



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Colorado Boulder
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2025
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Science
Major(s)	Computer Science

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
CSCI3434 – Theory of computing	English	COSC341
CSCI4229 – Computer Graphics	English	300 Level COSC
COMM1300 – Public Speaking	English	100 Level ARTS
COEN1015 – Everyday Excel	English	100 Level SCIE

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

Any comments about these papers?

The two computing papers were very self-guided, requiring a lot of independent work, whereas the two 100-level papers were much more engaging and interactive.

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

The workload at CU Boulder was more evenly spread throughout the semester, with regular attendance, homework, assignments, and quizzes all contributing to your grade. In contrast, Otago tends to be more exam-focused, with a heavier workload toward the end of the semester.

Accommodation

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

I lived in a flat with other university students who I found through Facebook groups. It was very similar to flatting in Dunedin and didn't come with the restrictions of university housing. It was also

an easy way to make friends straight away. I was lucky to end up with people who had similar lifestyles. The downside is that finding a place through Facebook/Ralphie's List can be risky and time-consuming, especially when trying to find a good fit.

Money matters

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

Accommodation in Boulder is very expensive, roughly anywhere between 450-600 a week depending on living situations. Food is similar to New Zealand spending. Flights all depending when you book but can definitely find deals if time it right. Visas is an expensive process particularly the in person mandatory interview.

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

I used WISE bank, is perfect travel card with little exchange fees. If staying for longer than 1 semester I would get a US bank set up.

Visas & Insurance

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

Student J1 visa. Gathering all the paperwork and triple checking all steps is important. One small mistake, typo in an application can cause it to get denied. Once all the paperwork has been filed attending the in-person interview was stress free and relatively straight forward. US consulate gets hundreds of student visas processing, so they know the routine.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No, it had mandatory regulations that had to be met, I used the student outbound insurance which luckily met all of CU Boulders insurance requirements.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There is so much at CU Boulder, every single day there was arts and crafts, sports events, social activities. Get stuck into it and make the most of the awesome resources they offer. I highly recommend joining a club sport team or club. I joined the rugby team and hiking club, easiest way to meet likeminded people and feel like a local.

What was the university/ city like?

Boulder is one of the most sought-after places in America, and it's clear why, Its beautiful, walkable and like Dunedin is tailored towards the students. Lots of outdoor activities, great bars, lovely people. Couldn't recommend it more.

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

Flatirons is an absolute must, very close to the university campus. Rocky Mountain national park is about an hour drive away and is a must do. During Ski season get up to Winter Park, Copperhead and Aspen is expensive and about 5 hour drive but is a Colorado must do. Go to the Denver sports, baseball, NFL, NHL and a concert at the Red Rocks amphitheatre is a must. CU Boulder college football games and tailgates obviously.

Any tips for future students?

Try new things and utilize everything CU Boulder offers. Being a large university with a very active mindset there is so much on offer for everyone. Biggest tip would be to join a club or sports team, is the quickest way to make new friends.

Overall Experience

