

Vic OE Evaluation Form

VUW degree(s)	BA and LLB
Major(s)	Spanish and Development Studies
Exchange Institution	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Semester Two 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	\$20 (you do not buy books but rather pay to scan articles or photocopied chapters of books which is very cheap)
Accommodation	\$400 a month (including all bills and washing done one a week, note standard of accommodation is low, you can find much nicer places to live and pay more)
Return Airfare	\$1900
Local Transportation	\$1.30 to take the metro one way, but I was close to my campus so could walk, but for those based at San Joaquin or not close to Casa Central campus expect to pay \$2.60 at least every day. The bus is a little bit cheaper.
Meals	Food products such as meat and dairy relatively the same as at home, but fruit and veges cheaper. It is a lot cheaper to buy food at La Vega, the big central market, just watch your bag as there are many thieves. Note tampons hideously expensive. I spent about \$40 a week on grocery shop, but could do it a lot cheaper. Eating out is so much cheaper, about %12 to go to a restaurant and get a big meal and drink.
Visa	Cannot quite remember but from memory \$300
Health & Insurance	\$600
Personal Spending	Hard to define, traveled a lot so main expenses were bus tickets and holiday accommodation. Alcohol is cheap. You have to pay to get into most clubs and prices vary but it is definitely cheaper than NZ.
Communications (phone, etc.)	Phone calls and texts are very expensive! Buy a cheap smartphone and use whatsapp (texting via the internet) to text, it's what everyone does, and you will save money. I spent about \$22 a month.
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Shampoo, facewash and these kinds of products were more expensive than NZ!

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

I spent less than I thought but mainly because I paid very little for my accommodation.

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

I bought a travelcard and took out money from that at a cash machine-note all of them will charge you a withdrawal fee and its about \$7 a time so I always just withdrew the largest amount possible.

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

Get a bike and bike to uni because transport costs add up.

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

Coke \$1.25 but coffee much the same price.

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 time-consuming, you have to apply for a criminal record history and that takes a month to process which I didn't realize. I waited until I had my acceptance letter but I would apply for all your documents that you need for your visa well before you get your acceptance letter otherwise you might run out of time.

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

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 you just had to have health insurance.

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

1 Cover Travel Insurance, I would not recommend it because everytime I had to make a claim I had to get my doctor in NZ to write a letter explaining I hadn't previously had the illness, which was v difficult and annoying.

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					

VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
Introducion a Derechos Humanos	Spanish	Elective	15	5	Interesting near the end of the course where we talked about cases but a lot of it focused on theory and ignored Chile's human rights issues and Pinochet which I found bizarre. Was very difficult, final exams are oral.
Trade, Economy and Finance	English	Elective	15	2	So incredibly boring, all we did was revise long WTO cases that we got set for homework.
Cultura Chilena	Spanish	Equivalent	20	4	Language barrier made it difficult, plus tests every two weeks meant you had to revise a lot.
Curso Intensivo Espanol	Spanish			3	I missed the first day of class because my flight was delayed, so got put in the lowest class with people that didn't know much Spanish. It was still a difficult course though as we learnt a lot and had 5 hours of class everyday for 3 weeks.

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

There was help through a student body (based at San Joaquin) or through my law faculty but it was difficult because you had to speak in Spanish with everyone and at the beginning I couldn't understand what anyone was saying. You can try classes out for the first week and then change.

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?

It was easy to get into the courses you wanted. I would say try and take as much courses in Spanish as you can instead of English courses because you will learn the language so much faster.

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

Academic Experience

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

There was less reading required but more assignments worth smaller percentages which you have to complete, and they are very time-consuming. Some of the courses were very disorganized. Also the semester was so much longer than Vic which was challenging. I started in July and didn't finish until 8th December, with no holidays apart from a three days off in September and a few other national holiday days.

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?

Classes are less discursive, more lecturing. The workload about the same but mainly because of the language barrier. In the last month of uni I also did a 9 hour per week Spanish course outside of uni which was helpful for final exams but very time consuming.

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?

3 or 4 courses. I would recommend doing the Spanish course before you start uni because you will need it for your classes and it will also instantly give you a group of friends.

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

Keep up with the readings and try to practice your Spanish as much as possible-live with Chileans instead of all foreigners and preferably people that don't speak English!

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

Very good condition, a high standard of all facilities and they offer free sport classes.

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?

