

Student Evaluation Form

A. Student Information

Degree(s) enrolled in at VUW	BA
Major(s)	Japanese, International Relations
Exchange Institution	University of the Ryukyus
VUW Trimester(s) and Year of Exchange	2011, 2 trimesters

B. Finances

Please provide an estimate on how much you spent on your exchange (in your host country's currency).

Food & personal spending	\$11,000
Accommodation	\$2000
Return Airfare	\$1500
Local Travel	\$10,000
Books, misc. levies (e.g. student association)	\$100
Visa	
Insurance	\$200
Other (please specify)	
	Total = about \$25,000

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

I earned a bit more money than I thought I would be able to, so I was able to have a bit more flexibility.

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

Velocity Trade (a website for transferring money internationally at a really low price)

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

You ought to have heaps of money leftover because accommodation is really cheap, but use it to travel the Ryukyus. Also use Velocity Trade to transfer money, it saved me about \$1000 in the long run!

Were there any extra or unexpected costs which future students should be aware of?

No.

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

100 yen

Please submit your completed Evaluation form, photos and Consent form to the Exchange Office via email (exchangestudents@vuw.ac.nz).

C. Visas & Insurance

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

Visa is easy. They walk you through how to get insurance at the university.

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

You get a special insurance for university students.

C. Academics

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 (if applicable)	VUW points/credits value	Rating (1-5)	Comments
Nihongo 1	Japanese			3	Just learning Japanese
Nihongo 2	Japanese			3	Just learning Japanese
Nihongo 3	Japanese			3	Just learning Japanese
Okinawa Affairs	Japanese			3	Course about Okinawan Culture/History/language
Japan Affairs	Japanese			3	Course about Japanese History/culture
Global Politics	English			3	A pretty boring course because its in English and most Japanese taking the course can't speak English that well.
Kanji Class	Japanese			3	Learning Kanji
Advanced Reading class	Japanese			5	Most useful class. Go through various readings in Japanese. Teacher is really good.

Please submit your completed Evaluation form, photos and Consent form to the Exchange Office via email (exchangestudents@vuw.ac.nz).

How did you find the teachers at your exchange university?

Some were good, some were not so good.

How did your academic experience differ from your time spend at Victoria?

A lot less time spent at university.

How did your academic experiences differ from what you expected?

Most of my learning was extra-curricular. I spent a lot of time going camping, spear fishing, snorkeling, swimming, exploring, drinking etc.

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

I would recommend taking easy courses and spending lots of time meeting people and interacting with Okinawans and learning that way instead. It is much more fun and you can learn much more Japanese outside of the classroom.

D. Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Apartment

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

Pros= Cheap, own kitchen and bathroom, a nice view, a balcony.

Cons= Single bed, not a double bed.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

The International House is the most luxurious. There is also a dormitory, which is slightly cheaper. Its better if you want to live with Japanese students, but there is no air con, so it's just too hot over summer. You may get put there for your first semester anyway. Other accommodation options would be your own apartment, but that would be 3 or 4 times the price of the university provided accommodation.

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

If you are there over summer apply for the international house. The university will still decide where to put you though

Please submit your completed Evaluation form, photos and Consent form to the Exchange Office via email (exchangestudents@vuw.ac.nz).

F. Culture

What were some of the hardest cultural differences you faced while abroad?

Dealing with being a popular white foreigner.

How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences?

Try not to be socially awkward.

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

A little bit, if people think you are from the military they don't really like you, but if you speak Japanese to them its fine. Some clubs and bars don't allow foreigners at all, but if you speak Japanese and are not American it should be fine.

G. Personal Response

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

Okinawa is definitely the best place to do an exchange to in Japan. Nowhere else are you able to live a relaxing life on a tropical island whilst speaking Japanese. This exchange has been the most beneficial and fantastic year of my life. I have increased my Japanese level an incredible amount, met a lot of people who I will definitely see again next time I'm in Japan, and have increased my knowledge of Okinawa and Japan.

Thank you for your responses, please leave any additional suggestions you may have for future participants below!

If you are in Okinawa, and are the sort of active human who likes to travel, explore and make the most out of your exchange, you NEED to buy a car. There is practically no public transport here. You can get a small car relatively cheap, about \$1000-\$2000 and then sell it again before you leave. I would definitely recommend doing this.

Please submit your completed Evaluation form, photos and Consent form to the Exchange Office via email (exchangestudents@vuw.ac.nz).