

Student Evaluation Form

A. Student Information

Degree(s) enrolled in at VUW	BCA / BA
Major(s)	Economics, Mathematics, Philosophy
Exchange Institution	University of California, Davis
VUW Trimester(s) and Year of Exchange	Tri 2 2011

B. Finances

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

Food & personal spending	\$3000
Accommodation	\$2800
Return Airfare	\$2500
Local Travel	\$1500
Books, misc. levies (e.g. student association)	\$100
Visa	\$500
Insurance	\$500
Other (please specify)	
	Total = 11000

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

I travelled around more than I thought I would so I spent more than that, also I changed my flights around so that made it more expensive. The Visa was also more expensive than I thought

because I had to fly up to Auckland. Textbooks and travel to/from campus were way cheaper than I thought though.

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

I opened a US bank account and periodically transferred money to it, I also had a travel credit card from Kiwibank.

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

It's a really good idea to set up a local bank account so you can write cheques easily.

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

A Visa is quite expensive if you don't live in Auckland, even if you do you have to pay quite a bit.

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

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

Coke - \$1, Coffee ~ \$3 (for filter coffee)

C. Visas & Insurance

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

It's expensive and takes ages so do it in advance

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

I used Southern Cross, but I never had to make any claims.

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
Development Economics	English	Econ 200-level	15	1	This course was pretty basic for someone that has done some economics and maths, but was quite different in content to courses available at Vic
American Econ. History	English	Econ 200-level	15	3	This course was a bit harder because I didn't have much background knowledge on American history, but overall it was really interesting and totally different from

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					anything I could do at home.
Early Medieval History	English	General Credit	15	1	This course was just an interest course that I took but it was very interesting, on a topic that I didn't know anything about. The assessment for it was really easy though.

How did you find the teachers at your exchange university?

Friendly and competent. The lecturer for Development Economics was engaged in fieldwork in rural Mexico and shared the data with us for use in assignments, which was interesting and a good taste of a real-world application of the skills we were learning in that class. All the teachers were very enthusiastic about teaching the courses and, despite the fact that they were on fairly specific topics at times, seemed to have really good knowledge of the area.

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

I found the courses overseas a lot easier than the ones at Victoria. However I think that this is because I had just finished my maths degree at Victoria and was finishing off economics overseas - I generally find economics easier than maths so this may have contributed.

How did your academic experiences differ from what you expected?

I expected it to be a bit harder, in particular the assessment style was really forgiving, with heaps of double chances, easy assignments worth heaps of marks, and so on.

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

Try out new courses you wouldn't be able to do at home, UC Davis has a huge course range and particularly courses with a local focus are interesting.

D. Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I sublet a room in a two-storey house about 10 minutes bike ride from campus.

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

Because I was subletting I had no flatmates my age, but I made friends with the neighbours and so this was no problem. Also subletting meant internet, power and water were included in my rent so I didn't have to worry about setting these things up, which was a plus.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Apartments are good ways to meet people and (at least in California) they often have pools and cool outdoor exercise facilities, they're a bit more expensive though. The accommodation I had suited me, I could go home to peace and quiet when I needed to study, and hang out with my neighbours when I wanted to.

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

Not really anything that I haven't said already.

F. Culture

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

People couldn't understand my accent.

How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences?

Learn to speak slowly.

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

No real problems. I played in the local rugby team when I was there, and despite the fact that they were all quite good themselves, being from New Zealand made me really popular, especially when

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we won the Rugby World Cup. Playing a sport is a good way to meet local people, otherwise you risk just meeting basically other exchange students. At least at UC Davis they have heaps of social sports teams anyone can get involved in - other students also acted in plays or joined the band so there really isn't much excuse for not getting involved.

G. Personal Response

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

I had a great time on my exchange to California. The people were welcoming and friendly, and there is heaps to do and see even just in Northern California.

Furthermore there's so many places in the US to see and internal flights are relatively cheap, so I was able to travel around a heap and felt that I really got the whole American experience.

I made lots of friends in my time there and I would recommend it to anyone.