



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of the West of England (UWE)
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2 2022
Otago degree(s)	Master of Planning (MPlan)
Major(s)	

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Plan making	English	
Transport Planning and Placemaking	English	
Transport Modelling and Scenario Planning	English	

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points 72 points 108 points 40

Any comments about these papers?

The Plan making course was a good introduction to the planning system in the UK. There were a diverse mix of attendees (different ages, levels of experience, part timer and full time, different nationalities).

Both transport papers were very structured and the I found them to be excellently delivered. There were a lot of international students in this class, probably 80%.

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

Fairly similar. Deadlines are more firm, with consequences for not making them. Some tutors were very specific with what they wanted from the assignments that they set, but in general this was clearly explained.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Cardiff, and commuted to Bristol. UWE campus is close to a railway station. I chose to stay in Cardiff because I already had a job that I was going to start at the end of my exchange and there was no point started an extended rental in Bristol

Money matters

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

I did not track this.

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

I have a bank account in the UK. I would suggest using a travel card designed for international spending, like Monzo

Visas & Insurance

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

No.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Unsure.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

As I was commuting to the campus, it was difficult to get involved with extra-curricular activities.

What was the university/ city like?

The university is a relatively modern campus on the outskirts of Bristol. It is quite easy to get to by bus which runs on a rapid route from the city centre (M1 bus I think). However, having attended and seen other campuses in the UK, I would say it doesn't have that classic feel of a university with some age/more centrally located. It kind of feels more like a business park.

The city of Bristol is brilliant for young people. There is a huge amount going on and there is loads to get involved with. Plenty of nightlife, bars, arts scene, sports etc. Also well located to visit other nearby places in the UK like Bath, Oxford, Cardiff, Devon, Cotswolds etc. The only downside it is very expensive to live and difficult to find accommodation.

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

Not specifically.

Any tips for future students?

Look for your accommodation early. Although staying on or near campus will allow you to access more of the activities on campus that might happen in the evening, I think it is better to live in Bristol and have direct access to all of the city and commute into the campus by bus, of which there is a frequent service.

Overall Experience

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

I would highly recommend taking the opportunity of doing a semester abroad as part of the Otago Global Student Exchange Programme. This is an ideal way to explore a different country, culture and lifestyle whilst continuing to work towards your degree. As a mature student and a dual national, I wanted to get educated in two countries where I am entitled to work so that my options were open for job opportunities in the future. I can now evidence this on my CV and would be able to talk about my experience in an interview. Although this was the driver for my exchange, taking a semester abroad offers you so much more than potential career opportunities. It's a window of time where you can explore who you are and who you want to become. It's a chance to look outside your own current reality and experience another so that you can grow into a global citizen. You will carry this experience with you for the rest of your life. Go make it happen!