



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	McCombs School of Business, University of Texas in Austin
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Spring 2019
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	LLB & BCom
<b>Major(s)</b>	Accounting

### Academics/ course load

*Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?*

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>	<b>Otago credit value</b>
International Business Operations	English		3
Global Marketing	English		3
Corporate Political Strategy	English		3
New Venture Mechanics	English		3
Social Entrepreneurship	English		3

*Any comments about these papers?*

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

I did only my business degree in Austin. Workload in McCombs is generally high; you should expect to be busy with weekly assignments and homework. The benefit of this is that most finals will not be more than 20%. The teaching style of professors is highly collaborative. Professors will expect you to contribute in class. Attendance and participation is compulsory and will count for a high portion of your grade. Personally, the academic experience for me in McCombs was a positive one. I was privileged enough to learn business from such knowledgeable professors.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed at Pearl St Coop. It is very close to McCombs. You live with 100 people so it can be challenging but you will get to meet a lot of new people from all around the world. Parties are amazing. Cost of accommodation was pretty cheap. You are expected to do 4 hours of weekly labour (either cooking or cleaning) to keep the place running – which is not that much. Food is included but please note that towards the end of the week, food will tend to run out. Pearl St did have a lot of shower and water problems during my stay. If you want any more information about this place, please contact me.

## Money matters

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

Accommodation for 5 months was approximately \$5,500 NZD (including food). University of Texas requires compulsory insurance of \$1,000 USD for all exchange students. Flights are expected to be \$1,000 - \$1,500 one way. It is highly important to sort out your VISA application early. You will have to travel to Auckland for an interview when getting your J1-VISA. The United States is expensive, so please make sure to save as much money as possible if you do plan on travelling.

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

I created a bank account (and obtained a debit card) with CHASE Bank upon arrival. I used TransferWise to transfer my funds from my NZ account to my US account. NZ debit card also works everywhere in the US.

## Visas & Insurance

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

Everyone has to apply for a VISA. You must do it online as soon as possible. There are fees associated with this and the overall process can take several weeks. I had to put in an urgent request for my VISA because I was required to be in Austin straight after New Years.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes - \$1,000 USD compulsory insurance is required

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Because I lived in Pearl St Coop, I did not have to work very hard to find social activities or things to do. There was generally something on every week which the locals or the exchange students were doing. There are a lot of parties on West Campus. \$1 beers at Cain & Abel on Tuesdays and Shakespeare on Thursdays is a must for all exchange students.

*What was the university/ city like?*

UT is amazing and the college culture is fantastic. Everyone in Austin is super friendly and welcoming. Austin is known for being weird. Definitely one of the best cities to live in the US. There is always something going on in Austin, whether it be live bands, food and cultural festivals etc.

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

Make sure you go to the Bat bridge, Barton Creek, Lake Travis, all the thrift stores. Don't forget to go to East 6<sup>th</sup>, Dirty 6<sup>th</sup>, and West 6<sup>th</sup> on your night outs.

*Any tips for future students?*

Because there is so much going on in Austin all the time, there will be times when you will miss out on things. Don't stress too much about this. The important thing to remember is to have fun with your friends and live in the moment.

## Overall Experience

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

I had the time of my life. I highly recommend Austin to anyone wishing to go on exchange. The last 5 months of my life has been a wild rollercoaster ride. With so many ups and downs and un-expected turns, I got to meet such unique and interesting people from all around the world – and got to make some lifelong friends. I would like to thank Otago University for giving me this opportunity! Please contact me if you are wanting to go to Austin on exchange.



Spring Football game (Longhorns Stadium in Austin)





Mardi Gras (New Orleans)



Bat Bridge at Sunset (Austin)