

# Vic OE Evaluation Form



## A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Human Resource Management
Exchange Institution	Singapore Management University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 1/2012

## 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	200
Accommodation	2500
Return Airfare	1000
Local Transportation	400
Meals	1000
Visa	90
Health & Insurance	500
Personal Spending	1000
Communications (phone, etc.)	150
Other fees (specify)	0
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	0

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

It was more than I had expected

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

I bought Singapore dollars before coming to Singapore and then I opened an account at OCBC Bank and created a visa debit card (the bank is located in the concourse of the campus)

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

If you plan to travel much to the countries nearby (Malaysia, Indonesia, etc.) you should try to save up more

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

Coffee on-campus is very cheap \$1-2, coke \$2, you can also buy coffee at Starbucks with \$6-7

**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?

You don't need to apply for a visa but you need Student Pass. The process is not so complicated, you will be sent emails and they will guide you on what to submit and when. After you apply for the Student Pass will need to book an appointment to collect your pass at the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority after you enter Singapore. It cost \$90 for a student pass.

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

It is easy but you need to check your emails and submit required documents before deadlines

### 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 do not need insurance. If you are sick you can come to the Clinic in the concourse of campus (with you student card) and you see the doctor and get medicine, it's all free

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

Southern Cross Travel Insurance

## 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
<b>VUW Trimester 1/YEAR</b>					
OBHR001	English	MGMT100	15	1	Very basic concepts of leadership theories, you might have learnt them at VUW. If you choose to learn this module with CSP project, you will have to do community service (it takes a bit of time) as it is required in this module
JPAN201	Japanese	-	15	3.5	It is fascinating to learn a

					new language, but you need to be focused and diligent
MGMT315	English	MGMT200	15	3	This course is more of self-study; the professor assists you in your work but you have to do your own research and work with your group
OPIM201	English	MGMT200	15	4	This course is very interesting and the professor is very nice. However, it needs complicated mathematics and calculation
<b>VUW Trimester 2/YEAR</b>					

**Course Registration/Enrolment**

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

You will be sent a list of course available to enroll in (online) before you go to Singapore. It will be fine and easy if you are enrolled in this way, but there are some courses you have to bid to enroll in. Bidding is open before the semester starts and everyone is given \$100 e-dollars to bid for the course they want. You will be guided on bidding for courses on orientation day.

**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 enrolled 3 courses online. 1 course I had to bid for but it was OK. You should try to enrolled most or all of the courses online because it is easy. Bidding is complicated and you have to use the given e-dollars wisely if you have to bid for more than 1 course

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

Most courses at SMU requires group work a lot so you should be prepared

### **Academic Experience**

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

You have to do a lot of group work, projects and meetings and you have to be open and committed to your group. It is not like the way you study at VUW, not much research or individual study. Meetings and group work may take away your weekends

It was firstly difficult to me to keep pace with this fast and active and demanding study environment but the professors and my group mates did help me much.

**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?**

There is a 3-hour seminar for every business courses at SMU (except language courses) so you may find it tiring to sit in a room for 3 hours (of course you have a 15-minute break) and there is no tutorial.

The workload is a little bit heavier than that of VUW and you have to spend much time doing your group work. If you travel much during weekends, this can be disappointing to you.

**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?**

You can take a maximum of 5 courses but I would not recommend that. VUW requires us to take 4 courses while on exchange so you should take 4. 5 courses will take all of your time and drive you nuts.

If you are doing Operation Management I suggest you take OPIM201 by Professor Helen Zou. At SMU, 1 course can be taught by many professors and each professor has his/her each way of teaching. Prof. Helen is very nice and dedicated and she makes her lectures very interesting.

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

Normally when you visit a new country you are eager to enjoy and explore new things and new difference, but you have to balance your study and enjoyment. Study environment at SMU is very stressful and competitive. If you want to have good record you have to work hard and sacrifice you time.

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

SMU's library and computer facilities are smaller than those of VUW but you will not use them so often. At level 2 of the library there is Lifestyle collection which consists of books and movies you can borrow.

**If you went to a country where English is not the native language, how did you prepare for this?**

Singaporeans speak English as their first language but their accent is hard to hear. Some people

can speak Chinese well but cannot speak English so well. You can learn some Singlish (Singapore English) if you want to

**Were there any intensive language courses provided by the host university?**

There are some language courses (Japanese, Mandarin, Korean, Spanish..). I took 1 Japanese course and it was very interesting.

