



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Université Sorbonne Nouvelle
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2 2024 (Sept-Dec 2024)
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Major in Politics, Minor in French

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
N3F001 Langue Français Avancé B2 (3 ECTS)	French	
N3CF007 La Culture Française à Travers son Cinéma (4 ECTS)	French	
A3FT101 Introduction à la Pratique du Thème Anglaise (3 ECTS)	French	
A3MT001 Version Anglaise (3 ECTS)	French	
N1DL11 Champ et Objet de la Didactique des Disciplines (3 ECTS)	French	
TOTAL : 16 ECTS = 2 Otago French Papers		
A3FC001 British Politics (3 ECTS)	English	
A1FC001 British History (3 ECTS)	English	
A5FC101 The United States in the 20 th Century (3 ECTS)	English	
TOTAL: 9 ECTS = 1 Otago Politics Paper		

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points 72 points 108 points _____

23 ECTS = 54 points at Otago

I received 25 ECTS

Any comments about these papers?

It was quite a difficult process to enrol in papers. There were limited papers that I could take on exchange that would cross credit to my degree (when I arrived they told me I could not do most of the papers on my learning agreement) so the result was that I had to do several papers which were well beyond my level of French. These included N1DL11 and A3MT001. While they challenged me, they were very difficult and I had to study really hard to pass them.

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

The workload in Paris was a greater workload than what I have at Otago University and I complete 5 papers a semester at Otago. With doing 8 papers on exchange and each class was two hours a week with at least one hour of prep work before each class, my workload was very full. This meant that I had 16 hours of compulsory class work a week with at least 8 hours of preparation work a week. I enjoyed experiencing a new teaching style that was very different from New Zealand and my papers were so interesting and unlike anything I had studied at home. Unlike Otago where we have large lecture halls, all of my classes were in classrooms of up to 30 people which I enjoyed as it was different from what I was used to. It was also great because most of my papers were just for exchange students and it made it easier to meet people.

Accommodation

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

My accommodation was CROUS accommodation. I initially did not get accepted to accommodation which was stressful as there were not many other options for students besides independent flatting which was very expensive. I was offered a place in the Reuilly CROUS residence which was a 10 minute walk to the university campus. Each person has their own unit with a kitchenette and bathroom and it is quite spacious and clean. I was living with other students so I felt very safe. It is important to note that the student accommodation isn't like Otago as there are no communal areas so it does make it quite difficult to make friends in the accommodation. My friends that I met were in other CROUS residences so there are a few options but Reuilly is the closest one to the campus so I would recommend applying for that one.

Money matters

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

The accommodation was great for Paris. It was 400 euros a month for your own apartment. I considered flatting and flatting with other people with shared facilities was anywhere from 800 euros to 1000 euros a month so it was a great deal. Flights, booked far in advance, were \$1500 NZD one way. I got the insurance package that the university recommended. My visa was around \$200 NZD all up.

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. This was great as I could transfer money straight from my New Zealand bank account and into this app. With a Wise card you can pay for everything overseas in whatever currency you need with minimal fees.

Visas & Insurance

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

I applied for a visa through the French Embassy. It took a while to get approved and part of this approval process is that you have to go to the French Embassy in Wellington for an in person meeting. These can be booked out very far in advance on the website so a tip is to call them. They are very friendly and I requested a specific day when I was in Wellington and they were able to fit me in. They do hold your passport while they validate everything and I only got my passport back a few days before I flew overseas so make sure you do this appointment as early as possible.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

We were required to have travel insurance which I got from the Exchange Department's recommendation. For my accommodation I had to get house/contents insurance for students. They sent me all the information for it and it was quite cheap, around 50 euros.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Joining the ERASMUS (which is the European exchange group) Facebook and WhatsApp group is a great way to meet people and they offer trips and parties. I went to quite a few of the parties, they would have one a week, and it's all exchange studies which is so fun. They also run trips. I went on the day trip to Champagne and Reims to go to Europe's largest Christmas market. If I had more time, I definitely would have gone on one of the weekend trips.

What was the university/ city like?

Paris was such a beautiful city. I was warned that it was quite unclean and unsafe but I never felt unsafe, even coming home late at night. The streets were also very tidy although there are a lot of homeless people around but they are pretty harmless. The Sorbonne campus is incredible. I was at the new campus in the 12th arrondissement but I would sometimes go to the main campus which is the old one and it is so beautiful.

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

With your student ID you can get into all the museums for free! It is so great because places like the Louvre and Versailles are quite expensive for an international traveller. I would try tick off a museum a week and still didn't get through my list. There is so much happening in Paris, we didn't do many trips out of Paris throughout our time there because there was so much to do there.

Bouillon Chartier has and cheapest, authentic French food. Mamiche in Montmartre is the best bakery.

Any tips for future students?

The process to go on this exchange to Paris is a lot of work and it can be disheartening at times, especially when French is not your first language and you do not understand how their university systems operate. It is so worth it though and I would not have had it any other way so do not let the challenge of it sway you.

Overall Experience

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

My exchange to Paris is exactly what I wanted from my exchange: culturally different, challenging, beautiful, and fulfilling. The process leading up to the exchange organising everything was very challenging, more so than my friends who went on exchange to other places. Now I look back on it and am proud of all that I have achieved and I am so grateful for the experience that I had. Going to Paris on exchange, you get a completely culturally immersive experience in one of the most beautiful cities in the world where you will amazing people from all over the world and for me, I know will be friends for life with the people that I met.