

Vic OE Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VIC OE AS A WORD DOCUMENT

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Information Systems
Exchange Institution	Texas A&M University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 2, 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	400
Accommodation	4500
Return Airfare	1700
Local Transportation	Free
Meals	2000
Visa	300
Health & Insurance	1300
Personal Spending	1500
Communications (phone, etc.)	350 (70 per month)
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Spontaneous trips to cities etc 150 for the weekend Clubs and Organizations you join have dues you have to pay to become a member

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

It was pretty much as I expected in terms of airfares and accommodation and all the necessary things you have to consider for when you arrive. But activities and trips are not really thought about until you arrive and meet people so save more money required for these experiences that usually arise really short notice.

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

Cash Passport and US bank account. The cash passport is really convenient in the US as most stores and universities will accept it. Also it is super easy to reload it with your New Zealand bank account. The only bad thing about it is they determine the exchange rate so you may lose money and not be able to maximize our strong dollar if we have one. My university also made all the international and exchange students open a US bank account. It was helpful for refunds from the university as they could not refund to an international bank account.

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

Save save save before you go. On campus shops also tend to mark up their products far too high for college students so try buy your food from off campus shops.

What was the average cost of a can of coke or coffee in your host country? \$1.50

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 is not a difficult process, but very time consuming due to their processing times.

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

It's all on the website and there are instructions and all the information you need to apply for one. Just make sure you give yourself plenty of time for it as the processing time can be very lengthy.

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?

Yes, mandatory health insurance. \$1000 per semester

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

Southern Cross, yes it is cheap and covers you for many events.

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					
Comm203	English	Elective	15	2	
Comm325	English	Elective	15	3	
Econ203	English	Econ140	15	3	
Mark347	English	Elective	15	2	
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

When doing the online application for Texas A&M they ask you to put in the courses you wish to do when you arrive. You list them in order of preference and list more than four to ensure if you can't be enrolled in one you can have another course of your choice. When you arrive they give you mandatory meetings with you course advisor so you are able to sort out if there are any other classes you want to take or drop and finalize what you will be taking.

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 was able to get all the courses I wanted to take.

Do 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?

They have less class time and a smaller and easier work load.

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?

The lectures are very similar to Victoria. But their smaller classes are a lot more interactive and have a lot of class participation and discussion. However, it's really good because you are able meet many different people.

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?

Four papers a semester just like here is a good work load. It's not extreme in any way and you have lots of time to experience other things around the university.

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

They use their textbooks a lot more than what we do here in Victoria. Many exams and assignments are taken from content from textbooks so it is super important you purchase them and read them. Lecture slides and tutorial work doesn't seem to hold the same importance as here.

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

Library is super handy. It is located nearly in the middle of the campus and is easy to get to. There is a smaller library next to the main one which is open 24 hours a day for anyone who may need it. There is also

a computing building with lots of computers and printers which is right next to the library so is also a great location and is also open 24/7. Finally, wifi is available in all campus buildings and dorms.

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?

A hall of residence. (Neeley Hall)

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

Pros. You meet heaps of people. There is always something going on. Really good location. Cons could be little privacy as you have a roommate.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Hall of residence. Or even a university apartment with other students.

How early can you move into accommodation?

Up to a week early.

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

There are different meal plans depending on how many meals you want a week. The dining halls are scattered throughout the campus and are easy to get to. They however had strict opening hours which was sometimes a little annoying, so make sure you have food in your dorm in case you don't make it to a dining hall in 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?

Apply as soon as applications open to give you a better chance of securing the particular hall you are after.

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 takes a little time. Americans are really intrigued by kiwis and were super friendly and welcoming so it comes as long as you go out and participate in hall gatherings or campus activities.

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

It is fairly easy. You learn as you go and observing.

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?

They were super welcoming, friendly and inviting.

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

Most of the people were curious about you as soon as they hear you have an accent. They are helpful and friendly and help where they can.

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?

They have organisations that promote minority groups and call for equality etc. They should be fine, and have many places or people they can see if they don't think they are being treated fairly.

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

I did not personally face any discrimination.

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?

They have available all different types of sports, clubs and organizations. I recommend you get involved in all that you can. Doesn't matter what the club may be.

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

Go to the major cities around such as Houston, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio. Also adjacent states.

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

There were opportunities for students to work on campus, however I didn't join.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Many are advertised during your courses and lectures, and there were many information evenings for if you wanted to find out more about them.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Passport, money, visa, documents, etc
2	Some cash of the country's currency
3	Phone/camera
4	Kiwiana goods to share with Americans
5	

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

1	Join as many clubs and organisations as possible
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2	Live on campus or at least with other students
3	Make the most of all the travelling you can do while overseas
4	Don't get caught up in the academics, yes they are important but so is experiencing the country
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	Go to New York, California, everywhere you can
2	Spend thanksgiving with an American family
3	Go to your schools American football games
4	Make the most of your weekends and nights are your exchange flies by fast
5	Join clubs and organizations and attend their events

H: Personal Experience

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

Going on an exchange is truly a life changing experience. You make many friends from all around the world and get to experience life in a different and exciting country. Texans are truly friendly and welcoming people and you could not have a better host university than Texas A&M. From classes to football games everything was exciting and fun filling. From my personal experience, when I first arrived I was overwhelmed and nervous. But everywhere you go, and everyone you meet wants to talk to you and get to know you. The rest of the semester just sky rocketed by and the amount of fun I had seemed to increase exponentially every minute I was there. The memories I made on this exchange are memories I will have with me for life.

