



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

<i>Host University</i>	University of Alberta
<i>Semester & Year of Exchange</i>	Winter 2018
<i>Otago degree(s)</i>	Bachelor of Arts
<i>Major(s)</i>	Theatre Studies and Music

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
DRAMA302 – Modern Canadian Drama	English		
DRAMA357 - Scene Study	English		
MUSIC202 - Topics in Ethnomusicology	English		
MUSIC488 - Music and Film	English		

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed Scene Study and Music and Film. I found these classes very engaging, informative and learnt a lot from my teachers and peers being able to partake in intelligent and productive conversation on topics that I really love. The other two classes had moments of interest but were a lot more reading heavy and harder to stay motivated and engaged. I was happy with all my results, especially considering how much I enjoyed each course and assignment.

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

The workload was quite a lot lighter than at Otago and some of the lecturers were willing to offer almost too much help. I enjoy the pressure and challenges placed upon me at Otago more but it was nice to be able to feel slightly more at ease with my work so I could make use of the travel opportunities as well.

Accommodation

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

Hall of Residence – International House.

Pros: Very interesting, diverse, engaging and intelligent people in the same position as me. Wonderful location on campus. Warm. Own bathroom and minifridge in room

Cons: Had to buy all my own bedding, every piece of kitchenware, do all my own cooking as well as pay for the laundry for each use.

Pro and con: Very little involvement from the head(s) of the hall who did not live on site. The hall was mainly run by residents, some who were given slightly more senior rolls but genuinely very casual, although generally mature.

Money matters

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

Accommodation: \$4000, Groceries: \$60 a week, Flights: \$3000, Visa (ESTA): \$10, Insurance: \$250, Bedding, kitchen etc: \$100

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

I used a Global Currency Card for a while but didn't find much difference between that and simply using credit card. If I was there for longer than one semester, I would definitely get a foreign bank account.

Visas & Insurance

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

ESTA Visa very very quick, easy, online and cheap

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

There was a mandatory health insurance plan which was rather expensive but I got a fair bit of use out of it.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Many cultural events, some social dinners, free movie nights, outdoor club trips. I would recommend getting involved in anything that interests you that you may have enjoyed at home but also try something new, just for fun and see how it goes, especially if it's a more fun/social atmosphere.

What was the university/ city like?

Edmonton is one of the smaller, quieter cities in Canada but my friends and I were definitely able to get the most out of it, even in the depths of winter. The University and my hall did a lot to make sure people were getting out there, having fun and getting involved even when cold or busy or stressed. Edmonton is also a good location to be able to travel to some slightly more touristy, adventure locations without the distractions of a busy, bustling city.

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

Go skiing if it is winter!!! Visit Jasper, Banff and Vancouver. Also Lake Canmore which I didn't get to but heard a lot of good things from friends. It is very easy and cheap to get to some great places in America during reading week too – I went to New York 😊

Visit/Eat – Beercade (nightclub), Hudsons or Pint for Wednesday Wings night, the Ice Castles, Snow Valley, Ice District for a Hockey Game or free Ice Skating nights.

Any tips for future students?

It is more of a quiet city so look for things to do, even if they aren't the most exciting activity of your life, a good friend group makes everything much more fun. Also say yes whenever a friend asks you to join them, if you can spare the time! I loved the Outdoor Club too, that was great to get out of the hall, get adventuring and make some friends.

Overall Experience

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

Exchange was more expensive than I anticipated, even though I thought I saved much more than I needed, I ran out of money quicker than I expected. Edmonton was also not exactly what I expected in its quietness so it is important to travel weekend, go hiking, skiing, camping if you can. Food was or at least felt a lot more expensive than in New Zealand too.

Other than those things, my experiences were great, I enjoyed the Uni, the workload, my hall, my travels and all my friends and the shenanigans we got up to. It was a wonderful experience and I would definitely say money and expenses were the biggest downfall so save more than you expect you'll needand then maybe a bit more again. It might even be worth getting a job for the time you're there as some of my friends did.