



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Melbourne
Semester & Year of Exchange	Sem 2, 2023
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Geography

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
The Disaster Resilient City	English	GEOG328
The World in Twenty Artworks	English	
Media, Identity and Everyday Life	English	

Total Otago credits gained: ☒ 54 points ☐ 72 points ☐ 108 points ☐ _____

Any comments about these papers?

They were all super interesting, you could really tell that the lecturers were passionate about the content in the paper. I especially enjoyed the geography paper as it provided geographical frameworks/ideas within an Australian context.

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

It was honestly really similar; the main difference was that BA papers don't tend to have exams, so all of my work was internal. This was really nice, rather than having sit-down exams at the end of the semester I just had final assignments such as essays/reports etc.

Accommodation

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

I managed to secure a flat before moving over which was really lucky, I found it on flatmates.au (fairyfloss is also a good facebook group to find flats). Pros were that flatting is SO much cheaper than student accommodation. I was also able to meet people who were not students which was nice. The main con was that it was a bit further away from campus (this wasn't really an issue though because the public transport is very well set up)

Money matters

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

I think rent and bills came to about \$200nzd p/w. Food about \$50 p/w. Flights were only about \$250 as Australia is so close to NZ. The uni offered a lot of opportunities for free food packs and stuff which I would definitely recommend if you're on a budget.

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

I used Wise for day-to-day purchases (transferred money from my NZ account weekly when Studylink paid me). I also set up an AUS bank account to pay rent and bills etc which was super easy. I found that the transfer fees for Wise were less than transferring between NZ and AUS accounts.

Visas & Insurance

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

Didn't need to apply for a visa.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Not sure, I think because I'm a New Zealander I could sort my own insurance.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There was a club specifically for exchange students, I basically met my core group of friends through this club. They held quite a few events throughout the sem, but it was a really good way to meet people as soon as you start. Definitely check out the club's day in O-week, University of Melbourne had so many to choose from. I also met a lot of people through indoor climbing, this was something I did on my own (not through the uni) but starting any extra hobbies is a great way of meeting local people who aren't necessarily students.

What was the university/ city like?

Melbourne as a city was so cool, its obviously massive compared to Dunedin which could be a bit daunting but there was always something going on. I really loved the inner-northern suburbs, they were a bit more chill than the CBD and had way more character. The trams were a fantastic way to get around, definitely make sure you sort a student concession card when you get there because it makes them way cheaper.

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

Black Cat in Fitzroy was one of my favourite bars, there's a tonne of vintage shopping in the area too. Crossways and Gopals (both in in CBD) have really yummy Hare Krishna vegan/vego food. Crossways is \$7.50 for all you can eat which is insane. Cheaper Buy Miles is a really cool places to get groceries, they just have a bunch of discounted kinda random stuff, but it can save you a lot of money. In terms of outdoorsy stuff Werribee Gorge and the Mornington Peninsula are beautiful (definitely helps if you find someone with a car to go and see cool nature spots).

Any tips for future students?

Just push yourself, it's definitely daunting moving to a different country on your own but it was so worth it. Say yes to new experiences and be open to meeting new people, it really helped meeting other exchange students as we were all kinda in the same boat.

Overall Experience

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

Overall, my experience on exchange in Melbourne was amazing. I met such a lovely group of friends and was able to experience living in a vibrant, massive city (has the same population as the whole of NZ!) that had so much to see and do. Studying overseas really provided me with a different set of skills/experiences that I wouldn't have been able to get just staying at Otago Uni. It was so valuable learning in the context of a different country. On a personal level the exchange forced me to step out of my comfort zone and it was such a rewarding process.



