



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Edinburgh
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2022
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Finance and Economics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Economics of Inequality	English	300 level
Firms, Competition and Markets	English	300 level
Economics of Cities and Regions	English	300 level

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points

Any comments about these papers?

I found that all three papers were relatively engaging. However, in terms of workload and difficulty, Firms, Competition and Markets required more time and engagement as well as a greater level of understanding to do well. If you are looking to travel throughout your exchange, I wouldn't recommend this paper as it has regular assessments. However, the content was still interesting.

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

The whole academic experience was relatively similar to that at Otago. Lectures were delivered both in person and online (useful if you are wanting to travel), and assessment style was very similar.

Accommodation

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

I stayed at Salisbury Court (student accommodation). This accommodation had a lot of positives – it was warm, clean and you get an ensuite. It is also in a good location. While it has large flat sizes (I was in a flat of 10), you can expect to be in a flat of first years rather than other exchange students. It is also a bit more expensive than some of the other accommodation, but this was worth it in my opinion.

I have really enjoyed this hall, however, I do wish it had been a bit more social. If you are willing to make an effort to get to know other exchange students outside of your hall, this will be fine for you. However, if you want your social scene to be more accessible (at the same hall), I would recommend looking into Pollock Halls.

Money matters

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

Accommodation = 6k (can get it for as cheap as 4k though)

Insurance = 1k (but I did a lot of other travelling as well)

Flights = unsure as I stopped at places on the way to and from Edinburgh

Food = can be as cheap as \$50 a week if you're very disciplined

If you are only coming over for the exchange (ie not doing any other travel), you can probably do it on 10k (maybe less when you account for study link). However, if you do travel before, after or during the exchange, I would expect to budget about \$100 per day of travel (and this is on the cheap side). Expect travel to be more expensive than you predicted.

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

I used a Wise card which I know a lot of other exchange students used as well. It has a physical card as well as an online app and Apple Pay. You can load NZD onto your Wise card on the app and then transfer it to other currencies at a relatively low price (about \$5 to transfer \$1,000 NZD to Pounds). I would recommend but I have also heard others have used Revolut as well.

Visas & Insurance

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

No visa required. If you are only here for one semester you don't even need documentation. You do have to do international check in at the uni but it is very straight forward and they will send you info about this.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

I am unsure, but Otago requires it anyway.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

I think there were some events organised in the first week but I struggle to remember. There is an organisation called ESN that organises trips around Scotland for exchange students. I did one to the Isle of Skye and it is a great way to get to know people. The university also created a Facebook group for all exchange students so you can find people with similar interests / in the same hall as you and can just message them (it's not weird and they will appreciate it as well).

I would really recommend putting in an effort to meet people in that first week (try and be a yes man / woman), as it will make you feel comfortable much faster. I became close with two other guys from Otago and had a lot to do with them, but it is great to get to know people from different cultures and spend time with them also.

What was the university/ city like?

The university is very central, so it usually isn't more than a 20 min walk wherever you end up staying. It has a really nice old college, which houses the law library (super nice library for studying). However, there are also more modern buildings on the campus.

The city is really awesome – for me it was the perfect size as it was small enough to get around, but big enough that there was always something to do. It is also very easy to get into the outdoors, as it has Hollyrood park (with Arthur's seat) very close by (walking distance). It also has a great pub scene, and it was a lot of fun being in Edinburgh for the world cup. The weather wasn't one of the highlights but it isn't hugely different from Dunedin (maybe a bit more temperamental and wetter).

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

There is a lot you can do so I will just put a few down. For places to visit:

- Calton Hill, Arthur's seat, Edinburgh Castle, Dean's Village

For good pubs:

- Pear Tree is the best place for watching sport
- Dirty Dicks has the best vibe
- Southsider is cheap and cheerful

Try and do a couple of trips around Scotland as well if you can. I really liked St Andrews which is very easy to get to from Edinburgh, but I also went to Glasgow, Inverness and the Isle of Skye, which all have their own charms.

Any tips for future students?

While you want to make the most of it, don't put pressure on yourself to always be doing something. While travel is an amazing experience, you're not going to feel amazing 100% of the time. Try and be proactive, and say yes to things, but also don't feel pressure to do things if you feel like some down time. It is a long time and at some point it is nice to get into a routine as well.

I would also try not to worry about money too much. I spent a lot of money on this trip, but was able to travel to some amazing places, and have really cool experiences as a result of this. If you are able to borrow money from parents or some other family members, just do it and have a good time. Don't worry about paying it back in the future because it will be so worth it.

Overall Experience

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

Make the most of your exchange experience, but also try and make the most of the travel experience. Don't be afraid to do some solo travel as it is a great growth experience. Figure out what you enjoy about travelling and then go and do that stuff! For me, I love hiking, so I spent 10 days doing that in France, and then also went to Morocco for a couple of weeks to do surfing and hiking (would recommend Morocco as super cheap and flights are easy).