



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

<i>Host University</i>	University of Glasgow
<i>Semester & Year of Exchange</i>	Semester 1 2018
<i>Otago degree(s)</i>	Bachelor of Science
<i>Major(s)</i>	Zoology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Animal Biology, Evolution and Ecology 2	English	Animal Designs for Living	36
Genes, Molecules and Cells 2	English	Animal Physiology	36

Any comments about these papers?

These papers consolidated my understandings and deepened my knowledge on the course I am majoring in (Zoology). The papers offered different topics centring the major learning objectives and each of them has its own merits but also difficulties. The papers that I have chosen in Glasgow were structured very differently from the papers in Otago. Each paper was a combination of wide selection of related topics and were designed specifically for Biological Sciences students in University of Glasgow. The paper above consisted 15 ECTS each so I only needed to take two papers in Glasgow to obtain 30 ECTS which is equivalent to 72 Otago Credits.

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

The style of teaching in Glasgow was not very different from Otago. The workload was slightly smaller while I was only taking 2 papers in Glasgow compared to 4 papers in Otago if I were to get the same credits. Due to the structure of the papers I did not have a lot of chance to do field works or go on field trips, which I found very different from the courses that I have taken in my first year in Otago.

Accommodation

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

I lived in a university-managed and self-catered student flat with 3 other international exchange students. The flat was only a 5-minute walk away from main campus and about 10-minute walk to the nearest shopping and dining outlets and the subway station. It is very convenient and located in a relatively quiet neighbourhood. One of the cons is that the condition of the flat itself and the furniture were a bit old.

Money matters

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

The cost for my accommodation for one semester was approximately £128 per week. I spent around £100 per week for food, transport and miscellaneous. It costed about £300 to £400 to travel from Singapore to Glasgow and the Tier 4 visa that I applied costed £322.

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

I have opened a UK bank account to access my finances as debit card and cash are commonly used here. It would be recommended to open a local bank account (Bank of Scotland, Santander Bank etc.) if you are staying in the UK for more than one semester.

Visas & Insurance

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

I have applied for a Tier 4 Student Visa. I needed to prepare necessary documents and went to a Visa Application Centre in Singapore to apply it in person. It took about one to two weeks to get back my passport with a valid UK Tier 4 Student Visa.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No, they do not have a mandatory insurance.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were several organised activities such as ceilidhs and parties during the orientation week. Events and extra-curricular activities were available throughout the semester organised by university clubs and societies. University of Glasgow had a very well-equipped gym which was located at the centre of campus and they provided wide ranges of free exercise classes too. Day trips or weekend trips organised by student-centred tour companies was a good option to explore around Scotland or even the UK.

What was the university/ city like?

The University of Glasgow was a vibrant and an intriguing place full of people all around the world. At the same time, it had upheld its reputation of being a prestigious tertiary institution, which offered high standard of teaching and good quality of academic environment. Glasgow was a lively and fascinating city bearing its own unique brand of charms due to its long history and immersed in traditional Scottish culture. It is a beautiful city where olds meet news and a melting pot of different cultures and different people and everyone was friendly to each other too.

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

Tours to Scottish Highlands and Lochs are popular if you are interested in exploring the beauty of Scottish nature. Other famous landmarks include Glenfinnan Viaduct and Stirling Castle. As in the Glasgow city, Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow Cathedral, George Square and Buchanan Street are amongst the most frequently visited places in the city. Traditional Scottish food such as Haggis, Whisky and Scottish Shortcake are a must-try during your stay in Glasgow. There are a few nice and reasonably-priced restaurants scattered around the city which are worth trying, e.g. The Mussel Inn, Taco Mazama and Cail Bruich.

Any tips for future students?

Glasgow is a lovely city and the university life here is equally amazing and unforgettable. The weather in Glasgow is quite unpredictable and the winter here could get rather cold and wet. It showers frequently in Glasgow, so it is recommended to bring waterproof and windproof apparels for unpleasant weather.

Overall Experience

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

I have had a wonderful time and marvellous experiences while spending one semester as an exchange student in University of Glasgow. I have made new friends from all around the worlds and have spent an invaluable time with them. Apart from the academic progression and the knowledge gained while studying here, the most amazing thing is that I get to travel around the UK and other European countries with easier access and lower budget. I have been to several countries such as Germany, Italy, Czech Republic and so on and it has been an unforgettable moment in my life.



