



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	University of Manchester
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 2, 2025
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Arts
<b>Major(s)</b>	Geography and Politics

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
MGDI20061: Sustainable Global Development	English	GEOG200
HCRI30081: Illicit Economies, Conflict and Development	English	GEOG300
POLI32071: Between War and Peace	English	POLS300

Total Otago credits gained:  54 points  72 points  108 points  \_\_\_\_\_

Any comments about these papers?

These were very cool papers, and I enjoyed taking them, especially as none of these papers (or papers similar) were on offer at Otago. I recommend taking papers that you wouldn't have the opportunity to take otherwise, because then you gain so much more from them!

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

I wouldn't say that the workload was significantly different to Otago. However, I noticed a few differences:

- It is mandatory to attend lectures, tutorials and workshops. There is an attendance policy here and you have to sign in (through a given code) at the start of lectures. Don't stress though as you only get warnings if it is very low.
- I was lucky with my degree/ paper choice as I didn't have a huge workload. I took three, 20 credit papers. I thought this would mean that my workload per paper was larger to those who took six, 10 credit papers. However, this was not the case, as their workload per paper was the same.
- Readings are a bigger part of the curriculum here, especially in the sense that readings are a part of tutorial discussions and weekly assignments, so you must do them to be able to meaningfully participate in these things. Again though, this is rather specific to my degree.
- Assignments, such as essays, are weighted a lot more here than they are at home. My essays are around 60-70%; however, have meant that I only have one paper with an exam.
- Due to the immense amount of paper options, classes are much smaller sized than at home. My classes were around 20-30 people. This does mean that there are more in-class discussions during the lecture.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed at Whitworth Park University Accommodation. This was one of the City Campus options. It is a large complex, where there are around 10 housing complexes. Each housing complexes have around 24 flats, and each flat can have up to 8 people living in them.

It is self-catered, but it's located beside a Sainsbury's and Morrisons, and a 5-minute walk from a Lidl, Tesco's and Poundland.

Not only was this the cheapest option but it was also extremely close to the University – compared to Fallowfield. It is similar to some of the less nice halls at Otago. However, you have your own room and share a common room (like a dining room), kitchen and bathroom. It is very liveable, but not as nice as other accommodations – hence the price.

I was a bit nervous about how easy it would be to make friends and socialise, but I had friends in my accommodation and had friends in Fallowfield and Victoria Park Campuses.

At Manchester, straight after you are offered a spot in an accommodation, you pay a deposit – for me this was £400. The entire cost of my accommodation for the semester was £2,282 (\$5,300 ish). So, when I paid my lump sum during the semester I only paid £1,882 due to £400 already being paid through the deposit. Meant I was paying around NZD \$265 ish a week (depending on the conversion).

## Money matters

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

**Accommodation:** £2,282.00

**Insurance:** \$775.00

**Flights:** \$1,400.00 (DND – LDN) and \$2,400.00 (LDN – DND)

**Food:** £25.00 ish a week in food at supermarket (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks)

\*\*\* Going out to eat/ going to cafes is quite expensive in the UK compared to NZ. You are spending around \$10 for a small flat white here.

*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 – international card**. Very much recommend. Super easy to use and allows you to get the cheapest conversion.

## Visas & Insurance

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

I had to get a UK **ETA** – 6 months visitor's visa (this has only been introduced this year). Only cost me around \$35 though and lasts for 2 years. Process is very simple, but you need it to get into the UK.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

I am not aware of Manchester having mandatory insurance. However, I had to get insurance anyway to go on exchange. I did the Student Safe Outbound Insurance. This was comprehensive medical and travel insurance and meant I was also ensured on my 6 weeks of travel.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

I recommend joining clubs and taking part in university events – especially the International Society ones. There are so many clubs to join compared to Otago, so take advantage of this. Your halls also host a lot of evening and weekend events – for example, my accommodation has had karaoke nights, quiz nights and frequently plays the Premier League matches.

In the welcome week, you need to take part in International Society events because they help you meet people. All my close friends I met at the first International Society meeting! They also do some awesome day/ weekend trips away during the semester that are reasonably priced.

*What was the university/ city like?*

- Manchester doesn't have super popular touristy places/ attractions, but it is a great place to live as there are awesome cafes, restaurants, bars, pubs and shops. It is very easy to build a life there.
- It is also a very young city and so the night culture is awesome. There are so many artists who come to Manchester – DJs like Kettama, and icons like Lady Gaga
- Very vibrant and diverse
- Like a lot of places in the UK, gets dark at 4pm in the winter – so be prepared for this

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

- Northern Quarter; filled with amazing bars, restaurants and unique and independent shops. So quirky and cool.
- Recommend going to a football game. You are in the UK and so need to experience a match! I went to Manchester United versus West Ham and only paid \$100 for a ticket.
- Curry Mile near the University has some delicious options for Middle Eastern, Asian and African cuisines.
- Go to Gay Village, so much fun
- International Society Day Trips around UK; e.g. Windemere
- Deansgate; cool places to eat, cool atmosphere at night and near the canals
- Makers Market on a Sunday

*Any tips for future students?*

If you are wanting to do lots of travel with your exchange, I highly recommend doing it at the start or end of your exchange. Your weeks once University is underway, get filled up super quickly, and you don't want to miss out on things happening in your city. I did 6 weeks travel before my semester, and then only did small trips away (e.g. Dublin and Edinburgh) on weekends or the mid-semester break. I recommend doing this, as I felt like I got the best of both worlds.

## Overall Experience

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

If you are tossing up whether to go on exchange, let this be your sign to do it. It has truly changed my life. I have been challenged and pushed, but I have also had the most incredible experiences and met the most amazing people from across the globe.

Use the exchange programme to get the best of both worlds; travel and study.

