



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Strathclyde
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 2019
Otago degree(s)	Law and Arts (LLB/BA)
Major(s)	Sociology (BA)

Academics/Course Load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course Title	Language of Instruction	Otago Equivalent	Otago Value Credit
Intellectual Property	English	400 level laws paper	15
Law, Film and Popular Culture	English	400 level laws paper	15
Understanding Welfare Reform	English	300 level arts paper	36

Any comments about these papers?

All three of my classes were 2 hour lectures once a week, and then every second week I had tutorials for the law classes. This meant I only had 6 or 8 hours of class a week.

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

The style of teaching and assessment is very similar to Otago's. Sociology at Strathclyde is referred to as Social Policy, and is slightly different in that it focusses more on the political side of sociology such as the welfare state and social services. The Understanding Welfare Reform class I took was really interesting and was assessed by a 50% Essay, and 50% Exam. This class was the equivalent of 2 arts papers at Otago.

Law at Strathclyde is similar to Otago, however both law classes I took were internally assessed. Intellectual Property was assessed through a 40% Essay (similar to how Otago Law requires Research and Writing), and a 60% Problem Question in the style of a legal opinion.

The Law, Film and Popular Culture class was also internally assessed and included a Group Project which required us to do a Presentation worth 40%, and a Research Report worth 20%. We also were required to write an Individual Essay worth 40%. This class was different to what is offered at Otago as it did not require much analytical skills, rather we watched films that depicted an issue in the justice system or aspect of the law, and then discussed the influence of this.

I think it is always a good idea to take classes overseas that aren't necessarily offered at Otago so you can make the most of experiencing a different university.

Accommodation

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

At Strathclyde I lived in the Student Village on Campus in Birkbeck Court. I was in a flat of 6, all International Students, and we shared two bathrooms, kitchen and living space. My flatmates were from all over the world and became my good friends. A lot of exchange students live in Birkbeck Court so it was really easy to meet people and make friends.

It was perfect for the semester as it was right on campus, about a 10 minute walk to Buchanan Street (the main shopping area), opposite the University Gym and Library, and close to 2 supermarkets and cafes/bars around Merchant City.

A cleaner came once a week and maintenance was always quick with fixing any issues.

The only con is due to Birkbeck being in the middle of all campus village it can be really noisy at night, but this wasn't a massive issue.

Money Matters

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

It was £1785 to live in Birkbeck Court which is roughly \$3400NZD. Supermarket shopping is very cheap in the United Kingdom, and I would spend around \$20-\$40 for a week's worth of shopping. Eating out in Glasgow can be quite expensive but a lot of places offer student discounts, Bar Soba became a usual place for eating out for that very reason.

I had Travel Insurance with TINZ for the comprehensive policy it was \$507.00, with a \$200 excess.

I travelled before and after my exchange in Glasgow, so I flew into Zagreb (Croatia) at the end of June and flying out of Lisbon (Portugal) at the end of January so flight costs may be different to if you were just flying directly to and from Glasgow. It was roughly to \$1,100 to fly to Zagreb and \$1,260 to fly back to NZ. I booked my flights with STA Travel who are really helpful at finding deals for you, and provide you with lots of options.

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 Debit Card that I would normally use in New Zealand. I would recommend checking out what your NZ banks conversion rates are, because ANZ ended up having better conversion rates compared with Cash Passport which is what I intended on using.

Visa & Insurance

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

I got the Short Term Student Visa stamp at border control when I first arrived in the UK, which was at London Stansted. It is a really easy process, just have a copy of your acceptance letter, finances and proof of accommodation and they will quickly check it and give you the stamp. Just note that you are required to get the Short Term Student Visa stamp every time you enter in and out of the UK so if you are planning on travelling out of the UK whilst studying there, just be sure to carry those documents with you to get the stamp each time.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

I had a comprehensive policy travel insurance.

Extra-Curricular/Social Activities

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

In the first week there were lots of events on for exchange students like scavenger hunts, meetings, and a few parties. There was also a clubs and sports day where you could sign up to anything you wanted to try.

Throughout the semester there were a number of activities for exchange students like parties, pub crawls and a ceilidh (Scottish Dance).

International Student Tours in Scotland and The Keltic Ginger were good Facebook pages to follow as they had heaps of organised tours all around Scotland. I did the Harry Potter Tour which took you through the Highlands where some of Harry Potter was filmed, and to the Glenfinnan Viaduct, which is the Bridge used in the movies. I also went on the overnight tour to Isle of Skye which was a highlight for me, it's beautiful there and it is good to have the tour, accommodation and transport all organised for you.

