



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	University of Melbourne
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	S2, 2022
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Arts
<b>Major(s)</b>	Politics, Economics, Philosophy (PPE)

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
American Politics	English	300Pols Paper
Global Environmental Politics	English	300Pols Paper
Political Economy	English	200Pols Paper
Public Policy Making	English	200Pols Paper

Total Otago credits gained:  54 points  72 points  108 points  \_\_\_\_\_

Any comments about these papers?

I really liked these papers a lot. I thought they were taught well, and were extremely engaging. I definitely learned a lot. However, I did not like there only being two assignments. In Global Environmental Politics, one essay made up 75% of my grade, and I thought that was poor design. I don't think such a limited grading system reflects the knowledge I gained and work I put into these courses.

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

The workload was the same, but the grading system was very different. I am used to writing essays for University of Otago, normally my essays get high marks; however, at University of Melbourne they look for different qualities so my essays were marked lower which was hard for me to receive. There were also fewer assignments that were worth a lot more, which I also did not like.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed at International House and I absolutely loved it. It is a college, and this being my first semester of in person uni, it was really wonderful. I met so many lovely people, including one from University of Otago, from all over the world. There was a huge focus on academic excellence at International House, in addition to loads of social activities like parties, culture nights and music nights. I really can't relay how much enjoyed my semester there! The only con is that it's a bit further from university than the other colleges; however, I like to walk so it wasn't a problem for me.

## Money matters

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

Accommodation was the most expensive, \$12500 AUD. However, I got a catering package, so I didn't have to buy food all semester, unless I wanted to eat out with my friends. The flights were also expensive, but I only needed a one way ticket so overall not too bad. My family also paid for it in miles. The visa was about \$270 USD. Insurance was about \$300 USD. I spent the most money going out with my friends, either for food, to the club, doing activities around town, and doing small trips on our breaks.

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

I got an Australian bank account and I highly recommend that. I was able to transfer money from my US account through a third party called Wise (it saves money on transfer fees) and I used an Australian debit card. Some clubs require cash, but for the most part I only needed my card details. I went with NAB and they are available on apple pay so I really only needed my phone.

## Visas & Insurance

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

Yes I did. It was super easy to get everything I needed: I did it in one morning and got it approved within 5 minutes of submission.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were so many to choose from! University of Melbourne has loads of clubs and sports teams. I joined the Surf Club and I was lucky enough to be able to sign up for one of their weekend surf trips. I highly recommend! It was so much fun!! The club provides all the surf equipment you need. You get to go to a cool beach location outside of Melbourne and spend a weekend surfing and having fun with a good group of people – they take up to 150 people.

*What was the university/ city like?*

Melbourne is a large city, but everything to do is quite compact. The public transport is great but expensive, and it is also a very walkable city. The campus itself is just outside of city central, and it is contained. It is really pretty with lots of lawns and places to study. I really loved being on campus. It is also a very safe place to be, I never felt scared walking home alone at night.

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

Lygon street for Italian food and ice cream. Asian cuisine is pretty cheap and is absolutely delicious! Go to Brighton Beach! Workers is the student club, everyone goes on Monday's. It's \$5 to get in and there's discounts on drinks. The botanical gardens are lovely, as are all of the museums. I also highly recommend going to see a game of footie in the Stadium, it was really fun! Outside of Melbourne, I highly recommend going to Torquay, it's the beginning of the Great Ocean Road.

*Any tips for future students?*

Save more money than you think you will need before you go, you will thank yourself later. Say yes to all of the fun activities you can manage. You will not regret them, and that is where the memories are made! I also really recommend staying in a college. Almost all exchange students that I talked too had a way easier time making friends in a college than in a university dorm hall.

## Overall Experience

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

At the University of Melbourne and International House, I made so many amazing friends and had so many unforgettable experiences. However cliché it may sound, this experience really did change me and my perspective on myself and the world. I am so thankful that I got to go on exchange, and I highly recommend this experience for everyone.

I got to see so many cool places, with some really amazing people that will be in my heart forever.



