



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Aston University
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1, 2019
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Management

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
International Finance	English	FINC 305	18
Business Ethics	English	MANT 331	18
Strategic aspects of organisational performance	English	MANT 345	18
Doing E-business	English	MANT 2xx	18
Government and Management	English	Comm 200	18

Any comments about these papers?

International finance was good but the lecturer was too scattered in his approach. Business Ethics was fine. Strategic aspects of organisational performance was interesting but misleading as it's mostly HR – the lecturer was very nice though. Doing E-business is useful and Government and Management is dull but educational.

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

In some of the classes the exam was worth 100%. It's very different from Otago in that sense as the grade is usually divided over different tasks but at Aston one essay/exam/coursework can be your

entire grade for that semester. Moreover, all classes are recorded at Aston making it easier to catch up. Lastly, past exams are released at the discretion of the lecturer so they only release 1 as opposed to Otago where you have more. Overall, the academic experience is good with a similar standard to Otago but with stricter marking.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in a student flat on the suburbs of the city. It was really good and close to everything I needed, being only a few minutes walking to another university (University of Birmingham). I had to take the bus to Aston University everyday but it was a pleasant drive so it wasn't a hassle. The pro's were the student vibe of the area I lived in, the great quality of the flat and living with local students. Cons were the long drive, but overall it was a nice experience. Other students stayed on campus or lived nearby to uni making their daily trip easier.

Money matters

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

500 Pounds/month rent

Visa was free on arrival

Food was roughly 60-100 pounds a week.

Insurance depends on the service and duration, and if it's multiple entry.

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

I used my ANZ card and took out cash whenever I needed it, which wasn't often as most places accept card now.

Visas & Insurance

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

I was able to apply for it in the airport on arrival. It's for 6 months, and you get a new one every time you leave the country and come back. They say they ask for proof of different things (like return flight), but personally all they wanted to see was that I was a student and they gave me the visa hassle-free.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No but they recommended it. And Otago says it's basically mandatory.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are loads of activities available to students catering to all tastes. These range from football to fashion & design.

What was the university/ city like?

The university was nice overall. The facilities were good and they just installed a beautiful, brand new Student Union building.

Birmingham was nice too as the second largest city in England. It has a bit of construction going on but its city centre is a treat.

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

Birmingham's location is incredibly ideal. Trains to London and Liverpool are only an hour away, and other cities are also close by. I would recommend going to Bath and checking out the nearby Stonehenge attraction- I went when it snowed and it was pretty cool! Also check out Brighton and its Pier which is so nice when it's sunny. Planes are also cheap to Europe and coaches are readily available.

Any tips for future students?

Enjoy yourself, make the most of your short time overseas and you'll have a blast!

Overall Experience

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

Overall, my exchange experience was very fun and eye-opening. I got to see a different country with incredibly rich history while paying Otago fees. I was able to visit so many beautiful cities like Liverpool and Brighton and I met so many great people. In the end I wish I did so much more even when I did so much! It's definitely a nice way to top off my degree and I would recommend it to anyone.

