



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Bristol
Semester & Year of Exchange	2018 – Semester 1 & 2
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Classics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
CLAS37014	English		
HIST20092			
HIST23008			
CLAS10039			
CLAS32335			
CLAS37017			

Any comments about these papers?

Good to balance out the 3rd year papers with either a 2nd or 1st year paper.

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

The style of teaching for 300 level CLAS papers differed greatly to that at Otago. In Bristol they were seminar/discussion papers and so you were expected to gain all your info from readings prior to class and then be prepared to discuss them with the other students in class. This style of teaching was great for evolving your own ideas and growing more confident to communicate and raise ideas.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in private flats and ended up living in three different ones throughout the year. I found the first one on a Facebook group called 'Clifton and Stoke Bishop Tickets' - it was with three 2nd year university students who had a spare room as 1 girl had moved out. I found the second two flats on Spare Room. The first was with three 3rd year university students, but the tenancy agreement meant that I had to move out before December in order to avoid paying the full tenancy until June. The last flat was with a young professional. While finding my own flats was difficult at times, I think this was a good move for me. I much preferred having my own living space. In addition, from talking to other international students who moved into Halls of Residence, living in flats meant that I developed many more friends at the University, rather than other international students.

Money matters

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

Rent varied between 475-600 pounds per month. Electricity was another c.20-50 pounds per month. Water was c.8 pounds per month. Internet was c.10 pounds per month. My budget for food was c.70 pounds per week.

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

I opened a bank account with Lloyds. When I travelled throughout the summer, I got a Post Office Travel Money Card.

Visas & Insurance

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

I didn't have to apply for a visa as I have a British Passport.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

I'm not too sure, but I was on my family insurance with Southern Cross Health Insurance.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were frequent International Student events run by the Uni in the first month of University. I also participated in the Bristol International Students Society – they ran trips around England, such as to Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon. I recommend getting involved in the latter, as they are a cheap way to see England and meet other students. There are also many university clubs, but I did not get involved in these as I was busy with other activities.

What was the university/ city like?

Bristol is a very fun, vibrant city. There is great music, art exhibitions, and restaurants available. It is very student friendly and easily accessible by walking.

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

In the first couple of weeks of arriving in Bristol, I recommend walking around the City and the Harbourside. Make sure to visit Clifton Village, the Suspension Bridge, and Banksy artworks in Stokes Croft! Bristol has some amazing restaurants and good bars as well, so get a bunch of people together and enjoy them!

Any tips for future students?

Be prepared for the university to run differently to how Otago does. Give things a go! Also, while you want to travel around the UK and Europe, don't forget about everything on your doorstep in Bristol.

Overall Experience

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

My exchange to Bristol University was an amazing experience!

In terms of the course, I was able to explore many more areas and particular topics of Classics through the department being much larger. This has prepared me well for going into my Honours year here at Otago since I have a much better idea of the area within Classics, which interests me the most. Something to realise is at Bristol (and other UK universities) that Ancient History and Classics are separated into two distinct departments, while at Otago they are combined into one. Also, the style of teaching, with the discussion focus, helped me greatly to increase my confidence in presenting ideas and thinking critically about work. Since I plan to return to the UK to complete my Masters in a few years this exchange has given me a good idea about what to expect.

Going for the two semesters with the UK summer break in the middle was an ideal exchange structure. It gave me three months to travel in the middle. I travelled by myself around Amsterdam, Berlin, Budapest, Athens, the Greek Islands, and Italy. Having the clear travel time in the middle of the year meant that I was not rushing away each weekend throughout the university semesters, which enabled me to maintain good grades.

In Bristol I got involved outside of the university. I joined a local Life Drawing Class and also worked in a restaurant. These were great ways to see other sides to the city and to meet other people.