

My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Melbourne
Semester & Year of Exchange	S1, 2023
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	International Business

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
ECON20002: Intermediate Microeconomics	English	ECON201
MKTG30012: Business and Marketing Ethics	English	MART3xx
ASIA30005: Global Cultures of Japan and Korea	English	JAPA3xx (culture paper)

Total Otago credits gained: " **54 points** " 72 points " 108 points "

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed all three of the papers that I took overseas. I was a little bit nervous about my economics paper as I need it as a prerequisite for a paper I'm taking this coming semester, but it was cleared by Otago staff as being acceptable so I had to trust in that. After putting in the hard yards though, I'm happy with the learning that I did overseas and am sure that I will not be disadvantaged in any way coming back to finish my degree at Otago. All the lecturers were good and seemed to take a genuine interest in helping students and went out of their way to help. Overall I had a really positive experience with these papers.

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

The style of teaching at UniMelb wasn't much different to Otago - a mix of lectures and tutorials for me. I only took 3 papers and found that that was sufficient course load to balance both academic intensity and leisure time in a new country. A cool difference however was that I was able to timetable my own classes. As part of the subject selection process, students can request particular streams from a variety of preselected options. For me personally I tried to fit all my classes in as few days as possible as I'd rather have a few hectic days than be constantly working all week. Fortunately I was able to arrange my timetable so that I only actually had classes on a Monday and Friday, leaving me ample time to explore the local area and be authoritative with my own time.

Accommodation

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

I was fortunate enough to have a friend that already lived in Melbourne that I was able to board with. If not for him, I may not have been able to financially afford the trip. I would therefore recommend to anyone thinking of going to definitely save up, because the rent is a killer. Most exchange students seemed to live on or very close to campus, which is by far the most expensive option. I would recommend exploring other options if possible. The public transport system in Melbourne is much better than here so if you have to commute to uni each day then so be it. That was my situation. My host family lived a 90 minutes away by public transport, which was the only con really. Otherwise the distance allowed me to

explore areas of Melbourne outside the main CBD, which I most likely would not have done if I lived so close to the uni.

Money matters

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

Again, very fortunately for me I had a friend that put me up for the 5 month trip and the family would not allow me to pay any rent so for me personally I did not incur any accommodation cost. Most of my costs were on food, gym, travel and leisure. Fortunately, students that need to take public transport to get to university, such as myself, can apply for a student discount pass which reduces the cost of all public transport fees - I would highly recommend this as it definitely adds up over the semester.

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

I opened a foreign bank account in Australia which was useful when I needed to transfer people money or if I wanted to sign up to a gym it was good to give them an Australian bank account for the subscription. Other than that however, I just used my NZ debit card as it has VISA and nearly everywhere I went accepted that. You do incur a 2% surcharge for using it, but my bank's international transfer fee was 3% so it was overall cheaper to do it that way.

Visas & Insurance

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

One of the most attractive perks of visiting Australia is that no visa application process is required. You are automatically granted one when you enter Australia.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

The host university did have a mandatory insurance setup but being from NZ circumvented a lot of that and I did something different. Still definitely had insurance but it was different to the one that they were recommending. Although it is mandatory to get insurance, you can adjust your premium to fit your budget (if that is something of concern).

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were many 'catch up' sessions open for exchange students as a means of both socialising and a support system. I personally never went to these but were available frequently for anyone interested. I didn't participate in much extra-curricular activities during my time there, I didn't join any clubs (which we are more than welcome to do), just because I preferred to not have those types of extra commitments and instead decided to participate in groups non-university affiliated. In saying this, even if it's not really your scene, I would recommend going to one or two of the welcome parties organised by the student union in your first week. There is even one specifically for exchange students. I personally found the night-life in Melbourne so much more enjoyable than Dunedin so maybe even if you're not a big party person here, you may end up enjoying it there. In any case these events are a great way to meet new people and have some fun. The people I met at these events became my friends that I got together with to do things throughout the semester and I'm hoping we will keep in touch in the future.

What was the university/ city like?

The city is bustling. The university is located very close to the major shopping centre of Melbourne but the university itself is generally pretty tame. It is very spacious and I recommend just learning where your classes are and ignoring the rest - it can be explored later. Interestingly there are multiple museums and art exhibits on campus, in libraries, etc. Melbourne is often referred to as the art capital of Australia (apparently) and it kinda lives up to it. I never went to an on campus museum but I did check out some of the art exhibitions. The university also has plenty of cheap but quality food establishments both on campus and immediately surrounding campus which are all good choices for lunch. Alternatively the main shopping centre is a 5 minute tram away where there is even more to choose from.

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

One of the highlights of my trip was exploring the Mornington Peninsula. Me and a friend spent the best part of 4 days exploring it and doing activities over Easter weekend and I would especially recommend the 40 minute bush walk to Bushranger bay if you get the chance. It's an out-of-the-way walk that leads out to this gorgeous and really pristine beach, very secluded and peaceful. We also saw a troop of kangaroos during the walk which was both slightly intimidating but mostly enchanting. The peninsula has allsorts to offer though so I would definitely recommend it as worth a look.

As something to do, I guess I would suggest partaking in the nightlife of Melbourne at least once - just to say you've done it if nothing else. I personally don't love going out to clubs and such but I did enjoy my experiences with it in Melbourne so I would encourage anyone to get out there at some point - especially in that first week as mentioned earlier.

Melbourne is apparently known for its boutique coffee shops but this never really interested me. For me I really enjoyed eating at a burger chain called 'Royal Stacks' and would go there regularly for lunch. On my last lunch there I splurged and got a 'Crunchie' Thickshake as well as my burger: *The Duchess*. Mmmmm so good.

Any tips for future students?

As a student looking for different things to do/see in and around Melbourne I would definitely recommend doing some online research. I spent some time both looking at various websites and physical materials for ideas but perhaps the most impactful information source was instagram. It didn't take long for my instagram to realise I was in Melbourne and lots of activities, sightseeing and places to eat began to flood my for you page. I saved as many of these as possible to look back on later to plan things throughout the semester and would consider this my biggest tip to future exchange students as there is so much to do in Melbourne!

Overall Experience

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

As an international business major I thought that it would be beneficial for me to be at some stage immersed within another culture. I was at first worried that Australia might not be different enough to New Zealand for me to get the experience I was after but that was all wrong. I found Melbourne to be the right balance of being different enough to be an exciting new experience but also similar enough to be able to fit into everyday life seamlessly. Another highlight for me was being able to have really good conversations with students from Australia, America, Japan, Korea, Thailand, China, etc. I am really interested in diversity and cultures and really enjoyed the time I spent making friends with other exchange students. The diversity at the university (and Melbourne in general) is not dissimilar to New Zealand and I found people to be very warm, welcoming and generous. I must admit that I expected Melbourne to be slightly less friendly than NZ but I would almost have to say that I found the exact opposite to be true. This experience was so good for me both educationally but also developmentally as an individual. Being able to navigate a completely new environment on your own is definitely an endeavour but one I think both myself generally and my studies have benefited from and I would highly recommend an exchange to the University of Melbourne for anyone who is considering it.

I would also recommend that if you do do it, to plan at least one trip away from the CBD. I know it may be difficult without access to a car but I highly encourage you to find some way around that because my Mornington Peninsula trip was probably the highlight of my trip and although Melbourne CBD is epic, you do want to get out to see a bit more than that.