

Student Evaluation Form

A. Student Information

Degree(s) enrolled in at VUW	BCA
Major(s)	Marketing and Political Science
Exchange Institution	University of California, Santa Cruz
VUW Trimester(s) and Year of Exchange	2011 Trimester 2

B. Finances

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

Food & personal spending	\$1,500
Accommodation	\$4,494 (hostel includes meal plan)
Return Airfare	\$1,400
Local Travel	\$150
Books, misc. levies (e.g. student association)	\$200
Visa	\$200 visa + \$200 SEVIS fee
Insurance	\$500 compulsory health + \$150 travel
Other (please specify)	
	Total = \$8,794

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

They were about what I expected. I didn't realize before I left how much cheaper flatting would have been to staying in the hostel.

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

I used Kiwibank's Loaded for Travel card because it let me lock in the exchange rate and make free credit card transactions.

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

Make sure you pay all remaining bills before leaving the US as you can't pay with credit card when you get back and Western Union transfer costs a lot.

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

I didn't realize the visa cost \$200 + an additional \$200 SEVIS fee

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

\$1.50

C. Visas & Insurance

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

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

The application website is really bad. Hang in there!

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

I used the UCSC compulsory health insurance plan and also One Cover for travel insurance. They were the cheapest.

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	VUW course equivalent (if applicable)	VUW points/credits value	Rating (1-5)	Comments
Orientalism	There is no equivalent at Vic. It actually critiques courses like the Asian Politics papers offered at Vic.	20 points	3.5	Small discussion based lectures which were more like a tutorial. I found the class to be very thought provoking but quite difficult.
Political Econ	There is no equivalent in Political Science at Vic but possibly in Intl Relations.	20 points	4	I found this course to be very well taught and it provided me with really great overview of political economy.
Modern Architecture	Arch courses are not offered under a BA at VIC.	20 points	3	I took this course entirely as an interest paper just to make up credits while overseas. I found it interesting but dropped it to focus on my major papers.

How did you find the teachers at your exchange university?

There was a greater emphasis on developing personal relationships with lecturers than at Vic.

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

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

There was much more assigned reading and assignments MUST be handed in on time.

How did your academic experiences differ from what you expected?

I was impressed with how much students contributed in lectures and tutorials.

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

Ask for permission codes from academic advisers. They will get you into any course (even if it's full).

D. Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I stayed in student housing on campus at the Merrill apartment complex.

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

As I was at UCSC for only 3 months, being in a hostel meant I could meet lots of people quickly. It also meant I had a place to go as soon as I arrived. However, it was much more expensive than flatting.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

I would recommend either staying in a hostel initially then moving to a flat or going to a flat straight away.

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

I wouldn't recommend living at Merrill or Crown. Porter is definitely the most fun/ nicest hostel.

F. Culture

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

I found Americans to be more extroverted than New Zealanders (though I wouldn't say this was hard).

How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences?

Your accent is your best asset, especially when meeting people or asking for help.

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

G. Personal Response

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

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

The UCSC is absolutely stunning and is entirely enclosed in a forest of redwoods. UCSC is seen as being very unique and progressive. It was great being in such a liberal environment where people cared about the same things as me. If you are looking for a sorority/ fraternity type American college UCSC definitely isn't the place. I would highly recommend going on a college led hike as California is beautiful and the university has great opportunities for free trips. I would also highly recommend visiting LA. The town of Santa Cruz is really great and has all the amenities you would expect in a much larger city. There are lots of beaches and a historic boardwalk (where the movie 'The Lost Boys' was set). There was so much awesome Mexican food and the dining halls are incredible.

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

If you want any more info or have questions, feel free to contact me and I will be happy to help you out! I'd recommend getting a 7-day meal plan if living on campus. It takes 4 hours to get to UCSC from San Francisco via a pretty complex public transport system (it's only \$15 in total though).

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