

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	LL.B, B.Com
Major(s)	Finance, Economics
Exchange Institution	Bocconi University, Milan, Italy
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Tri 1, 2015

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	NA
Accommodation	\$4000
Return Airfare	\$2000
Local Transportation	\$2.50 for 90 minute ticket
Meals	\$10 for dinner
Visa	Student Visa is free
Health & Insurance	\$400
Personal Spending	\$2000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$15 for monthly plan
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	

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

They eventuated as expected.

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

Savings before departing NZ, did not work while abroad. I opened an Italian bank account, but also used NZ eftpos card when needed.

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

Save the funds you need before departing NZ, you will not likely be working while in Milan.

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

€1 for espresso

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 I needed a student visa to stay in Italy for more than 90 days. You apply through the Italian Embassy in Wellington. The process does not take long if you have all the documents and information ready that the Embassy requires. A student visa is free. Apply well in advance of your departure date.

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

Make sure you read what is required by the Italian Embassy for issuing a student visa, and have all the relevant documents and information ready when you apply.

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?

Not sure, I had comprehensive travel insurance before departing NZ. This is required in order to obtain a student visa.

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

Southern Cross Travel Insurance. They were well priced with low excess. I did not need make any claims.

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					
Financial Contracting	English		15	3	
Economics of Globalisation	English		15	2	
Banking Law	English		15	3	
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

Registration for courses opened before I departed NZ, and was completed online. There is a course add/drop period at Bocconi during which time you can change courses if you want. The International Student Desk can provide help with most questions about courses or university matters for international students.

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 in my first choice courses. I would be online at the time course registration opens up to give you the best chance at your first choices

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

Get approval for a range of courses from VUW to allow you to change courses at Bocconi without worrying about whether they will credit back or not.

Academic Experience

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

Academic experience was enjoyable with engaging lecturers. Workload was more focused towards final exams rather than weekly assignments. Workload was less time demanding than VUW but more stimulating. My courses exceeded expectations, and I really enjoyed the content and subject matter.

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?

Teaching was more relaxed than VUW, lecturers are very approachable. Discussion during class. Attendance is not necessary, can select non-attending for some courses. Workload was less than VUW but study still required to grasp subject matter.

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?

3 courses allows for more time to travel and experience Italy and Europe. 4 courses would be similar if you need to take more. Financial Contracting and Economics of Globalisation were brilliant courses.

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

Make sure you study and are on top of course content to do well academically.

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

Library is small given size of student body, hard to find a place to study during test/exam time. Computer labs are average. Internet access is good.

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?

I started learning basic Italian words and phrases before departing NZ. I also completed a one week Italian crash course before classes commenced. This was a very useful introduction to Italian language and culture.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I rented a shared room in an apartment near Bocconi.

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

Pros: more freedom/independence than at a university managed hall of residence. Living with Italians allowed me to practice language and meet other Italians, more so than other students at halls of residence. A proper kitchen (with oven fridge and stove), unlike at some halls of residence.

Cons: difficult to find rental accommodation in Milan when under time pressure. Not as easy as applying for and receiving offer from a hall of residence.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

If you want certainty and no fuss accommodation, a hall of residence is ideal. If you are happy to find accommodation on arrival in Milan, and want to live independently and with locals, go apartment hunting.

How early can you move into accommodation?

I moved in two days after viewing the apartment. Not sure about move in dates for halls of residence.

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

I cooked for myself and with flatmates. Learnt recipes from them. I also lived nearby heaps of good cheap restaurants and food outlets. Italian food is excellent.

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 not straightforward searching for private accommodation. Agenzia Uni is a useful website advertising current available rooms without the agency fees many private firms charge. Also there are facebook pages for available rooms in Milan. You will likely need an Italian tax code (Codice Fiscale) to obtain private rental accommodation, and will have to go to one of the tax offices (Agenzia delle Entrate) in Milan soon after your arrival with appropriate documents (passport and visa mainly, with copies). Tax code is usually issued on the spot.

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

Best to have it sorted before arriving to minimise any stress, but otherwise book at a hotel or hostel for a week or so when you arrive and search for permanent accommodation then. Do not pay money for deposits etc. before viewing any property, it is highly risky.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

Made friends with many international students. Also with local Italian students by living in an apartment with three Italians, and meeting many of their friends.

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

Culture at Bocconi was easy, no hassle to adjust. Had to adjust to things not working, running late etc as common place in Italy, and to not speaking English at restaurants, supermarkets etc.

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

There is far more bureaucracy and administration in Italy than New Zealand, so best to avoid as much as possible. Basic Italian language skills are useful for communicating in daily life, though English is relatively common in Milan.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

Friendliness of many Italians is great. Food and wine is excellent. Italian history and culture is rich.

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

Very well. Locals, staff, and students are extremely friendly and helpful to foreign visitors.

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?

Could not say with certainty.

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

Be aware of places out for your tourist dollar when travelling – know what is a reasonable price for various items. Be alert for pickpocketing wherever you travel in Europe.

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?

Erasmus student network puts on various events and activities for all students. Can get involved in whatever interests you. Travelling around and outside of Italy in spare time is great.

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

Travel around Milan, surrounding cities, Italy, and Europe.

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

Not sure. Could probably get a job at a café if needed, but restricts your ability to travel.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Students could volunteer at Milan Expo 2015. Internships are available if you search for them and will be staying in Italy after exchange.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Clothes for warm and cold weather There was both snow and a heatwave while I was in Milan.
2	Funds enough for a lot of weekend travel, accommodation (hostels etc), and eating out.
3	Basic Italian language skills. Italian phrasebook
4	
5	

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

1	Apply for visa, enroll for courses asap.
2	Know the assessment structure for your courses and when assessments are.
3	Don't hesitate to approach lecturers with questions or problems about course material.
4	Check your lecture schedule daily and weekly. Timetable changes regularly.
5	Get approval for a range of Bocconi courses from VUW to have freedom to add/drop courses once in Milan.

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Travel a lot in Italy and Europe.
2	Eat during aperitivo in Milan for cheap eats and drinks.
3	Hire a motorscooter and ride along the Amalfi Coast.
4	Try as many flavours of gelato as possible.
5	Don't walk through the middle entrance doors at Bocconi.

H: Personal Experience

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

Exchange to Bocconi University was an awesome experience. I learnt a lot through classes, experienced different teaching styles, and did heaps of travel throughout Italy and Europe. Absolutely no regrets. An exchange provides you many opportunities and challenges that help develop your skills and understanding of another culture.





