finishes next year, it gave me a lot of new perspective which I would not have had otherwise. As I write this I am still in Europe, a month away from coming home and I am already planning my next trip back and looking forward to the new friends I have all over the world!

