



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University Of Alberta
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1, 2018
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Psychology, Minor- Criminology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
PSYCO377	English	PSYC313	4
SOC321	English	GEND310	4
SOC327	English	GEND310	

Any comments about these papers?

PSYC377 Human Neuropsychology, was very similar to the content of PSYC211 however there was a lot of specifics that I struggled with. The professor was extremely knowledgeable and I learnt a lot with the different resources and expertise they had in Canada. The two sociology papers that I took were super interesting and I could easily apply my New Zealand criminology knowledge to the Canadian context.

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

The work load was not any more than I have experienced at Otago, although I had to learn quickly to adapt to the amount of testing they used throughout the semester. At Otago I would usually be doing written assignments, however I preferred having the need to familiarise yourself with the lecture content often rather than only for the final exam. The marking was very different than what I was used to as each teacher could decide their own grading scale, so some assignments I was getting similar percentages but that would result in different letter grades.

Accommodation

What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?

I stayed in the East Village Campus apartments. The actual living situation was very nice and the apartment was clean and warm with a fully equipped kitchen and lounge, I chose to go into a four bedroom so there was plenty of room. However, because there was only 3 other people that I could get to know I felt that it was very difficult to meet other people in the university community. After a few weeks I ended up spending most of my time with other friends in the university residence next door, International House as there was 17 people per floor and over 200 international students that all were very socially involved as well as academically successful. I personally regretted not choosing this residence as there was more of a social aspect and international community than the apartments.

Money matters

Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance

The accommodation I was in was quite expensive coming to around \$3200, but the place was extremely well heated, and in the -27 degree I appreciated that. Flights were reasonable because I booked them well in advance. The ETA for Canada is only around \$7. Weekly cost of food was reasonable with supermarkets within walking distance of the university, around \$50 a week. The university had a great health insurance of \$127 so I could use the doctors for free at any time during the semester. The travel insurance for Canada was expensive though because I have had surgery on my ankle so had a high excess.

What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)

Just used my New Zealand debit card because I was only there for 4 months and didn't think it was worth opening a Canadian account. The Canadian dollar was very similar to the New Zealand dollar so it was easy to keep track of my spending.

Visas & Insurance

Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?

The Canadian visa application was very easy as it is a simple online application and once you make the \$7 payment the visa is immediately emailed to you.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

There was a mandatory health insurance of \$127 that allowed me to have access to their health clinic for free appointments and any medications they prescribed for free.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

The recreational services were amazing at UofA, there were skiing trips both in the city and weekend trips to Banff. I had never skied before so I went on the beginner's night trip to the ski field, where the university booked the hill place so we could have the place to ourselves. There were also many sports teams to join with high ranked Basketball and Ice hockey teams. Unfortunately, I can't ice skate that well so I opted to play for the Ball Hockey team, which is an indoor version. I also signed up for kickboxing classes, and their weekly yoga classes. There were so many options and I definitely recommend joining an intermural team, and the fitness classes. It was a great way to meet new people and get out and do something other than study.

What was the university/ city like?

The university was an amazing facility for both education and social events with brand new engineering and science buildings. There was a mall within the university that sold many food options as well as home supplies and study essentials so it helped many of the students who were living on campus gain access to them with ease. Edmonton itself was a very large city, with minimal attractions. However, there is the West Edmonton Mall which is the 2nd largest mall in the northern hemisphere, with an indoor beach and amusement park inside.

Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?

Definitely go skiing at Snow Valley, there are hills for all levels of expertise and for someone who had never done it before I really enjoyed it. Also, check out the West Edmonton Mall as it's the best place for shopping and great restaurants as well as a massive arcade and movie theatre. Whyte Ave is one of the main streets and there are nice bars and restaurants. Every Wednesday it is wing Wednesday over there so I recommend going out with friends and have a maple beer and \$5 wings, while watching an ice hockey game on the big screen.

Any tips for future students?

Embrace the Canadian culture, try poutine and anything maple flavoured! Make sure you go and see a professional Ice Hockey game. Learn how to balance both study and social activities as there are many opportunities with the international community that should be taken.

Overall Experience

Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!

My time in Canada was rocky to begin with, as I found it hard without being in the larger residential hall, to make friends. However, once I began to enjoy my studies and meeting other international students I began joining in on more activities and now have lifelong friendships from all over the world. My studies were super interesting learning a different perspective to psychology and criminology in the Canadian context, and once I got my head around the lecturers marking style I was doing really well with my grades. I skied for the first time, went ice skating and saw my first professional Ice hockey game. Also, I went for a night walk through the snow at Elk Island just a short drive from the city where we roasted marshmallows and stargazes with Elk roaming around us. Edmonton had its charm with the chilly temperatures of -27 and my first time experiencing snow, although it did lose its novelty after many months of it. Because I spent a lot of my time at International house, I was able to take part in their many culture nights such as German and Japanese. I am extremely glad that I decided to do this exchange as it has reassured me in my excitement for the field I am studying and I have a new Canadian family that I hope to see again sometime.

