



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	University of Bristol
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 1, 2019
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Science
<b>Major(s)</b>	Majors in Psychology and Economics, Minor in Anthropology

### 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>
Anthropology and Contemporary Capitalism	English	A 200-level anthropology paper	20
Anthropological Methods	English	A 200-level anthropology paper	20
Intro to Philosophy B	English	A 100-level philosophy paper	20

*Any comments about these papers?*

Thoroughly enjoyed these papers (most of the time). As with any papers at university, some classes/times in the semester are harder to enjoy than others, but overall I am happy with my choices!

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

The experience at Bristol was very similar to Dunedin. Papers tend to be made up of both lectures and tutorials/seminars/lab work, although I did find that, there were fewer assessments than I was used to and so they tended to be worth quite a lot. In addition, there seemed to be less contact hours per week than I was used to and therefore, work that is more independent was expected. Everything was well and truly manageable though!

### Accommodation

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

I opted to stay in the University accommodation that was on offer. I found this worked out for me as I was not arriving to the UK/Bristol until the day we were required to arrive so this type of accommodation was far easier to organise. I chose University Hall purely on the basis of money -it was the cheapest accommodation. It was self-catered which was ideal for me as I had spent a year flatting and cooking my own food. It was a pretty basic set up and none of the rooms in any of the Uni accommodation come with linen/duvets/pillows, etc. and kitchens don't come stocked with

utensils, pots, crockery, etc. either. But you are sharing with other people so it may be possible to organise to share. Washing machines and dryers are provided in the vicinity of the halls, but not in your unit/flat and you do have to pay to use them -I got very good at washing clothing in the sink. Overall it worked out reasonable well for me as I spent a significant part of my exchange travelling Europe anyway.

## Money matters

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

Accommodation – about £114 per week; about £2700 overall (note: these values are in pounds)

Flights – I booked my flights through STA for \$1680 return (I left NZ on the 21<sup>st</sup> Jan, and left UK on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July)

Insurance – I also got this through STA with a 10% discount. I opted for \$0 excess which would have been \$488 without the discount (\$440 with it)

Food – It's hard to put a definite value on this as I did a lot of traveling and so wasn't very consistent with food spending. I would say it is reasonably equivalent with what I would spend in Dunedin.

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

I decided to set up a TransferWise borderless account as both my brother and my cousin have used it overseas and recommended it. If you have an address in the UK then you are able to order and be sent a debit MasterCard to that address (unfortunately, you can't get one with just an NZ address). I did this within the first few days I arrived and the card came within a week. In this time I used both cash that I had converted back in NZ and also had my KiwiBank debit card for emergencies too. I opted to keep my money in my NZ bank account and then transfer to my TransferWise account as and when needed.

## Visas & Insurance

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

As I was studying in the UK for less than six months there was no need to apply for a visa prior to traveling. When at the border, entering the UK it is just required for you to have proof of university acceptance, and although I personally never was asked for proof of finances or accommodation, you did need to know what address you were going to be staying at. It is possible for them to ask for proof of finances but I just made sure I would have access to my bank account on my phone and my Studylink details so if they did ask then I was prepared (I think this is highly unlikely to be asked, but good to be prepared for everything). People travelling with an NZ passport are now able to just enter the UK through the e-gates but just be aware that the first time you enter (and possibly every time you come back into the country) you need to go up to an actual border control person and get a study visa stamp.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

I don't think Bristol required any specific insurance but it was recommended.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Bristol has a large variety of clubs and teams available to join, during the first week of each semester they have a clubs day where you can go and sign up for any club you want. Many of them also hold taster sessions to maybe introduce you to something you aren't sure about or just want to try. I would definitely recommend joining some sort of group because it gives you an opportunity to meet

other likeminded people from various places around the UK (and sometimes the world too). Would also recommend going to any events that the international office put on because that is where you are likely to meet lots of other people on exchange that you will become friends with and travel with!

*What was the university/ city like?*

The university and the city of Bristol were both very similar to Dunedin (although quite a bit bigger). It is very much a student city, and the nightlife is pretty huge. You do have to pay to get into a lot of the clubs, but my friends and I enjoyed hanging out at pubs and bars just as much. The city is considered a little bit 'alty', with a lot of street art around (it is the home of Banksy after all) and many independent shops. Cafes are popular around Bristol too. The uni itself is somewhat spread out and there are quite a few libraries, study centres, and old buildings around -I would recommend just wandering around the university at some point, they have a few cool hidden spots around the place!

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

If you go to Bristol you have to make sure to go for a few explores, up to the Clifton Suspension Bridge, and around Clifton Village, down by the Harbourside, go visit the M-Shed museum, Brandon Hill and Cabot Tower, and make sure you look up at the top of city hall at the unicorns. Pretty much just allow yourself to wander without a goal in mind and see as much of the city as you can! Make sure to venture out of the city to Bath for a day trip.

*Any tips for future students?*

Just go and have a ball. Enjoy yourself, and try to get used to saying yes to all the experiences you can! You may come home a little bit broke, but damn it is so worth it!

## Overall Experience

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

My exchange was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life, and Bristol was a great fit for me. It definitely felt a bit like I was just over there for a holiday as opposed to just studying, but I was glad that I was able to still work towards finishing my degree at the same time. Exchange allowed me to learn so much about both myself and others and I will forever be grateful that I just took a leap of faith and went for it. I managed to visit 16 different countries and many more cities while on exchange and met some amazing friends and these are the things that make exchange so so worth it. Oh and I got to see Prince Harry and Meghan when they visited Bristol.