Answered above.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Student accommodation, 18 people in a smallish house with very small private rooms

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

Pros=social, good for learning Spanish, always people to hang out with. Cons=very loud all the time and couldn't sleep that well.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Student houses, but you have to get in quick or even pay before you arrive to get the best student houses, mine was not very good!

How early can you move into accommodation?

As early as you want, check compartodepto.cl, that's the flat website and they have lots of flats and student houses. The uni also has on its page some student houses they recommend but they are very strict with rules and are run by private individuals not the uni itself. You can arrange homestays through the uni but the uni does not offer accommodation.

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

We had one kitchen for 18 people and it was way too small and all the equipment was falling apart!

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 difficult! There is a huge rush for accommodation esp in the middle of the year and you pay so much more as a foreigner than a local. I would turn up to flat viewings and hear that the price had gone up, but only because they saw I was a gringo..

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

I know some people went through agencies to find places but you have to pay a fee and you also pay a lot more if you go through an agency because its basically just foreigners who use the service so the renters have high prices.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

I found the Chilean girls at uni very hard to befriend! As did practically all my other exchange friends.

Especially at law school where people are in very tight groups. I had a lot more Chilean friends outside of university.

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

The Spanish accent is very difficult to understand! Also Santiago was quite hard to adjust to coming from NZ as there is a lot of pollution and very little parks and trees.

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences? You get a lot of attention from men especially if you are blonde, ie get yelled at down the street and things like that. I really didn't like that and found it hard to get used to.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

That Chileans are very close to their families and have big BBQs on the weekend. I went to a few of these with my Chilean friends and their families were so nice. They are also always very helpful and if you get sick or something they always go out of their way to help you.

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

I had one teacher who went out of his way to help me and would help me meeting me to talk about the classes and explain some things in English because I really struggled at the start of the semester with understanding things. Students always helped me around campus and with sorting out admin and printing things.

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 is a lot less acceptance of minorities in Chile than in NZ but I think that this is changing. I have a lesbian friend who was on exchange at my uni and she experienced no problems.

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

I would say gender equality is not respected so heavily. I got sick of all the inappropriate comments from men and especially taxi drivers who would ask you sexual questions and at times felt uncomfortable.

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?

I did a photography course-there are lots of courses like this available and you pay about \$100 for the semester. There are a lot of sports (tennis esp, bring your gear if you play) and some dancing classes also but these are taught like a subject and you must attend three classes a week that consist of two hours a

class and do tests and things.

I also did some volunteering at an orphanage on Saturdays and there are many different volunteer options. They also have a language exchange program called Tandem which I participated in and you teach a Chilean student your native language while they teach you Spanish.

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

Go and visit other regions of Chile, buses are cheap!

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

You are not allowed to work as an exchange student there, and the pay is so low you probably wouldn't want to either.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

See above. I tried to find an internship for summer all required a fluent level of Spanish which I don't have.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Contact lenses
2	Tampons
3	Small country flag (for events at uni)
4	Backpack for travelling
5	Trekking shoes

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

1	Sort accommodation before you go! Or at least sort out staying with a host family for a month so when you get there you have a place to stay while you look for a flat.
2	Take as many courses in Spanish as you can.
3	Sign up for extra-curricular activities, they have heaps of sport classes and cultural classes which are either free or cost very little.
4	Live with Chileans.
5	Go to some of the CAUC events esp early on in the semester, they have heaps of events for exchange students and most exchange students go to at least one.

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Unless you speak Spanish very well, do a Spanish course
2	Visit Valparaiso, especially at New Years, they have an incredible fireworks display

3	Take salsa classes! I didn't but heaps of my friends did and loved it
4	Shop at La Vega, it's a cultural experience
5	Go to the Museo de Memoria in Quinta Normal

H: Personal Experience

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

I had a great experience in Chile. It is a beautiful country and is great to travel around. My uni experience was harder than I expected but I improved my Spanish so much by having to constantly read, write and listen in Spanish. It was a lot harder finding a flat than I expected and most of my friends had trouble, one girl I know lived in a hostel for the entire semester because she couldn't find anywhere to live! Santiago as a city itself is not very pretty and I tried to spend a lot of time outside of the city! I definitely don't regret my exchange, but I think I would have preferred to go to Buenos Aires for exchange instead. I went there for a week and the city is amazing! I didn't really research the options for exchange before I left, I just decided on Chile because of what I had learnt about it in class, but I would definitely recommend researching into the different options available and talking to people who have visited those places.