



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Pontificia Universidad Católica – Santiago, Chile
Semester & Year of Exchange	Feb-June 2019
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Spanish and Psychology

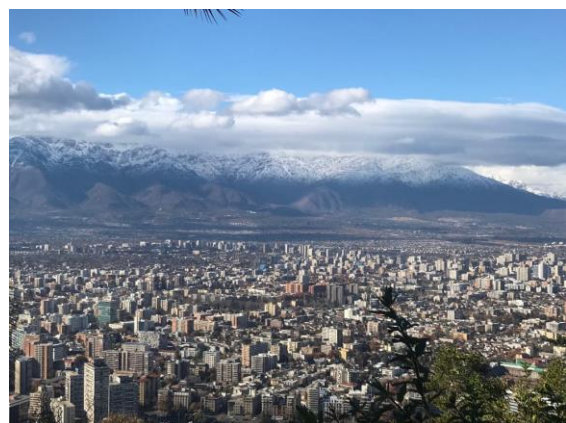
Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
LET090P-1 – Curso de Espanol Intensivo Nivel Intermedio	Spanish	SPAN331	18
LET086P-1 – Curso de Espanol Semestral Nivel Avanzado	Spanish	SPAN332	18
IHI2370-2 – Seminario de Cultura Chilena	Spanish	SPAN Culture Class	18
ARO102F-1 – Fotografía Análoga	Spanish	SPAN Culture Class	18

Any comments about these papers?

The Spanish classes were definitely vital to my communication the whole time I was there. Chile is amazing but also less people tend to speak English. The classes helped bring me up to the next level in Spanish as well. Of course you can become conversational quite easily, but the grammar courses helped a lot. I had great teachers both time, and small classes or 6 and 8 which I loved.



Santiago, Chile

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

All of my classes were much smaller, and there is limited amount of space in each class. It is much more of a personal basis style of teaching. I knew all my lecturers and such, this was a very nice change. Workload is similar, but of course depending on what courses you take.

Accommodation

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

I lived with a Chilean family for my 5 months in Chile. I absolutely loved it. It was located perfectly in the centre of the city. This was a huge thing for me. Being on the outskirts of the city I would not recommend. Makes everything harder and more of an effort and more time commuting. Also living with this family helped my Spanish a ton! They did not speak any English, so at home I was always practicing my Spanish. They also had kids around my age which was fun, spent a lot of time with them. Everyone was relaxed. I cooked for myself which I loved as well. For me, this was perfect and an ideal living situation. But some people would prefer living in student houses around the city for more of a social atmosphere, which I can completely see the appeal to that as well.

Money matters

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

I would say the cost of living here is a bit cheaper than New Zealand as whole. But I was also living in the city, so that of course increased prices, especially of rent.

Rent – about \$600nzd a month

Food – about \$35nzd a week

Visa – about \$200nzd

Flights – of course depends how much you travel, and if you find cheap flights etc. My flights to and from NZ to Chile were about \$1200nzd round trip. Then flying within Chile is very affordable, and within South America too.

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

Definitely would recommend always carrying cash here with you. Many big stores and such in the city take credit or debit card. But when traveling in other areas of the country or shopping at little markets, etc, cash is necessary. I would also recommend getting a credit card with no foreign transaction fees, because this can add up very quickly.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes I had to apply for a student visa. Was quite straight forward to get. Once you are already accepted by the university in Chile, there should not be a reason you don't get the visa. It does take some time, so make sure you give yourself enough time to do it before arriving.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes. They required full coverage of all medical things while you are here. You can choose whatever you want, you just have to send them a photo or something showing you have insurance if something were to happen.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The university provides tons of extra-curricular activities, similar things to Otago. I was involved in some volunteering; we would go and spend time with patients who are living in a psychiatric hospital. It was truly an amazing experience to work and learn with these kinds of people. And I was volunteering with other Chilean students which was great as well. This definitely enriched my experience in Chile. They also have these “tallers” (workshops) for students of all sorts. You pay a very reasonable fee at the beginning and you have this class for the rest of the semester. It’s not a class for your transcript or anything, just for fun. They have dance classes, like salsa dancing, they have art classes, sports classes, many options. I did a CrossFit class that was one hour twice a week, right on campus. I loved it!

What was the university/ city like?

University was great! It is considered the best university in all of South America which is pretty incredible. The students and professors reflect this. It is high quality education.

Santiago – the city I miss the most. To be honest, at first, I did not love it. It took a few weeks, but once I made some friends and found my groove and my favourite bars and cafes, I really learned to love it. There is so much to do, endless options of museum exhibits, events, music festivals, and so much more. There are many options of hiking around this city as well that you can just take a bus to for a day hike, because the city is between two mountain ranges. Every area/little neighbourhood of the city has a different vibe, so you can find exactly what you like! And the metro is great, gets you just about everywhere you need to go.

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

Favourite neighbourhood – Barrio Italia, very cute, great cafes and bars.

Things to do – go to the museums, they are really well done and very interesting. I am not a huge museum person, but I really enjoyed them here. Art museums, history museums, etc. Hike San Cristobal on a clear day, beautiful views of the city and mountains. Take day trips to nearby towns.

Any tips for future students?

DO IT. Study abroad, all the preparation before going will definitely be worth it all. And travel! Chile is so amazing. There is a huge diversity in nature and landscapes all in one country and I was lucky enough to see almost all of it. Absolutely incredible, the Atacama Desert was unlike anything I’d ever seen before. Torres del Paine in Patagonia was incredible as well, definitely make the trip to the south to see it or do a trek because it is definitely worth it! Make sure not to do it in the winter though, park closes. And just say yes to things! Go out of your comfort zone, make new friends, try new things!

Overall Experience

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

Overall, I would never change my experience living in Santiago, Chile. Chile has a very interesting and intriguing culture that varies a ton depending on where you are, and I loved learning about this. The people are very nice and welcoming and always interested in why I chose to come to Chile and



curious about foreigners. My host family helped me love my time here as well. It was really nice to be able to hang out with them in the evenings and have family lunches with them every Sunday. I think learning and improving my Spanish was one of my favourite aspects about living in Chile. By the end, I didn't even have to think about what I was saying, it just came out in Spanish. Of course not perfect Spanish, but could basically say everything I wanted to. And I could listen to Spanish and understand almost all of it without having to translate it in my head to English. I learned so much about myself, about people, and about the world we live in from completely immersing myself in a new society. It is a risk to do it, but I never regretted it for a second. My time and memories of Chile will be cherished forever! And I now have friends and a family here to come back and visit for the rest of my life.



Exchange Profile

Sally Davis – PUC Santiago, Chile – Semester 1, 2019

First of all, I am so glad I took the risk and decided to do a semester abroad during my degree at Otago. I would change it for the world! It is an amazing way to fully immerse yourself in a new culture and new part of the world, no matter where it may be. Chile was perfect for me. I am double majoring in Spanish and psychology, so Chile being a Spanish speaking country, was the perfect place for me to go to really learn Spanish while experiencing more of the world! I learned so much about South American and the culture here, helping me understand and learn new things about the world. I tried so many new foods and had new experiences and saw landscapes I have never seen before. My university in Chile was a top notch university, considered the best in all of South America, and I could definitely see why. The professors and the students showed dedication to the high quality education provided at my university. There were endless options of extra-curricular activities: such as sports, dance, art, volunteering, etc. All of these aspects of my exchange helped show me the amazing things this world has to offer to us. I became a more open minded person, and became more humbled. I came back very grateful for what I have, but will have a never ending desire to keep traveling and return to visit my home in Santiago.

