

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Biomedical Science and Arts
Major(s)	Human Genetics and English Literature
Exchange Institution	Royal Holloway University of London
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	2 nd Tri 2014

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	\$150
Accommodation	\$3,000
Return Airfare	\$2,000
Local Transportation	\$50 a week
Meals	\$80-\$100 a week
Visa	\$180
Health & Insurance	\$400
Personal Spending	\$150 a week
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$50
Other fees (specify)	Gym and club/society memberships: \$400
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Society membership fees and public transport were both more expensive than I was expecting.

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

It was basically what I expected because I planned on there being a few unexpected costs.

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 and a credit card. Both were good.

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

Prepare to spend a lot on public transport. It's not like Wellington where you can walk everywhere. You'll want to go into London at least once a week, which is around \$18 return on the train. Clubs, sports teams and societies are expensive to be a part of but it's worth it because they're a huge part of the uni culture over there.

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

Coke \$2, coffee \$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?

I got a student visitor visa because I was there for less than 6 months. It cost around \$180 and was quite easy to apply for but you have to get onto it early. Start applying a couple of months before you're due to go.

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

Don't leave it till the last minute

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 got an all inclusive travel insurance when I booked my flights which cost \$400

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

I got it through STA travel at Vic and I would recommend it.

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					
Intro to Genetics	English	200 level Genetics course	20	3	
Human Physiology	English	200 level physiology	20	3	
Intro to Poetry	English	100 level poetry	20	2	

VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

It was quite easy. I just did it all in my initial application which was fairly straightforward. Similar to the application process at Vic.

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 applied for. I had to change my English paper when I got there though because of a timetable clash. You should be flexible because if you are studying in more than one department then it's likely you'll have clashes.

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

Choose equivalent courses to what you would do at Vic but also don't be afraid to try something new because there's so many interesting papers on offer.

Academic Experience

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

There was a lot less contact time than what we have here. For example most of my papers only had one lecture a week compared to three or four at vic. They expect you to do a lot more work in your own time.

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?

See above.

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 did three courses and it wasn't difficult so it would definitely be possible to do four.

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

Turn up to classes because you get marked on your attendance and it counts towards your grade for some papers. Also don't forget to put in effort in your own time.

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

Really good. There was Wifi everywhere and good library facilities.

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?

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Hall of residence

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

It was really good for meeting new people but it was quite expensive and I also had to share a room.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Hall of residence

How early can you move into accommodation?

A couple of days before the beginning of term.

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

The hall I was in is a catered hall so food is provided in the dining room. This food costs extra and it's kind of gross so I ended up buying my own food from the supermarket most of the time.

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

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

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 really easy making friends in my hall with locals, especially because I was in a shared room. They were all just starting uni themselves so everyone was keen to make new friends. I also made friends with some international students but I spent most of my time with locals.

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

It wasn't too different to New Zealand so it wasn't very hard.

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

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

Sunday roasts.

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

Everyone was really friendly. The university was so helpful with making sure my papers and everything were all set up. The students all wanted to be friends and were really interested in the fact that I came from NZ.

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?

As far as I could tell it would be fine. Everyone was really kind and non judgmental especially with things like race and sexuality.

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 at all.

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 was so many clubs available, it was a huge part of their uni culture. I would definitely recommend joining at least one because you make so many friends and get to go on trips etc. I played lacrosse while I was over there and it was one of the highlights of my exchange.

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

Go explore the area around the uni like Windsor, London and Virginia Waters. You can also get really cheap flights to Scotland and France and other nearby countries, which are definitely worth a visit.

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

If you have a working visa then the university can help you with finding a job either on campus or near by.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Warm clothes
2	Camera
3	Whittakers chocolate
4	Plenty of money
5	Gumboots

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

1	Explore the surrounding areas
2	Join a few clubs/sports teams- try something new
3	Take advantage of the free guest lectures, choir performances and drama shows on campus
4	Live in a hall of residence
5	Make friends with both locals and exchange students

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 London
2	Go to a West End show
3	Visit Cambridge
4	Go for walks to Virginia Waters
5	Go to Scotland

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 to Royal Holloway was one of the best experiences of my life. I was really excited but mostly nervous when I found out that I had been accepted, but as soon as I arrived it all turned into excitement. It took a lot of hard work to save enough money to be able to pay for my exchange but it was definitely worth it. Everyone was so friendly and I made some friends that I'm sure I'll have for life. I was in a hall with mostly 'locals' but I made friends with people from all over the world who were also on exchanges. The time went so quickly, I can't believe I'm home already. Royal Holloway is in a beautiful semi-rural area but it's so close to London so there's always something to do. I played for their lacrosse team, which was amazing because we travelled all around southern England for our games every week. There are so many different sports teams to join- I even tried trampolining! I would absolutely recommend going on an exchange to anyone, and Royal Holloway will always be my first choice.



