



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Manchester
Semester & Year of Exchange	Winter Semester 2019/20
Otago degree(s)	BA, BTheol
Major(s)	Psychology, Biblical Studies

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Holocaust Theology	English	BIBS300	18
Woman and Gender in the Biblical World	English	BIBS300	18
Post-Intermediate German	English/German	GERM300	18

Any comments about these papers?

The theology papers I completed were excellent. Neither of these papers are offered at Otago, which made it a great opportunity to learn on these topics. The theology department has some great papers on offer.

The German paper was okay. Three hours per week on one evening was quite tiring but they have it then so that non-students can attend as well. The language department offers heaps of languages which you can complete for credit or not but for a fee – a great opportunity to pick up a language if you've ever wanted to.

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

I was completing my final 300 level papers so I was quite busy. Both my theology papers had a formative essay, which was compulsory for one paper but optional for the other. This was a good opportunity to see how the lecturer marked, so very worthwhile doing. The Holocaust paper had an exam and one formative essay. The Woman in the Bible paper has an oral presentation, an essay to do with this presentation and then a final research essay – no exam. Both theology courses had one two-hour lecture and a tutorial, which was led by the lecturer.

Accommodation

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

I lived in Oak House on the Fallowfield complex. This was an awesome place. It is the cheapest accommodation, self-catered and is a lot of fun. Each block has four flats, each with 8 rooms (four male/4 female). Each flat has two bathrooms and a large kitchen/dining room area. Most of my flatmates were 18 or 19, but most had done a gap-year so were a lot more mature than NZ first year students. Fallowfield is a 30 min walk, 30 min bus ride or 15 min bike ride from the main campus. If it's summers, definitely get a bike or just walk it, the busses are slow and annoying, but if you're lazy it's fine.

Money matters

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

Supermarkets are generally cheaper in the UK, the cheapest being Lidl which is near uni. Food in café's or on campus is really expensive and coffee especially is a rip off, but coffee in the UK is generally more expensive than in NZ.

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

I got a Monzo account. All done online through the app - really easy to get (48hours). Just download the app, fill in your details, and then you take a video of you holding up your Passport. I used OrbitRemit to transfer from my NZ account, it has a blanket \$4 fee to transfer as little or as much as you want.

Visas & Insurance

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

Visa was free as I have a NZ passport and was only in the UK for 6 months. If you're there for a year you need another visa and have to pay. I just took my acceptance letter to the boarder (I travelled by bus from Paris to London) and the man stamped my visa without asking me for my address, finances etc.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

I don't know.

They have the NHS which has a reciprocal agreement with NZ, so Dr's visits are free and the emergency department will treat you without cost.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The international society puts on many day trips for 20-40 Pounds. I thought this was too expensive but if you have limited time, these are great. Do some hiking in the Peak District – really easy to get there by train and cheap, you just get a 6 Pound off-peak return ticket. Warehouse Project is a concert venue in an old warehouse – a great time.

What was the university/ city like?

The university is really cool. You can get stuck in the Uni bubble, a bit like Otago, so get out and about. Explore the Northern Quarter, go out to the stadium, have a look around Chorlton.

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

Stonehenge. The Cotswold's. Edinburgh. Liverpool. London of course. Utrecht in the Netherlands. Lyon and Paris in France. You don't have to go far from Manchester to get a whole new experience/ different scenery.

The Norther Quarter is great for a pint or few. You have to experience Wetherspoons – a terrible pub which offers cheap drinks and food, with app ordering. The staff are not paid enough to care, its quintessentially British.

Squirrel's is a brilliant bar down at Fallowfield's. If you only go to one pub, make it Squirrels.

Any tips for future students?

Have fun. Get out of your comfort zone. Get in contact with the other Kiwi's on the exchange list, it can be a comfort to have some other Kiwi's around at times.

Overall Experience

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



Sam Williams

Winter Semester 19/20 (Otago Semester 2)

University of Manchester

I have loved my time on exchange. I've met a load of great people, many of whom I hope to bump into again one day. On exchange you are whoever you want to be. You make friends with people you might not necessarily be friends with in Otago. Some people arrive on exchange and expect to do everything, be friends with absolutely everybody and travel everywhere, that's fine for some. I didn't do this, I was realistic, made close friends, really got to know the people I lived with, and the city I lived in. I did travel but not just the whistle-stop tour, one day in the major cities. 5 months can seem like a long time but it actually went really fast. I enjoyed what I studied, worked hard, attended the open lectures, just because its only pass doesn't mean you should just aim to pass.

I've learnt a lot about the UK. My grandparents came out to New Zealand from England so I've always associated myself with the UK, however, the UK has changed since their day. Being here during the Brexit situation has been fascinating. Hearing the perspective from students, none of whom were old enough to vote, then being there for the general election when they all could vote. The UK is a very complex place which you can only really understand once you're here.

My time on exchange, first in Germany and now Manchester has prepared me for my next step in life. Without the exchange programme I definitely wouldn't have made the move to Europe. It has given me the opportunity to develop skills I wouldn't otherwise have in little old New Zealand. "YOLO", "make your dreams come true", "just do it", whatever cliché you want, I went on exchange twice and I couldn't have asked for more. Cheers Otago and the exchange programme office.

