

Vic OE Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	BAS
Major(s)	Architecture
Exchange Institution	Korea University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 1 & 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	\$ 70 (per semester)
Accommodation	\$ 1,600 - \$ 2,000 (dormitory, per semester)
Return Airfare	\$ 1,800
Local Transportation	\$ 20 (per week)
Meals	\$ 5 - 15 (per meal)
Visa	nil
Health & Insurance	nil
Personal Spending	\$ 80 (per week)
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$ 100 (pre-paid smart phone), \$ 60 (per week, monthly-paid smart phone)
Other fees (specify)	\$ 100 (studio materials)
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Medical Costs: Although quite affordable, can be costly without health insurance

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

Seoul is considerably cheaper to live in than Wellington and the variety is huge. However it is essential to apply for the dormitory as soon as possible otherwise the search for alternative accommodation both in the holidays and in the second trimester can be difficult and costly.

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

Applying for Study Link is crucial as well as getting a Debit Visa Card as transferring money to the Korean bank account (which is also your student ID card) can be a complicated process.

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

Although you may work part time you will soon find out that the pay is extremely low compared to

Wellington. The university does have some scholarships that you can apply for which is helpful.

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

\$2 to \$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?

No.

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

Nil.

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?

There was a mandatory insurance that all exchange students were required to obtain.

The school informs the process on how to get insurance.

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

Nil.

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					
Studio.5	Korean	ARCI 411	30	5	Intensive and valuable.
Structural Design	English	ARCI 421	15	3	Integrated with Studio.5.
History of Contemporary Architecture	English	SARC 451	15	3	History of Korean Architecture is more interesting.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
Studio.6	Korean	ARCI 412	30	5	Intensive and valuable.

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

The registration process takes up to 12 weeks and there is some documents that needs to be submitted. KUBA helps out in a lot of this and also informs any news or things that need to be done.

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?

Enrolling for courses are somewhat chaotic and for a handful of courses enrolment is not guaranteed. Exchange students used to have first priority in selecting courses but this is no longer an option they provide. When enrolling for courses, it is best to enroll as soon as possible as core courses will be gone in less than one minute.

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

If Korean is not an option it is important to select the courses taught in English. And even some courses that are supposed to be taught in English may be taught in Korean, or partially in Korean.

Academic Experience

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

The studio is excellent as the faculty consists with some of the leading figures of architecture in Korea.

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?

The emphasis on aesthetic value and perceptions of what is good or bad differs from VUW which makes it valuable when one is seeking for a different perspective. The workload is quite heavy but can be done alongside other activities.

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?

The studio courses are a must but other courses can be selected according to the availability. VUW 15 credits would equal to KU 3 credits and KU sets the minimum credits to 12 and maximum to 19.

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

Being consistent and good at some Korean.

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

The facilities are not as good as VUW and especially in the architecture studio you will find no computers. Having a laptop is handy and a lot of Korean pages do not operate in Chrome or Firefox. Library is quite good but the number of English books are limited and both the dormitory and studio provides Wifi.

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?

Nil.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

First Semester: University Dormitory / Second Semester: Flatting

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

Dormitory is the best but has limited cooking facilities as Korean students usually do not cook. Flatting is not a good option and a lot of Koreans are not accustomed to such type of living. Maybe the positive side of it is that you can experience where most of the domestic students *actually* live but is understandable why most of them apply for the dormitory in the first place.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

The university dormitory is undoubtedly the best option. It is new, clean and close to the campus. It is also affordable compared to any other type of accommodation and also has facilities such as a piano practice room and a fitness center.

How early can you move into accommodation?

You can move in at least a week before the semester starts.

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

Cooking facilities are limited and the meal plans may not be as good as eating out. There were lots of complaints about the meal plans but were nevertheless satisfied with what was available elsewhere.

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

Off-campus housing are not recommended for international students as the bond can be up to \$5,000 and is quite limited to domestic students. There is an international hostel close by but the dormitory should be the first choice.

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

Apply as soon as possible as it is usually on a first-come first-served basis.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

International students are automatically in a buddy program called KUBA where domestic students help out and socialize with international students. Koreans are quite friendly towards international students and it is quite likely to make friends by joining a club(s).

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

It is extremely different and people are much less individual and likes to fit in to what is seen as normal or relevant. There is a heavy drinking and smoking culture which can be either good or bad.

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

Doing what everybody is doing is what many people expect and this can be a challenge if you think otherwise. But at the same time this is valuable experience so it is best to submerge into it.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

Although a lot of people are passive initially the more you get to know them the more open and close you will get. There is a real sense of bonding and the random people you meet in random occasions may turn out to be the most interesting moments.

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

There is definitely a difference in how people perceive you depending on whether you are an actual foreigner or anything close to or is, Korean. In some ways it is better to be not Korean and in some other ways it is better to be Korean but this isn't something that one can change. The cultural experience that one will have according to this will be different.

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?

They have very different perceptions and views on this but for students with disabilities the school is considerably well equipped *except* the architecture studio. There are NO elevators but the studio is on the 4th floor.

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

No. If there is, it is more of a language barrier.

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 are many in-campus clubs as well as clubs which are in conjunction with other universities. Casual sports such as basketball or football can also be attained. Although Koreans are into baseball and football

they do not play cricket or rugby. You can start out at KUBA then go on to join other clubs and activities.

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

Go on a train trip (the KTX), heaps of exhibitions and concerts, social club events and outings.

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

There are not a lot of opportunities unless one can speak Korean.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There are some internship opportunities but are limited. There are a lot more volunteering activities such as for concerts, sports events, exhibitions et cetera.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	A camera
2	A bit of money
3	A Debit Visa Card
4	A laptop
5	Clothes

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

1	Courses taught in English may not necessarily be taught in English.
2	The university dormitory is the best option for accommodation.
3	There are so many things to do and the city is fantastic.
4	The culture is significantly different to anything that one may expect.
5	You will not here much about North Korea than in NZ.

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Visit every part of Seoul. There is so much that it has to offer.
2	Join a club. Any club is alright as you will have the same cultural experience whichever you choose.
3	Try the food. The variety of the taste and style is huge.
4	If you like music but not K-pop, go to Hongdae where the indie scene is.
5	Go on a train trip down to Busan, the harbor city.

H: Personal Experience

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

the exchange office!!

Whether the exchange turns out to be better than expected or something totally unexpected, it is one of the best experiences. I enjoyed every bit of the good parts and the silly mistakes and if there was ever another chance to go again I would not hesitate. Just to be thrown into a totally different surrounding and culture opens your eyes to so many more things and also broadens your perspective. It is something that can only be obtained thanks to Vic OE and will no doubt be valuable in the future.