What was the University/City like?

The University is right in the heart of the City making it really easy to explore Glasgow. The University itself is similar layout to Otago where it takes you 5-10 minutes to get to different lecture theatres from your accommodation.

Glasgow as a city is vibrant and really easy to get around. I walked everywhere, which not only saves money on transport but also means you get to know the city really well. You can subway or bus out to the West End, but also only takes 35 minutes to walk there. There was always something going on and it's a really busy, bustling place.

The city is broken up into three parts, Merchant City is the East (where Strathclyde is), then Centre City which is Buchanan Street/George Square, and the West End (Byres Road, Ashton Lane, Glasgow Uni and Botanic Gardens).

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

In the City Buchanan Street, Argyle Street and George Square are nice to walk around, and see the shops. There's a cool street art walking tour map online you can do which goes all around Merchant City showcasing all the cool street art.

In the West End wandering around Glasgow University is really beautiful, especially at Christmas when they put the lights up. Ashton Lane is really cool street for food, coffee, and there's a cool retro movie theatre called the Grosvenor. Botanic Gardens and the Kelvingrove are really nice to wander around

Places to Eat: Near Strathclyde there is a place called Merchant Square which has heaps of places to eat, including Bar Soba which does 50% of food for students Sunday-Thursday which was great! Wilson Street Pantry, Tantrum Donuts, Singl-end, Stack and Still, Bar Home, Bar 91 and Max's Pub are all great spots. Kember and Jones, and the Gardener were my two favourite places to eat in the West End. Urban West is also really good.

Places to go out: The Garage, Sub Club, The Social, Bamboo and Buff Club are all really good for a night out on the town.

Things to do: Walking around Glasgow Green and down the river Clyde are good when it's a nice day! Visit Edinburgh, I went a few times while in Glasgow it's super easy to get to on the bus or train and is nice to wander around. Definitely visit the Highlands, around Glencoe, Fort William, Portree in Isle of Skye are all beautiful places to visit. If you are there at Christmas go to all the markets, there's really good food and mulled wine. Check out what concerts etc are on at the SSE Hydro, it's a really cool venue and lots of amazing international artists play there – I went to my favourite comedian Jack Whitehall when I was there which was a highlight!

Any tips for future students?

The first couple of weeks can be really exhausting when you are meeting lots of people and going out a lot. But push through – you'll soon get into a routine, make really good friends and then you won't want to leave! Also, call your parents! You can forget when you are really busy, but just send a message and photos to update them. Don't think about what is going on back home, chances are nothing has changed and you aren't missing out on much.

On days where there isn't much to do just go for a walk into town, there is always Bagpipes and street performers on Buchanan Street.

Do something by yourself! It can be daunting to go to a concert or film by yourself, but you'll find you won't get a lot of alone time with all the people around so it can be nice to spend some time by yourself.

Check Skyscanner all the time, Glasgow is a great base for travel, and it is so easy to get around the UK and EU – sometimes flying from Edinburgh is cheaper, but you can take a bus straight to Edinburgh airport which takes only an hour. Make the most of other Otago Students studying abroad as well, I managed to meet up with other Otago students in Dublin, Portugal, Manchester and Amsterdam which is always great to see familiar faces.

I also took advantage of the fact that my Otago semester finished in June and my Glasgow semester did not start until September. This allowed me to do 2.5 months travel before-hand where I travelled through Croatia, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Germany and England. I was also lucky enough to get to Ireland, The Netherlands, Portugal, France and Spain during and after my semester in Glasgow. My advice is to make the most of cheap flights and grab any opportunity you can to travel.

Overall Experience

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

I had no idea what to expect arriving in Glasgow but as soon as I arrived I fell in love with the city. Glasgow, and Scotland as a country are really similar to Dunedin and New Zealand, so it was super easy to adjust, and instantly felt like home. I met some incredible people and now have friends all over the world, which makes me want to travel more and visit them. The University itself offered some really interesting classes, and the lecturers were great making sure I settled into their classes well, and always helped when I had questions.

My exchange experience was incredible, and I would 100% recommend putting yourself outside your comfort zone and heading overseas – you won't regret it!



The Harry Potter Bridge in Scotland



Vatican City



Prague, Czech Republic



Venice, Italy



Glasgow Cathedral



Exchange Friends in Glasgow