

Vic OE Evaluation Form

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Development studies
Exchange Institution	Universidad de Jaén
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Semester 1, 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	0€
Accommodation	240€ month, inclusive of power, water, gas etc
Return Airfare	\$3000 NZD (round the world)
Local Transportation	0.90€ each way to uni from the centre of town
Meals	40€ per week
Visa	\$120 NZD
Health & Insurance	\$350 NZD
Personal Spending	\$4000
Communications (phone, etc.)	20€
Other fees (specify)	Gas is separate to other bills. Usually needs to be replaced every 5 – 6 weeks. A bottle is about 16€.
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Generally speaking, everything was cheaper in Spain. Trains are relatively more expensive (probably similar to long distance travel within New Zealand) and fast food could be expensive.

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

Spent a little bit more but that was due to more trips in the weekend to places like France, the UK and travel within Spain.

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

I used my Air New Zealand Airpoints card. It was really good, charged 0 fees for withdrawals from ATMs so I was able to take out 20€ at a time if I wanted.

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

Walk everywhere if the weather allows. If you do take the bus often, get a bud card (it's half price)

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

Coffee from the machines at uni was 0.55€, at a café 1.20€. I think a can of coke was about 0.50€

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?

Yes. It was not difficult and was completed and ready to be picked up within 3 – 4 days. It really helps being in Wellington at the time of application but you can do it by post. There was no interview for the visa.

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

Read all the requirements carefully so you can do it once and quickly. Remember to pay in cash.

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?

I had to get insurance before I left, I don't think they offered any specifically at Jaen.

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

I had insurance by 1cover. I never needed to claim anything but it was easy to apply online.

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					
Geografía de Europa	Spanish	GEOG 300	20	3	Really good course material. Lectures can be quite dry but the lecturer is really helpful and there is a lot of printed material/ slides can be accessed online.
Geografía Humana II	Spanish	GEOG 100	20	1	Lecturer was moody and very unhelpful. Seemed to dislike all Erasmus/exchange students and failed 2/3 of the class in the final

					exam. There was a lot of assignments for a 100 level course.
Geografía Regional del mundo	Spanish	GEOG 200	20	4	Really interesting class. Lecturer was kind and interesting; she always played us movies and documentaries during práctica classes. She spoke very quickly but that helped my Spanish a lot.
Spanish intensive course B1	Spanish	NA	0	3	Kind of helpful but the teacher was very relaxed and a lot of people didn't get any credit for this course so wouldn't turn up.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

You have to line up at the International Office in the first week of university and get a student ID card. You then need to register online for courses, take it to your course advisor, get it signed and bring it back. There was a lot of waiting around.

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?

Allow enough time to get things organized. Go to the office first thing in the morning.

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

Try to choose courses where you have a good feeling from the lecturer. I think having a

compassionate and interested lecturer is more important than your interest in the subject he or she is teaching.

Academic Experience

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

I found the university really disorganized which was annoying. I would sometimes only find out the due date of an assignment the night or weekend before because everybody else in that course might have other courses together, so they knew when things are due. There are no course outlines and it's hard to find information on the website.

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?

A lot of lecturers don't use slides. So you have to learn to write quickly and take good notes.

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 would recommend Geografía regional del mundo, because the lecturer was so great. I think three papers plus a language paper is a good workload, I couldn't have done more.

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

Try in the first couple of weeks of your course to learn new vocab that keeps coming up in class. If you are studying similar papers those words will come up a lot and it's a good way to make use of the first couple of weeks where there is little to do.

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

They were pretty good, WiFi on campus, computers at the library but the library hours were terrible, didn't open until 9.30am.

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?

Definitely try to do the three week intensive course at the start of the semester. I found that a good way to brush up on verbs and common expressions.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Central city apartment.

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

Close to the shops and bars but a 30 minute walk to university. I preferred living close to the city.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Trying to live in a big flat with lots of people – it's much more fun!

How early can you move into accommodation?

As early as you organize it. I found my accommodation in four days.

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

I cooked for myself. Food is cheap and really good. Meat and vegetables are much cheaper than New Zealand. Beer and wine are also very cheap.

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

It was very easy. You should search for the Jaén accommodation Facebook group to find flat mates.

Do you have any tips of advice for future students when applying for accommodation?
Try and get a buddy, then you can live with other Spanish people.

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 quite hard, students in my classes had strong established groups of friends and it wasn't until later in the semester that they became more friendly.

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

The culture is no problem but for the first couple of months I found it quite isolating having a limited amount of Spanish language.

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

Practice as much Spanish as possible before arriving, the opening hours of shops/Spanish 'timetable' takes a while to adjust to but is actually quite good once you are used to it!

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The food, the daily

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

Almost nobody spoke English in Jaén, so you need to be prepared to know what you are going to say when buying things like sim cards, specific foods, ordering in restaurants etc. Andalusian people are, generally speaking, really friendly and warm.

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?

For people with disabilities, quite hard. Jaén, especially the university, was multi-cultural and I knew a lot of gay people who had no problem.

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

No, 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?

Not particularly as you arrive midway through the winter and leave midway through the summer. Lots of football but not a lot of female sports.

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

Visit Andalucía. And if you are travelling abroad, fly out of Malaga, it's so much quicker and easier than Madrid.

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

Some English tutoring was available.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Little as far as I knew.

5 things to take to your host country or region

- 1 NZ to Europe adaptor
- 2 Spare credit cards
- 3 Take hardly any clothes or shoes! So cheap to buy over there
- 4 Micro-fibre travel towel. Great for trips away or the gym.
- 5 Learn as much of the language as you can before arriving

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

- 1 Get a buddy.
- 2 Join the Erasmus Jaén group on Facebook as a way to find flats.
- 3 Do the intensive course which is run 3 weeks before each semester.
- 4 Try and get mobile data as part of your plan as everyone in Spain uses Whatsapp rather than SMS.
- 5 Use your Erasmus ID to get discounts on the ALSA buses around Spain.

Top 5 Things to do

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

- 1 Tapas in Jaén. Usually Tapas come free with Tinto or Beer.
- 2 Visit Sevilla, Granada, Málaga, Nerja.

- 3 Visit Barcelona. There are cheap flights from Granada on Vueling.
- 4 Try and hire a care with friends, you can see so much more.
- 5 Go to a football match. Real Madrid tickets can be as cheap as 60€

I: Personal Experience



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

For the most part I enjoyed my experience at the Universidad de Jaén in Spain. I did find the lack of support at the university a problem, for instance there was no help offered

towards writing academic essays in Spanish or study groups but I think that is the nature of Spanish education. I feel like my Spanish has improved and I was able to take some great trips to Sweden, France and the UK as well as around Spain itself. The lifestyle was good and living costs much cheaper than New Zealand. An exchange is a valuable experience for anybody studying at Victoria.

