



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of British Columbia
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 2018
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Science
Major(s)	Information Science

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
EOSC111	English	Unspecified	4.5
EOSC114	English	Unspecified	13.5
CPSC210	English	INFO202	18
CPSC221	English	COSC242	18
STAT302	English	STAT362	18

Any comments about these papers?

EOSC111 and EOSC114 were papers taken to fill the quota, chosen because their area of knowledge (Earth and Ocean Science) was interesting to myself, but not related to my degree.

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

The CPSC papers were reliant a lot more on self-teaching, lab and lecture material was focussed on pre-readings rather than necessarily building upon previous lectures. There were a lot more questions asked during the lectures for STAT302, and that made for a class that felt more inclusive

Accommodation

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

Fairview Crescent, housing operated by the university. I enjoyed my time at Fairview, I had 3 other roommates who were pleasant and easy to get on with. The "houses" were all part of the same building so it was easy to get to know others in the area. Cons of the accommodation were that you were expected to bring your own bedding, and eating and cooking utensils which I was unaware of.

Money matters

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

The ETA costs 7CAD to apply for, and was straightforward applying for. The mandatory health insurance iMED and the UPass (unlimited public transport for the term) cost 425.55CAD for 1 term's worth (September-December), while housing cost 3530CAD for the same period. Over the 4 months

I spent 1455.19CAD on food between August 19th and December 21st, and ended up paying ~2100NZD for flights. Insurance at home I went for AA's Comprehensive Travel Insurance – didn't have to use it thankfully – which was about 800NZD.

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

I set up a student bank account with CIBC as they had a promotion giving 60CAD to students who signed up. This worked well, as I didn't have to pay fees on a student account, and I used TransferWise to transfer money to and from NZD and CAD.

Visas & Insurance

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

No, I had to apply for an ETA, which was very easy to do, as well as an ESTA for when I visited the USA. I also had to apply for an i-94 to travel through the US via a land border (AMTRAK), it's recommended to get this at the border rather than online.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, iMED is required for 1 semester exchange students

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Fairview Crescent had a range of activities each week hosted in their Common Space, while the Exchange Student Club hosted club nights and other various outings, including hikes, a weekend camp, and a barbecue on Wreck Beach. There were also intramural sports which I would highly recommend joining, you get to meet new people and be active doing it, and my team even won our division and got a free Intramural Champions t-shirt – a great souvenir!

What was the university/ city like?

UBC was much, much larger than Otago, and Vancouver itself was still connected to the other "cities" of West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Burnaby, and a few others. The people in Canada are very friendly, and there wasn't much if any culture shock besides the "big city" vibe. There was a supermarket on campus a 10-15 minute walk from accommodation which I utilised every week, and the public transport was reliable if sometimes crowded, Sky Trains were the best way to travel and could take you most anywhere in Vancouver and Burnaby.

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

I would highly recommend (for S2 students) to sign up with the Exchange Students Club and go on their weekend camp, a great way to meet like-minded people from all over the world and explore the great Canadian outdoors while you're at it! Grouse Mountain or the nearby Cypress Mountain have some amazing views of the city on a clear day, but be warned that the Grouse Mountain gondola costs 15CAD to get back down after the trek up the Grouse Grind.

Any tips for future students?

Plan your souvenirs/gifts in advance, it may seem early but when your exchange is over and you're back home wishing you'd got more Canadian maple syrup (a great gift for the friends and fam) you'll kick yourself for not getting more. Sign up for evo or CarShare, and utilise them to the fullest during

those summer months, go on hikes, see the wilderness around Vancouver before the roads get icy and the clouds dark and grey.

Overall Experience

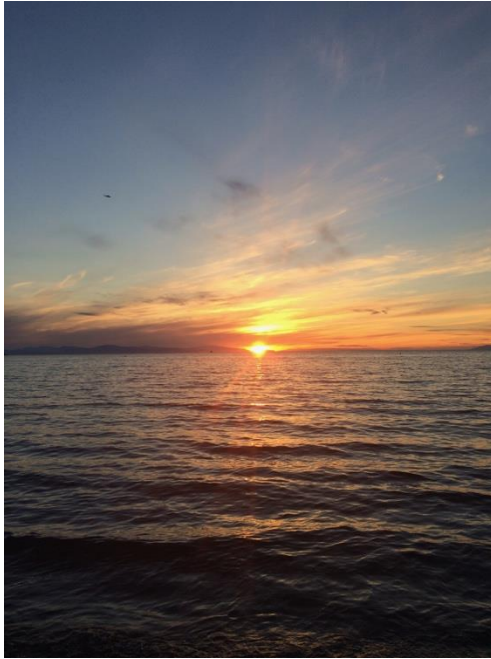
Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!

Going on exchange has undoubtedly been the highlight of my university studies so far, being able to explore the world without having the stress of a job tying you down gives you freedom to go out and enjoy the surroundings. One of my best mates from Otago was also on exchange at UBC during my time there, we bought a van (not recommended, it was a hassle selling it after) and travelled around the Rockies before the semester started. Breath taking views mixed with getting lost somewhere between Kelowna and Revelstoke all added to the adventure (bring a hardcopy map!), and we finished our journey off by travelling down the coast to San Francisco by AMTRAK and Greyhound, the latter wasn't the best method and we'd recommend finding an AMTRAK if you do travel down the west coast. Despite my best efforts to take advantage of the pass-fail system for my GPA, I ended up putting a lot more work into my studies than expected and that made for a comfortable week leading into finals as my assignments and midterm grades were high enough to essentially guarantee a pass. This allowed me to make the most of the learning opportunities on offer at a different institution while also having time to explore the Vancouver area on weekends.

Exchange was an amazing experience, it taught me independence, got me out of my comfort zone, and was a great way to see the world. I would highly recommend it to anyone looking for adventure, a different style of learning or for a new look on life. You won't regret it.



Sunset over Commercial Drive, Vancouver



Sunset at Wreck Beach, Vancouver



Canada vs Switzerland during the 2019 IIHF World Juniors at Rogers Arena, Vancouver



Consider a ferry (17.80CAD) over to Vancouver Island to visit Victoria



Sunset over UBC from the Stanley Park seawall, Vancouver