

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VICTORIA ABROAD AS A WORD DOCUMENT

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Science
Major(s)	Psychology
Exchange Institution	University of Surrey
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 1, 2016

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	\$3600
Return Airfare	\$3000
Local Transportation	\$1000
Meals	\$700
Visa	\$0
Health & Insurance	\$800
Personal Spending	\$2000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$80
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	I was commuting from London to Surrey, which was pretty expensive (about \$30 per day)

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

Everything always ends up costing more, especially if you're wanting to travel when you're over here. Just say everything you can.

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

I brought my NZ debit card (Westpac) with me as I was able to withdraw money from that account from the Barclays cash machine (which gives no fee for Westpac cards) and then go inside and deposit it directly into my UK bank account with Barclays.

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

London is expensive! Download the XE Currency app so that you can see how much things cost in NZ dollars. It can be easy to look at something and think £4.50 is cheap for a sandwich for example, but it's actually \$9 NZD. It can be really easy to let the numeration trip you up.

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

Coke maybe \$2.50, Coffee \$4-6

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?

The process was very difficult and confusing, and no one really wants to help you. I tried asking the university but they wouldn't give me a straight answer either. My Visa was free.

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

There are 2 Visas you can get for the one trimester. 1 is 6 months and is free for study. The only thing with this one is that you can't work. The other is 1 year and you can work but it costs (not sure how much). I recommend getting the year long Visa so you can work if you need to.

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?

I'm not sure if there was mandatory insurance, I got some anyway just in case. I got full cover and it cost me around \$700 for 7 months.

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

I used Allianz (through STA travel). I haven't made a claim yet so couldn't comment on how good it is!

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					
Morality and Emotions	English		15	4	Interesting, but pretty abstract
Work and Organisational Psychology	English		15	3	Great course, structured amazingly, and really interesting and applicable content
Thinking and Reasoning	English		15	2	Interesting and great tutors, but a bit slow

Applied Psychology and Public Policy	English		15	5	Interesting and the tutor was lovely, but as it was a new course (it was the first year) the structure and teaching of it was quite difficult to understand.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

There was someone we could email who looked after exchange students (Zoe Stevenson). Registration process was pretty long and required transcripts and documents, printing things off and scanning, just a lot of fiddling around really.

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?

It ended up that I got all the classes I'd applied for, although even after having to pester the exchange coordinator at the host uni I didn't find out what classes I was enrolled in until only a few days before the first day, which was a bit stressful.

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

Try and read up on some of the courses online, as the names can be a bit obscure.

Academic Experience

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

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?

Much less contact time. I was doing 3rd year papers, and we would have 1x 2hour lecture per week, and the rest was expected to be done in your own time. Big focus on self-directed learning. The lectures (at this

level anyway) were more like tutorials (my biggest class had probably 30 people in it, and my smallest class had 6) and had a big emphasis on class discussion. More workload in that you're expected to do much of your own wider reading, they set texts and readings for you but you're expected to also do reading outside of these, without them telling you to. Also exams have a much higher weighting, with only 1 or 2 internal assignments throughout the semester.

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?

4 courses was pretty standard I think.

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

Just have to make sure you keep up with the readings each week, don't leave it to the last minute. Also, because the classes are so small you should definitely make use of your lecturers office hours.

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

Seemed fine, would be shortage of computers at peak time which would be pretty normal.

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?

I flatted with my boyfriend.

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

Pros were that I was able to share a room which made things slightly cheaper.

Cons were that I lived in London which is much more expensive than Guildford, and also had to commute for an hour each way. I also didn't get as much of a chance to socialise with other students.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

If I did it again I would live on campus – seemed really fun through people I spoke to, and also much closer!

How early can you move into accommodation?

Not sure.

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

Flatting so I cooked.

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

It was easy because I already knew people over here so was able to move in with them.

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

Calculate how much it will cost for your entire time there. Pick something affordable and close!

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

I was lucky enough to be able to meet locals just through my classes.

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

It was fine, lots of Kiwis over here, and the people aren't that different.

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

People are nowhere near as friendly! Customer service is pretty poor compared to NZ, staff are often quite rude but over here it's just normal.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

SO much to do here, so many different people, types of food, things to do

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

Fine, everyone was nice enough.

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?

Fine I think, the university was very diverse.

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

No

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?

There were a lot of groups available. I would just recommend spending time with classmates outside of uni, catching up for coffees etc. The locals are often up with the play with things that are going on.

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

I recommend travelling as much as you can across Europe. You can get really cheap flights on Skyscanner, and everything's so easy to get to. Obviously do Big Ben, London Bridge, The Eye, The Shard etc.

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

Not sure as my Visa didn't allow me to work.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Not sure!

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Warm clothes if you're going in Trimester 1! It's cold until May pretty much
2	Camera
3	Spending money, as you're definitely going to want to buy stuff
4	Sports stuff – so you can join the gym and go for runs etc. You can do hikes around the place and when you go travelling it always comes in handy
5	International Student Card – you can get heaps of discounts on tourist attractions

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

1	Live on campus
2	Join lots of groups and do activities
3	Travel around England when you can, up north is lovely
4	Try to make your own lunch instead of buying it – it's super expensive especially when you're buying with NZD (as the pound is so much stronger)
5	Don't be afraid to ask questions, or too shy to talk to people – everyone's really friendly.

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	The Shard
2	You can go to Edinburgh for really cheap on the bus
3	Go on Skyscanner and click 'Everywhere' in the destination box. Then sort from cheapest price and you can get some amazing deals to random awesome destinations. Some flights only cost as much as Wellington to Christchurch to go to Europe!
4	Camden Markets
5	Go to a West End show – you can get relatively cheap tickets on lastminute.com

H: Personal Experience

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

The exchange has been one of the best things I've done, both for my own life experience and for my studies. Experiencing a different method of learning has been really good for keeping open minded. It's also been so amazing being able to just pop over to France or Denmark or Italy for the weekend! Have met some really amazing people and I'm so glad I did it.