



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	Nova SBE
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 1 2024
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	BCom
<b>Major(s)</b>	Finance Major, Economics Minor

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>
Global Economics 1	English	ECON 300 Elective
Macroeconomics	English	ECON 202
Modelling and Optimisation	English	FINC 300 Elective

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

Any comments about these papers?

Global Economics 1 was known to be one of the hardest bachelor's courses offered at Nova SBE. Unfortunately, I wasn't aware of this when choosing the course and struggled to keep up. Global Economics 1 and Macroeconomics were harder than any Economics paper I have taken at Otago, although passing Macroeconomics was more achievable than Global. Typically, Economics and Finance papers at NOVA SBE are significantly harder than the Management course offered at Nova, so I would recommend going for management courses such as entrepreneurship if you have an elective, as many of my exchange friends did. Modelling and Optimisation was more of a maths-based paper than finance, but it was not too difficult to pass.

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

The workload was similar to that of Otago except for Global Economics 1, which covered more content than a typical Otago economics paper and required more time to keep up with weekly

content. Nova had a style similar to Otago's regarding lectures and tutorials. The lecturers are all very nice and accommodating to questions and office hour sessions. It's also worth noting that there are resit exams in the month after the normal exam period. I would not plan for leaving before the resit period as it is not uncommon to have to stay back to resit a failed exam, especially if you are taking economics or finance courses.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed in the Milestone student residence next to campus in Carcavelos. It was like a Dunedin Halls of Residence room layout, except a lot more independent, with no organised events and shared kitchens where you had to cook your meals. Many of my exchange friends flatted in Lisbon and commuted to Uni every day. The pros of staying in Carcavelos were it was close to the beach, it was easy to hop out for a surf, it was close to a stunning running track along the coast, and there was 0 transport time to Uni, so much so I could even nap between lectures. The cons of Carcavelos is all the nightlife is in Lisbon, where you have to pay for Uber's home at night after the clubs when public transport closes, further from social activities such as pres and dinners, and you miss out on experiencing living in the cool Lisbon atmosphere.

## Money matters

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

Accommodation: 750 Euros per month

Food: 50 Euros per week

Visa around NZD 50 + 80 for shipping passport to Canberra

Insurance NZD 700

Flight one way NZD1500

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

Wise card for everything! I only ever needed cash at the campus canteen.

## Visas & Insurance

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

Yes. I had to apply for a Schengen Visa. The process was difficult, and I would recommend looking into this as soon as you receive acceptance from Nova. I applied as soon as I had all the required documents, and I only got my passport back with the visa around a week before leaving. In order to apply, you must have proof of accommodation, university acceptance and a return flight to NZ, among other things. There were complications with my request as I could not book a return flight home to NZ so far in advance as I am doing a full-year exchange (second semester in Canada) and not returning to NZ until after that. Therefore, I had to write a letter to the embassy explaining my situation. The closest Portuguese embassy was in Canberra, Australia, so I had to verify my passport identity by the Portuguese consulate in Wellington, then courier all my required documents and passport to Canberra. The Portuguese visa office is very particular about the required documents, so read these carefully. I received the visa and passport back around seven weeks after applying. I recommend leaving more time than this to avoid stress.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

No. The StudentSafe NZ insurance recommended by Otago was sufficient.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Nova has lots of extracurricular clubs. I became heavily involved with the Nova Surf Club. I applied to be on the marketing team of the Surf Club Executive Committee to continue my passion for photography and videography abroad. It was unusual for them to accept a single-semester exchange student, but applying for the role regardless was the best decision I made all semester. I became super close with the team and really immersed myself with local students while many other exchange students were stuck within themselves. Through this club, I went on weekend surf trips with club and committee members and was shown the coolest surf spots around Portugal. I also joined the heel-to-heel run club, which was started by one of my best mates that I met in Portugal. It made running so much fun and motivated me to complete a half marathon with two of my running friends at the end of the semester. If you join, say hi to the organiser, Lucci, for me!

*What was the university/ city like?*

Carcavelos was my dream beach town consisting of only surfing, drinking and chilling. The campus was super modern and such a nice place to study in. So much so that they'd often host business conferences, election debates and TV commercials. The coast helped me find a passion for running, leading to a half marathon in my final weeks in Carcavelos. Lisbon was a whole other atmosphere – buzzy nightlife, old towns and colourful photography.

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

So many. Madeira Island was the coolest place to hike and sightsee. Porto is a retro city like Lisbon but on a smaller scale and cooler. Go to Nazare in the winter for world record waves. The Algarve has the prettiest beaches I've ever seen, and Peniche is great for surfing! Regarding eating, I didn't go out much and stayed very budget because I preferred to spend my money on trips. If you're as budget as me, you'll love the uni canteen that does 3 euro meals – not super good but cheap and also Portuguese style.

