



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	University of Bologna (Università di Bologna)
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 1, 2023
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	BSc, LLB(Hons)
<b>Major(s)</b>	Microbiology

### Academics/ course load

*Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?*

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>
Introduction to Italian Culture	English	-
English Literature 2	English	ENGL200
History of Science	English	200-level science

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

*Any comments about these papers?*

I took the opportunity on my exchange to do elective papers for interest, outside of my degrees. I really enjoyed this because it switched up my learning whilst in a different country and it allowed me to try a mixture of different subjects that I wouldn't have got the opportunity to do in Otago.

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

The academic experience varied greatly depending on the paper. Some papers were much more of a typical lecture style, sitting and taking notes, whereas my history of science paper was very discussion intensive. I found the workload very manageable, which meant I had lots of free time to explore the city.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed in private flats. Accommodation in Bologna is incredibly competitive and difficult to get, which made it challenging for me to find a place to stay as I left it quite late. However, it is also very difficult to organise something in advance as seeing the place is advised. There are no student accommodation services offered by the University, however there are some private institutions (e.g. The Social Hub) however these were very expensive for the quality.

## Money matters

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

Flights - \$3,000 return

Accommodation - \$215 a week (however there was a \$800 agency signing fee, and a \$1,600 deposit)

Visa - \$160 (however there is an additional process that Italy requires upon arriving there, the Residency Permit/Permesso Soggiorno, which is an addition \$200 or so)

Food – around \$60 a week on groceries, but meals out were very cheap (around \$20 for a sit-down dinner, takeaway pizza slices were \$3), and the coffees were very cheap (\$3 for a cappuccino)

Insurance – around \$800

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

I had a travel credit card that I transferred to periodically. I also used my NZ visa card that was able to be used on small purchases with no additional fees.

## Visas & Insurance

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

The visa process was quite complicated. I had to send in my passport and many documents (letter from host university, letter from home university, flight details, accommodation details, proof of insurance, proof of sufficient funds etc.) to Wellington, and it was then sent back. It took quite a while and several follow-up emails and phone calls to ensure I got it in time. I would recommend phoning the Embassy because online does not have all the information.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The university offered no organised activities for the students. However the Erasmus programme, the organisation that runs exchanges for European students between European countries, ran many activities such as bar crawls, museum tours, day trips, and trips away. New Zealand students can get an Erasmus card and participate.

*What was the university/ city like?*

Bologna is a university city – the University of Bologna is the oldest university in the world, and the city feels like that. The campus is widespread, and a lot of the history and architecture is influenced by the students. Bologna has a strong arts and culture programme, with great museums, art galleries, music, and a film festival that runs in July-August.

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

Places to visit: Piazza Maggiore (I went there almost every day for lunch), Palazzo D'Accursio, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio (this is a beautiful library that I only discovered on my last week, I wished I had studied here all along), the two towers (although local superstition says you should only go up the towers once you've passed/graduated from the university), Giardini Margherita for picnics in good weather

Places to eat: Cremeria Santo Stefano (best gelato I had), Cremeria Minghetti (second best gelato I had), Pappare for coffee and croissants, Enoteca La Confraternita dell'Uva for a lovely study and coffee spot, Osteria dell'Orsa, Pizzeria Largo Respighi, Murtadella, Le Golosità Di Nonna Aurora (best restaurant in Bologna).

*Any tips for future students?*

## Overall Experience

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

I really enjoyed my exchange experience. I took the opportunity to do elective papers and explore some subjects outside of my degrees at home. The courses were very interesting, and for the most part well-tailored for exchange students.

During my exchange I was able to do a lot of travel. This meant that every weekend I would have a trip planned to explore the North of Italy, where I was staying, and on long weekends and holidays I went to further away places. The highlights for me were Milan and Rome, and it was incredible to see these cities and all the history and the architecture.

Exchanges are challenging. There is a lot of planning and organisation required which can be difficult to navigate, and moving your life to the other side of the world in a place is hard. Some of the days were draining, but that was a very normal part of the exchange student experience. I am so glad I went regardless of the obstacles, and would highly recommend it to other students to get a taste of travel, another culture, or just expand their horizons from beyond Otago.