**E: Accommodation**

**What form of accommodation did you stay in?**

I stay in hostel for exchange students recommended by the university (Commonwealth hostel)

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

Pros: 1 flat has 2 rooms and each room consists of 2 students so you can make friend easily. The flat is pretty well-furnished and the room is air-conditioned. Price is \$450 per month inclusive

Cons: the flat is pretty old and not so close to university (about 20mins using underground train)

**What accommodation would you recommend to future students?**

I think Commonwealth Hostel is fine

**How early can you move into accommodation?**

I moved in right after I arrived in Singapore

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

There is a kitchen with electronic stove but it is time-consuming to cook every day. I eat out most of the time, there are many good courts in residential area and the price for 1 meal is from \$4

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

Commonwealth Hostel is not in-campus. It is residential housing but 2 blocks are spared for exchange students. If you don't want to stay in Commonwealth you can find a condo and share with other people. However, an average condo costs around \$3000-4000 per month so you need to share with many people to get a cheap price. Finding people to share with is difficult when you first come to Singapore and have no acquaintances or friends.

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

I recommend you apply for Commonwealth Hostel.

**G: Personal & Cultural Connections**

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

The easiest way to make friends with local students is group work. I took 1 course that required us to do a community service. The group work was intensive and we had group meeting once or twice a week. It was a good chance to make friends and grow friendship.

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

Singapore is kind of a westernized country so there were not many differences except the fact that the pace of living in Singapore is much faster and more active than that of New Zealand

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

There were not many differences but English spoken by Singaporean is fast and difficult to hear.

**What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?**

I appreciate Singapore's diversity.

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

They treat me very good especially my group mates as we were doing a community service.

**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?**

I think there is enough assistance and support for students with disabilities to study but I did not see them at SMU. Students who are visible minorities will be fine as well because Singapore is very diverse. I am not sure about people from GLTB community studying at SMU.

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

I do not face issues regarding discrimination. However, exchange students can be preconceived as not committed to group work (because they travel a lot, because they just want to have fun around) and local student they study real hard, you may find that some local students do not like exchange students to be in their group. However, if you show your effort and commitment everything will be fine.

## **H: 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 are many sport clubs that you can join (dancing, fencing, artificial climbing..)

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

On weekends you can go to Marina Bay and watch light show. You can also go shopping at Bugis, it is cheap and it has many kinds of clothes to choose. If you have some friends, you can go picnic at East Coast Park or Sentosa. On holidays some students go to the nearby countries.

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

I worked off-campus as a server in Banquet department of a hotel. Wage was \$7.5/hour (minium wage in Singapore is \$6-6.5/hour, cheaper than New Zealand). It was casual work and it was hard and sweaty. If you do not really need money or you want to spend your free time on other activities, do not work so hard

**What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?**

## **5 things to take to your host country or region**

1	<b>Umbrella – it rains a lot in Singapore during rainy season</b>
2	<b>Power adapter</b>
3	<b>Flip-flop to use on rainy days</b>
4	
5	

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

1	<b>Make the most use of Lifestyle Collection in level 2 of the library</b>
2	<b>Studying in SMU can be competitive and local students study real hard but don't panic, stay focused during the seminars and do your work properly, you will be fine</b>
3	
4	
5	

### **Top 5 Things to do**

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

1	<b>Go to the Universal</b>
2	<b>Watch light show at Marina Bay</b>
3	<b>Go to the Henderson Waved Bridge</b>
4	<b>Eat Chilly Crab and Frog Porridge</b>
5	<b>Go to Night Safari</b>

### **I: Personal Experience**

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

Thanks to Vic OE I had a chance to study in Singapore - a nice country to visit and to live. Fast, active, modern, tropic – Singapore is an ideal place for young people like us to experience and to explore. Singaporean's food is diverse with cheap prices, I hanged out and ate out a lot. I made friends, not heaps of friend but they were all kind to me. I also liked the library, it was not big but it had Lifestyle collection from where I could borrow books and movies. Shopping in Singapore was also one of the things I enjoyed. Singapore has many beautiful places to visits and from Singapore you can easily go to other Asian countries. I really loved my exchange because it was an opportunity for me to have a broader view of the world.





