



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	The University of British Columbia
Semester & Year of Exchange	2023 Semester 2
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Laws & Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Economics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
COMM 412 Negotiation		
COMM 461 Business Development		
ECON 485 Political Economy		ECON 300
ECON 441 The Process of Economic Development		ECON 300

Total Otago credits gained: 72 points

Any comments about these papers?

COMM 412 was one 3 hour class per week which involved a mock negotiation followed by a class reflection and discussion about key points. The negotiations were not graded directly and all assignments were straight forward.

Comm 461 was a brilliant course focusing on sales management. The professor had business experience and levelled with the students well.

ECON 485 and 441 were similar courses with a fair amount of econometrics. You did not need knowledge of econometrics to do well in the exams. However, it a large proportion of class is working through economic studies and the data.

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

All my classes were taught in small classrooms with 30-40 people attending. The workload for a paper is similar to one in Otago.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Walter Gage after getting in off the wait list. Walter Gage is in a great location, is 3 large towers with over a thousand students from second year onwards. You are placed in units of 6 and is mostly full time students. The majority of exchange students on campus live a 15 minute walk away in Fairview Crescent. Fairview consists of apartments of 4-6 and has a community feeling with a central café. Accommodation is done on a lottery system, I got in off a waitlist, otherwise would have looked at shared flats in the areas nearby UBC.

Money matters

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

Accommodation costs can be found online at vancouver.housing.ubc.ca

Vancouver has a high cost of living

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

I used a Wise account and highly recommend.

Visas & Insurance

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

Please check official UBC and immigration websites for updated information

If you are staying for less than 6 months → only need to apply for a Canada eTA

If you are staying for more than 6 months or intend to work in Canada → will need a study permit

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, UBC has mandatory health insurance for the dates you are studying

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Clubs are a big part of life at UBC, you will be able to find plenty that might interest you on clubs day. I recommend the VOC (varsity outdoors club) if wanting to go backcountry skiing, rock climbing or anything of the like. A \$40 joining fee gets you discounts on courses, free gear rental and access to heaps of trips you can join. The ski and board club and surf club organise trips which are popular with exchange students and host parties during the off season. I recommend any ski trip, the surf trip to Tofino, the rock party and anything else on the VOC website.

The intra-mural sports league is very popular. You will need to be aware of when the sign up date is and then can make/join a team to play weekly. I had a great time playing flag football.

The student pass for Whistler ski resort is a great deal. The ski club also gets a discount for the Ikon pass which includes plenty of resorts in the interior.

What was the university/ city like?

The University campus is amazing. There are numerous of cafes, restaurants and shops. The nature is stunning with beaches starting from the coast of UBC (Wreck beach is great) all the way to Stanley Park with views of the mountains. Kitsilano is a popular coastal suburb with great cafes and bars. The West End of Downtown and Stanley park are especially stunning.

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

British Columbia is known for nature hikes. St Marks Summit, Grouse Mountain, Garibaldi Lake, Joffre Lakes are some of my favourites. These are amazing in summer, but nothing to stop you going out in the winter and hiring snow shoes or spikes. The more times you go out, the higher your chances of seeing wildlife.

We did a great road trip to Jasper and Banff to see the towns and national parks. Lake Louise and Lake Moraine are stunning in the summer. Or can ski the Big 3 resorts during the winter. We used TURO (personal care hire platform) to hire cars for this trip.

Whistler is a 2 hour drive away, with bus companies going most days, or can take an EVO car (care share provider).

Overall Experience

Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos! Any advice for future students?

After my exchange I have a better idea which direction I want to take my career, I have got into hiking and backcountry skiing and have many friends I look forward to visiting and welcoming to NZ.

If you want to experience a different culture, meet people from all over the world and have new experiences do not hesitate to go on exchange. If you love being outdoors, want a high quality university and want to experience Canada then UBC is a great choice.

If you have ask any questions feel free to reach out.

Sam Blake

