

Vic OE Evaluation Form

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	BAS
Major(s)	Architecture
Exchange Institution	Ecole Speciale d'Architecture, Paris
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester One 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	\$-
Accommodation	\$1400/month
Return Airfare	\$2200
Local Transportation	\$100/month – travel card
Meals	\$60/week
Visa	N/A
Health & Insurance	\$400 National Insurance
Personal Spending	\$50/week
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$30/month
Other fees (specify)	\$2000 – French language course at Alliance Francais
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Food eating out was more expensive but getting around with a bike proved to be more enjoyable and a cheap way to getting about.

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)?

Joined a local bank, easy to setup and use.

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

Look into flats available close to university to save transport cost and use the velib' to save by cycling

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

\$2.50 - Espresso

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?

EU citizen – no visa required

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

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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?

Application made through the university for national health insurance - \$400

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

Govt. health 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
VUW Trimester 1/YEAR					
History of Paris	French	elective	7.5	1	-
Design Studio – Peter Cook	English	ARCI 411	15	4	Excellent course and tutor, highly recommend
Ideology and Architecture	English	ARCI 451	15	5	Tough but really well taught – trip to Moscow
French Language	French	elective	7.5	2	-
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

Please describe the registration process at your host university. What kind of help was available?
The process was very easy, all online registration after lectures describing the courses in the first week.

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?

Be early in choosing your course but the school is very accommodating.

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

Choose a course you are going to enjoy so that you are happy when you do your work and can have fun while doing it.

Academic Experience

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

The academic experience at ESA was far more engaging with much smaller class sizes and a far higher standard for teaching even if the other students were not a much better.

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?

Much more relaxed and liberal style of teaching from VUW with better tutors and more critical approach.

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?

Courses were set up for students to choose from so making choices is easy.

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

Work hard and don't get caught up in "Springtime in Paris syndrome"

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

Limited computer facilities and very small library.

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?

Language course at the university is not especially good but Alliance Francais course is excellent. Should be completed before starting university.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Independent, one bedroom apartment in the 11th arrondissement.

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

Not cheap unless sharing with someone else but central and great location.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Look for independent apartments online and at the Eglise Americain noticeboard.

How early can you move into accommodation?

Moved into the apartment one week after making an application, very easy and was given a 5 month lease.

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

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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 easy to find using internet and noticeboards. Preferable to university supplied accommodation.

Do you have any tips of advice for future students when applying for accommodation?
Get to Paris early to organize accommodation otherwise could take longer than expected.

G: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

It was really easy making friends in a smaller school but having lots of international students around was also very helpful at first.

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

Easy, there were no issues as long as you are wary and keep an open mind.

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

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The Parisian lifestyle and food as well as living in a truly global city was great.

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

Integration was not difficult due to the small size of the school and people were very friendly

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?

Yes absolutely.

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

None.

H: 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?

Limited at the school, too small to offer too many activities

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

Get out and explore Paris, but remember to travel and visit other parts of France

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

Opportunities to work at the school bar/café during term time. Great chance to speak French.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There are great internship opportunities for after the exchange but limited during.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Passport
2	Backup money
3	Health/travel insurance
4	Language dictionary
5	Sense of adventure

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

1	Live nearby
2	Get to know the school, hang out on campus
3	Speak French
4	Smoke
5	Meet as many people as possible, great opportunity to network.

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Integrate yourself into the French lifestyle as much as you can
2	Travel to other countries around Europe
3	Practice your French
4	Eat falafel in the Marais

I: Personal Experience

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

My experience at L'Ecole Speciale d'Architecture and Paris can only be described as enlightening, coming back to Wellington and New Zealand will never be the same again. The exposure to a whole new world and lifestyle is incredibly powerful and changed my perception of the world we live in completely. The school offers incredible opportunities to meet interesting people in a very international environment, the fact that it is private meaning many of the students are from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and countries. I can only encourage others to do the same and enjoy it while it lasts.