

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Commerce
Major(s)	Economics and International Business
Exchange Institution	Nova School of Business and Economics
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	VUW tri 1, 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	\$0
Accommodation	\$2500
Return Airfare	\$2200
Local Transportation	\$50 per month
Meals	\$100 per week
Visa	\$0
Health & Insurance	\$500
Personal Spending	\$2000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$14 per month
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Lisbon was generally cheap, but if you went to any of the tourist spots, like restaurants or to the beach the food and drink was much more expensive.

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

I ended up going over my budget as I travelled quite a bit and went out with my friends more than I had intended to.

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

I used a cash passport from BNZ. This was a good option as they give you a backup card too in case you lose the first one. The only problem with using a foreign card in Portugal is that most of the smaller stores only accepted cash or a card from a Portuguese bank. So if you were to go with a cash passport you will end up withdrawing cash and only using it to buy groceries etc.

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

As Lisbon is a small city you don't necessarily need the metro card, although it is not a big expense anyway. Also, expect to get invited to a lot of Erasmus parties and activities so make sure you save a lot of extra money.

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

Coffee was 0.8 euros which is about \$1.50 NZD. Coke was around 1 euro.

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?

I have a British passport so I didn't need to apply for a visa.

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

NA

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?

NA

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

I used STA travels insurance. I never used it but it is good to have just in case.

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					
Microeconomics	English	ECON 201	15	4	Was quite difficult as my algebra and calculus was not up to the standard at Nova.
Global Business Environment	English	IBUS 201	15	3	Was an okay course. A lot of essay writing so was easy for me to get good marks as English is my first language
Finance	English	FINA 201	15	5	Very difficult course but I would say it is probably similar

					to what is offered at Vic.
Entrepreneurship	English	Elective	15	2	A fun course. Lots of work to do every week but easy to pass. I also had to present most weeks so it was good experience.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

I received regular emails about when enrollment started and the process so was not too tricky. It was all done online. The only problem was that they said 5am for New Zealand time but then they would keep extending that time frame.

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?

I got into all the courses that I wanted to do.

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

Apply for more courses than you need, that way when you get to university and you don't like a course you can drop it. It is much harder trying to get into another course once you are already at the university.

Academic Experience

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

Nova is a very good university and the courses were very similar in structure to Victoria. Lectures were all 1.5 hours long and had a 1-hour tutorial each week as well. The experience met my expectations but I did not do a lot of extra curricular activity at the University, so that is something I would think about doing if I was able to do the exchange again.

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?

It was very similar to 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?

4 courses is appropriate. Some courses at Nova are not worth as many credits but the ones I did were all worth 15 credits each. I would recommend doing entrepreneurship as an elective as it gave very good hands on experience and you were encouraged to “get out of the building” and really think for yourself.

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

Go to all classes and make sure you balance study with travelling and other activities. There were a lot of parties on week nights so keeping that balance was important.

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

There were not very many computers at all and the library is really small. I mostly did my work at home not at the University. Nova Sbe is a very small campus.

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?

There were language courses offered but I would have had to pay for it. Most people spoke English well so it was only a problem if you were talking to a much older Portuguese who did not speak much English. The Portuguese are very friendly though so it is not as scary as it may seem.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I stayed in an apartment in the city.

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

My flat mates weren't students so it was hard for me to make friends with them. Otherwise it was a good form of accommodation.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Apartments are the only form of accommodation but I would recommend finding a big student flat, that way you get to meet people straight away, especially if you are going to Lisbon on your own.

How early can you move into accommodation?

As early as you want as long as it is in the month that you have paid for.

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

NA

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

I used a website called Uniplaces. It was very good and is a safe place to find accommodation without having been there first. Living off campus is the best way to experience the city but make sure you have a map or Internet on your phone! I got lost a few times during the first week.

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

I would recommend staying in a hostel first and visiting the places to see what it is like and that the area is a nice area etc.

F: 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 hard for me to make local friends but as my flat mates were Portuguese I met a few friends through them and the volunteers for the Erasmus organizations were Portuguese so I ended up with a few friends who were locals.

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

The culture was very different and took some time to adjust but it was a great experience and you just have to learn to go with it and be open and friendly.

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

NA

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

It was a very relaxed culture and everyone was very nice and helpful.

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

I was noticeably a foreigner as I am pale and blonde so they always treated me a little differently but they were usually very nice. The university staff were friendly but the students mostly kept to themselves and I ended up just being friends with the other international students.

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?

From what I saw there was not much discrimination at all so would be fairly easy.

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

No.

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?

Sign up to organizations like Erasmus Life Lisboa, and ESN Lisboa. You will meet a lot of people that way and get to travel throughout Portugal and experience the most of your exchange.

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

Go to the beach, zoo, aquarium, and take day trips to the coasts outside of Lisbon. You can rent cars fairly cheap and the beaches just out of Lisbon are amazing.

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

I did not see any opportunities for work on or off campus but I imagine if you tried hard enough you might find something but note that the wage is very low in Lisbon.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There were a few volunteer opportunities and internship opportunities with the international student organisations.

5 things to take to your host country or region

- 1 Camera or phone. Take lots of photos so you have something to look back on!
- 2 Bikini/swimwear. You will end up going to the beach a lot!
- 3 Good walking shoes! The pavements are very uneven so if you are a girl don't bother packing heels.
- 4 A jacket, as even though it is a warm country it can still be a bit cold!
- 5 Something cultural from NZ as people are quite interested in NZ

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

- 1 Go to all the events during the first week of University that are hosted by Erasmus Life Lisboa or ESN.
- 2 Be open and friendly to everyone.
- 3 Take every opportunity that comes along as the time flies by.
- 4 Remember to balance study with other activities, as you still need to pass your courses.
- 5 Don't stay in Lisbon but travel throughout all of Portugal as it is an amazing country.

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 Beach!!**
- 2 Sightsee and go to all the historical buildings especially castle st. George
- 3 Go on a trip to Porto or to the surrounding towns. They are beautiful and truly show the culture.
- 4 Experience the nightlife (Lisbon is famous for it).
- 5 Ride on a tram through the city.

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 experience was amazing. I was able to meet so many different people from different countries and it really broadened my perspective on things. I was also able to do a bit of travel through Europe and just experience so many different cultures.

In Lisbon there were so many beautiful beaches to visit and sightseeing to do that I was always busy doing new things and meeting new people along the way. It definitely helped having an

organisation that organized these kinds of activities and was a good way to meet new people and make friends. I am definitely going back to Portugal to visit as I have fallen in love with the country.