

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VICTORIA ABROAD AS A WORD DOCUMENT

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	BA – Sociology and Social Policy, BCOM – Marketing and International Business
Major(s)	Sociology, Social Policy, Marketing and International Business
Exchange Institution	Lancaster University (England)
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester One and Trimester Two, 2015.

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	N/A
Accommodation	\$5000
Return Airfare	\$2500
Local Transportation	\$200
Meals	\$2600
Visa	N/A
Health & Insurance	\$750
Personal Spending	\$1500
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$1000
Other fees (specify)	I'm not sure exactly how much I spent on travel around England and Europe, but this was probably my major expense other day to day living costs.
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Local transport was more than I expected, around \$5 NZ for a return trip to town.

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

They were similar to what I expected and had budgeted for. Overall, prices in England are similar to prices in New Zealand. However, I probably spent more on local transportation than I anticipated.

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

I used my New Zealand bank account and had both a debit card and a credit card. I also set up a local United Kingdom bank account which I would recommend doing.

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

Don't be too frugal, you're on exchange to have amazing experiences, but also make sure that you save some money to travel during the weekend and the holidays. I also stayed in Lancaster for part of the summer break and I actually decided to get a job to keep myself busy, make some more friends and save a bit of money! I continued working during the final term that I was at Lancaster and it helped me to keep afloat financially. I will return to New Zealand with a bit of money in my bank account, which is definitely a nice feeling!

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

Around \$1.50 NZD for a can of coke and \$4 NZD for a cup of coffee.

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 I did not have to apply for a Visa as I am a British citizen.

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

Apply as early as possible.

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?

No, not that I am aware of. However, I know that it was recommended.

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

STA Travel - Comprehensive Insurance. Yes, I bought travel insurance from STA Travel when I booked my flight to England. It was very easy to acquire, reasonably priced and offers very full coverage.

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 2015					
MKTG 327	English	300 Level	15	4	

		Marketing Elective			
SOCL 208	English	200 Level Sociology Elective	15	3	
SOCL 210	English	200 Level Sociology Elective	15	3	
SOCL 310	English	300 Level Sociology Elective	15	4	
VUW Trimester 2 2015					
FREN 100	English	FREN 101	20	3	
SOCL 311	English	300 Level Sociology Elective	20	4	
SOCL 324	English	300 Level Sociology Elective	20	3	

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

When you apply to Lancaster, you pre-register for the classes that you would like to take while on exchange. The classes available to study abroad students are outlined in the Study Abroad Handbook. Then, during orientation week, there is a formal registration process where representatives from all of the departments sit in the Great Hall and you go from person to person formally registering for your classes. There are a lot of students registering at once so there isn't a lot of one on one help and you have to be quite independent. However, the people from the International Office are available to answer any major questions.

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?

When I arrived, I found that several of the classes I had had approved and had pre-registered for were no longer being offered or were full. Thus, I had to email my course advisors/heads of school at Victoria to have new classes approved and ended up taking classes which I hadn't initially signed up for. Overall, it is important to be flexible and to have back up courses available.

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

Get extra courses approved before you go on exchange just in case your first choices are no longer available.

Academic Experience

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

I really enjoyed the academic experience at Lancaster. Overall, it was quite similar except there were fewer hours of class each week and the class sizes were considerably smaller. The academic experience met my expectations and I felt challenged by the workload, but not over worked.

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?

Because classes were smaller and there were no tutorials, lecturers took on more of an interactive approach. There was also more group work than I was use to at Victoria. The workload was similar/a little bit lighter that what you would expect at VUW.

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 taking four classes (32 ECTS credits) in the Lent/Summer semester and three classes (24 ECTS credits) in the Michaelmas term. I recommend taking classes that you know you'll enjoy. Your exchange experience is supposed to be fun and it is important to like what you choose to study while overseas.

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

Start your work early and do the majority of your study/course work during the week. This reduces stress and frees up the weekends for travelling and exploring the local area with your new friends!