*Any tips for future students?*

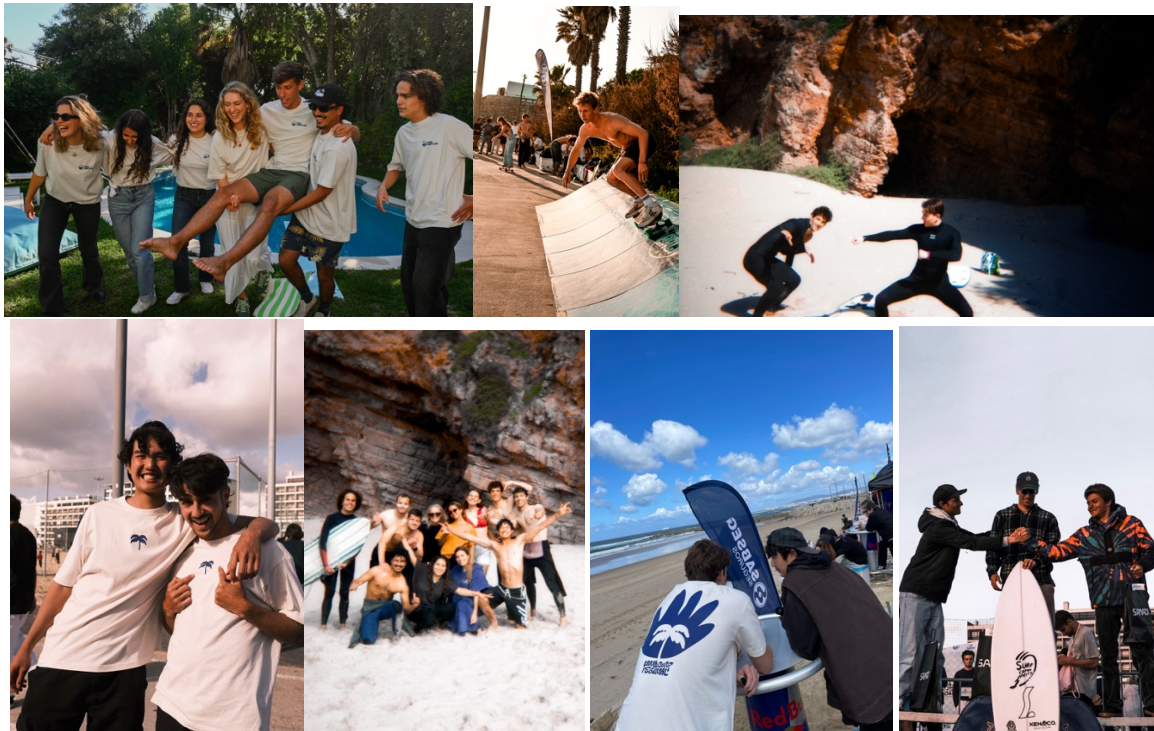
Ensure you are happy with your chosen courses during the first week of class. My only regret of the semester was not switching out. Of Global Economics while I had the chance. Although I managed to fit in many extracurriculars, I could've had more free time close to exams if I wasn't stressing about passing that course and wishing I hadn't taken it.

## Overall Experience

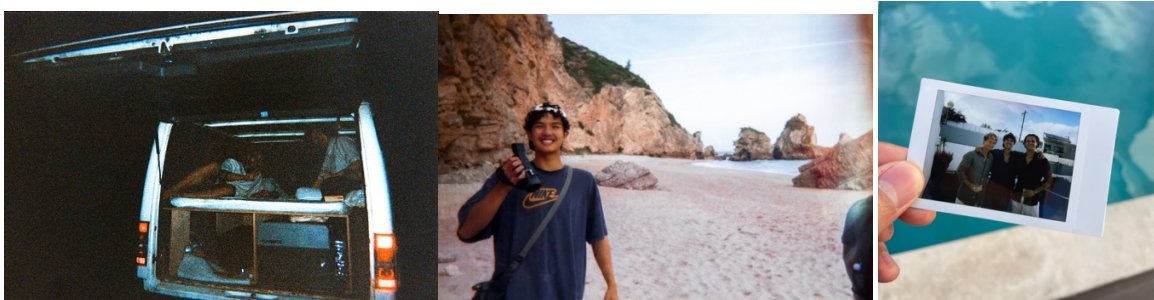
*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!*

Honestly, I couldn't have asked for a better semester. The beachy, surfy, chill vibe of the Uni and students (especially the surf club people) was so refreshing. They even sold beers at the campus food store, and on the first day of class, I was drinking sangria on the beach with my new friends in between lectures. I have to say I got lucky with the surf club and the people I had the opportunity to get to know, but with so many exchange students, you're bound to find people that suit your vibe. Although I didn't hop around Europe country to country within the semester as many other exchange students did, I strengthened my bond with people at the university and ventured on more local trips to get to know Portugal. I then embarked on my Euro summer after exams concluded. Here are some photos of my favourite moments in Portugal!

### Nova Surf Club



### Out and about with Friends ☺





My mid semester break in Morocco



Heel to Heel Run Club