These two photos are from the first week I was in Melbourne. On the left hand side is a picture of Aimee, another University of Otago student that I met at University of Melbourne, and I on orientation day. On the right, these are some of the many friends I met at International House. We all went to Brighton Beach one of the first weeks we came to Melbourne.



This picture is from the O week party our college, International House, threw. They rented a boat for the night and we sailed around the Melbourne harbour!



This picture is from our mid-semester break. Most of my friend group and I went to Sydney for the week. We stayed in a hostel together, and spent the week seeing the sites of Sydney. This picture is the day we went to the Blue Mountains!





This is a picture of the view from my room at International House. The sunset was absolutely gorgeous!



These pictures are from one of my most favourite nights at International House: Cultural Night. The country was Japan, so there was multiple Japanese performances, and Japanese food served for dinner. I am a dancer, so I was asked to be in the advanced dance piece for this night. I had so much fun going to rehearsals and learning the choreography one of my peers did. The entire cultural night team was absolutely amazing and so much fun to work with. The night itself was a huge success as well. I loved performing for everyone, the food was amazing, and afterwards we had a party where one of my friends got to DJ. Definitely one of the highlights of my exchange.



These pictures are from the surf camp trip I did. We went to Torquay for the weekend where we tent camped right next to the beach. I got to surf for two days (they give you lessons too!) and admire the gorgeous beach we were on. I had so much fun meeting new people, and trying my best at trying to stand up on the surf board.



This is me and my friend group on our last night together!





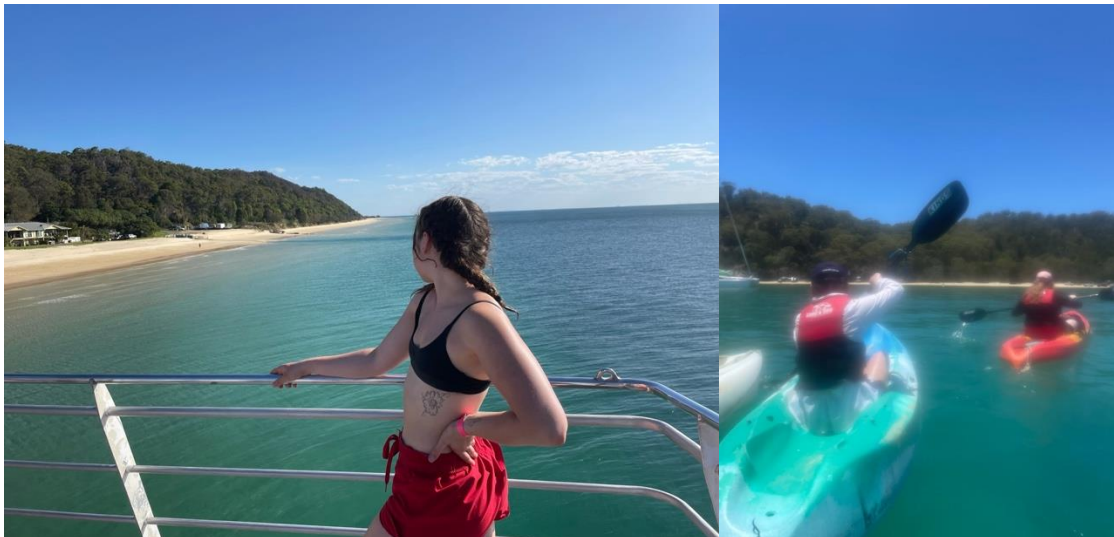
Some of my friends and I did a trip after finals together up to Queensland. These pictures are from the Lady Musgrave Tour we did in Bundaberg. We got to scuba dive and snorkel on the Great Barrier Reef! It was so much fun: we saw turtles, sting rays, and so many fish!



This picture is also from Bundaberg. We went to the Bundaberg Ginger beer factory. The only one in the world, yet they are a global company! It was delicious.



The left is a picture of the gorgeous sunset in Brisbane. On the right, this is from the Currumbin Conservatory in Gold Coast. I got to feed a Kangaroo!



These pictures are in Brisbane when we went to Moreton Island for the day. We spent the morning kayaking around the famous sunken shipwrecks, then the afternoon snorkelling around them. We saw three wobbegong sharks!!!