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

The computer facilities and internet access were both great at Lancaster. The library was being refurbished while I was there and is now a state of the art space and a lovely space to study. There are plenty of computers, printers and study spaces available.

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?

N/A.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I stayed in The County College on the university campus. During my time at Lancaster I had a single ensuite room and a single room with a shared campus.

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

The on campus accommodation at Lancaster is fantastic. Lancaster is a self contained campus and the majority of students live on site. I definitely recommend doing this. As an exchange student, most of your friends will also be living on campus and your social life will revolve around the college bars and other onsite facilities. All of the rooms are well equipped, modern and comfortable and the kitchen and bathroom facilities are also great. Living in a flat on campus is also a good way to meet local students.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

On campus in one of the colleges.

How early can you move into accommodation?

As soon as International Student Orientation starts or a couple of days earlier if necessary.

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

Most of the on campus accommodation is self catered. However, there is the option to purchase a meal card and eat at one of the designated cafeterias/restaurants on campus. I did not do this and cooked by own food, but I've heard that this scheme offers a lot of choice and is a good option for those who don't feel comfortable cooking for themselves.

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

N/A.

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

The college that you choose will determine where you live. If you want to be as centrally located as possible, choose Flyde or Furness. If you don't want to walk long distances to get everywhere, do not choose Lonsdale or Cartmel as both of these colleges are very far from the centre of campus.

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 first week of exchange is full of orientation activities and there are an abundance of opportunities to make friends. I made some of my best friends on exchange and had the most amazing year because of it. Most of my close friends were other international students, though I was lucky enough to make some local friends through flat mates and group work in my classes.

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

It wasn't too difficult. The British sense of humour takes a little bit of getting use to, but otherwise it was quite an easy transition.

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

N/A.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The humour and the laid back and friendly attitude of most British people.

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

I was welcomed with open arms and felt very accepted and valued.

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?

There were several students with physical disabilities studying at Lancaster and there seems to be sufficient support in place. There are also active groups supporting visible minorities, including students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.

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

N/A.

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?

Just like at Victoria, there is a club for just about everything. There are also plenty of sports teams and other extracurricular activities and groups. There are also numerous opportunities for volunteering as well. I recommend joining the Study Abroad Society and the Hiking Club.

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

Travel as much as possible! There are lots of day trips on offer most weekends through the Study Abroad Society and the various colleges. Cities like Manchester, Liverpool, York and Birmingham are also very accessible by train. I also strongly recommend visiting the Lake District at least once.

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

There are job opportunities available in the bars and retail outlets on campus, though these are quite competitive. It is possible to get part-time work in one of the shops, restaurants or bars in Lancaster city. I got a part-time job half way through my exchange and was able to spend some of my summer break working.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There are lots of opportunities to volunteer. There is plenty of information about this on Lancaster's website.

5 things to take to your host country or region

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|----------|---|
| 1 | A positive attitude and an open mind. |
| 2 | Plenty of warm clothes if you're studying there during winter. |

3	New Zealand lollies/other treats to share with your new friends.
4	A carry on sized backpack for weekend trips away.
5	A pair of good, sturdy, comfortable walking shoes.

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

1	Always say yes!
2	Travel as much as possible.
3	Get involved in university life.
4	Make the most of the weekend day trips on offer throughout the year.
5	Live on campus.

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 the Lake District.
2	Spend the weekend/several weekends in London.
3	Explore Europe if you have the chance. Amsterdam, Dublin, Oslo and Bergen were some of my favorite places.
4	Visit Brighton when the weather's nice.
5	Go to a football game.

H: Personal Experience

The year that I spent in Lancaster has been the best of my life so far. I made so many amazing friends from across the world, from New Zealand, to Norway, to Canada, to Australia, to America, to England. I loved the University environment and all of the courses which I took while on exchange. I was also fortunate enough to have lots of opportunities to travel and loved exploring England and visiting some incredible places across Europe. I now consider England my second home and I can't wait to get back to Europe as soon as I graduate!

