



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Edinburgh
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 2022
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Science
Major(s)	Neuroscience

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
BIME09005 Mechanisms of Brain Development	English	Generic science credit above 100 level
BIME08006 Our Changing World	English	Generic science credit above 100 level
PSYL10173 Current Topics	English	Generic science credit above 100 level

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

Any comments about these papers?

Our Changing World was a pass/fail course and Current Topics was a course designed explicitly for exchange students.

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

The style of teaching was very similar to Otago, but the marking scheme is much harder. If I did my exchange semester again I would get as much academic help as possible with my assignments.

Accommodation

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

My accommodation was Mylnes Court. It is in a fantastic location being right at the top of the royal mile, and very close to George Square campus (less than 10 minutes walk). It is right in the middle of everything and so is also very close to all attractions/both new and old town. The only downside to

the location is that it is far away from the big supermarkets! The RAs put a lot of effort into answering any queries and hosting events. The hall itself is in a historic old building, but the downside of that is there are mice around (in common areas and flats). The flats themselves are standard issue hall-type and so nothing special, but are warm. Also there is little difference between the different types of rooms, and so potentially not worth the difference in price.

Money matters

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

Basic costs included accommodation (\$190/week) and food (cheaper than NZ, around \$40-60/week). Edinburgh does not require insurance, so the only insurance that is needed is the one required by Otago. Flights were expensive around the time I went, but it was just post-covid and I didn't plan my return well. I found that once I was over here I wanted to go and explore, whether that was day trips into the highlands or weekends away into Ireland. I would recommend having plenty of money extra for the fun things!

If you are under 25, apply for a young scot card straight away. This gets you discounted transport if you are under 22, and discounted entry into lots of places.

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

I used my debit card.

Visas & Insurance

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

I am a UK citizen so I did not have to apply for a Visa.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are plenty of societies and clubs that you can join – there is an expo when you arrive where you can talk to the different groups and join what you are interested in. I joined the Polo club, which was a great way to meet people (locals and exchange students alike) and try a new hobby. The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a great club to be involved in at Edinburgh. You don't have to formally join, you can just follow them on Instagram and join in with the events. They do a lot of events designed to get students mingling and I met several of my friends through this. They also organise day/overnight trips throughout Scotland, which are one good way to explore. They book up quick though so make sure you look ESN up early.

What was the university/ city like?

Both Edinburgh University and Edinburgh are very historic. Edinburgh is a very accessible city, with lots of it accessible by walking and buses to the rest. It has a nice vibe, with lots to do.

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

I would recommend a visit to Craigmillar Castle, which is a little out of the city but well worth a visit! The old town area has great pubs and clubs for a night out, with the places around the uni the best for students. Edinburgh airport connects to lots of places throughout the UK and Europe, so it's a must to look on Skyscanner for cheap flights for a weekend away.

Any tips for future students?

I would recommend choosing a hall that is in the best location, as some of them are tucked quite out of the way and it can become a hassle getting back and forth. I think it is a little harder to meet people if you are not in a hall, but a lot of exchange students do choose this (also in a hall your expenses are capped, which is a benefit with the rising cost of living).

Be careful which school you end up in (you will be placed on a school within the college you are accepted into based on which papers you have chosen). You then have to take two thirds of your papers in that school, which may be quite restrictive based on the school you get into. Bank on some of your papers being different from what you were anticipating and make sure you have appealing options.

Everyone has the same fears about making friends, and it will be much easier than you think, I promise! My advice would be put yourself out there as much as you can by joining international student chats and events, the club/societies that interest you etc.

Overall Experience

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

Due to Covid, exchanges weren't running until the last semester of my degree. I am so happy that I was able to do an exchange, and to go to the University of Edinburgh, which was my top pick. Edinburgh is so beautiful and historic, with heaps to do and a great vibe. The rest of Scotland is beautiful as well and offers heaps of good day trips (especially St Andrews!). I made a great group of friends from all over the globe who I did a lot of exploring and had a lot of fun with. The University of Edinburgh offered biology based papers that I was really interested in and thought would add value to my degree. Overall, it was a really great experience that I am really glad I was able to do.