



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Glasgow
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2 2019
Otago degree(s)	LLB/BSci
Major(s)	Law and Genetics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Exploring the Cosmos 1X	English	1 x 100 level Science Paper	18
International Private Law	English	2 x 400 level Law Papers	30
Philosophy 1A	English	1 x 100 level Science Paper	18

Any comments about these papers?

I loved all three of these papers! Exploring the Cosmos was a really interesting but also extremely manageable paper to take to make up science credits overseas – I would highly recommend it. International Private Law was much more challenging and required quite a lot of work to pass but the lecturers were really engaging and knowledgeable and it was interesting to learn about in the context of an impending Brexit. Philosophy 1A had fantastic engaging lecturers/content and was very manageable to pass.

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

The academic experience was relatively similar – I was impressed by the level and style of teaching, especially within the law faculty, although found the workload for the law paper was larger than that of an 400-level law paper at Otago – this was probably reflected in the fact that one law paper at Glasgow credits back as two at Otago.

Accommodation

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

I stayed at Murano St Student Village which was student accommodation provided by the University, made up of mainly 1st year UK domestic students and a group of international exchange students that all live together in their own group of flats within the complex.

The actual accommodation was nothing flash, very like a first year hall bedroom at Otago – there was a shared kitchen where everyone could make their own food and hang out. I liked the fact that you could easily meet and live with a lot of international students through this accommodation. All of my closest friends were those that I lived with at Murano, if you choose a 10 person flat you've got a good chance of making great friends which is fun.

It was also relatively easy to organise this all before I left New Zealand which made my whole travelling and exchange experience more relaxing, knowing that my housing was all sorted in Scotland.

The accommodation is quite far away from the University – about a 20/25 minute walk but it is along the main street in the West End and means you get your exercise up for the day!

Money matters

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

My accommodation cost £1970, which is roughly \$4000 (rounded up) and included all rent and utilities – there was the option to either set up a weekly payment or pay it in a lump sum at the beginning.

My flight over to the UK was around \$1,100 and my visa didn't cost anything as it was a short-term study visa (available if you are from NZ and studying for less than 6 months).

I found food prices in the UK about the same as you'd find in NZ although it was probably a bit pricier to eat out.

My travel insurance cost about \$800 for 6 months (including travel around Europe beforehand) with no excess.

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

I started out with a Travelex travel card and would buy currency at a fixed rate to load onto my card – I used this for about 3 months and then switched to my normal ANZ Visa card as some of my friends had said it worked out to be cheaper (which it was!!).

Overall I would definitely recommend using your visa debit card if you bank with one of the big banks like ANZ, Westpac etc. (some of my friends using smaller banks such as kiwi bank struggled with the overseas charges). My Visa debit ended up with a better exchange rate and it was much easier to be able to use my normal internet banking to track all of my transactions rather than go through the Travelex website.

Visas & Insurance

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

I didn't have to apply for a visa – coming from NZ you simply have to see an immigration officer when you arrive at a UK airport (DON'T go through the E-gates – I made this mistake and it wasn't easy to fix!) and show them documentation such as bank statements and your university approval letter.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were lots of organised activities available to students – the University itself has two student unions, each with their own multi-storeyed building including a bar/venue, café and offices. The student unions put on social events/gigs each week so you had your pick of either to attend – these were fun and I would recommend going to a few during your time in Glasgow as you can meet the local students here.

During orientation week, there were multiple events each day and night available to exchange and Erasmus students to allow us to all meet each other and hang out, you just had to sign up to these beforehand. Some of these events were better than others but I would definitely recommend all of the night-time social events so you can get to know other international students in your first few weeks!

As well as these, there was a multitude of cultural clubs, sports teams and societies available to join. I joined the international law society which was a good way to meet other international law students as well as law students from the UK – they had a lot of fun events that you could go along to and I would recommend joining if you study law! One of my flatmates from Australia joined the Rugby team which he really enjoyed and met a lot of domestic students through the events that they put on for him.

What was the university/ city like?

The University was amazing – the building itself looks like something out of Hogwarts and has some impressive alumni to its name. I really enjoyed all of my classes/lecturers and found the University very impressive. Glasgow itself was different from what I expected – it is quite industrial and doesn't have the beautiful architecture or streets that you will find in places like London and Edinburgh. The weather was also pretty bad, with non-stop drizzly rain filling many of the days although I loved the frosty white days around Christmas!

The people of Glasgow are very friendly and the University area/West End is full of cool and cosy bars, pubs, cafes and restaurants. If you are looking for a true UK University experience at an amazing world-class University with the beautiful highlands and scenery of Scotland only 30 minutes away then I would highly recommend studying at the University of Glasgow! However, if you are looking for an exotic, sunny and totally different experience from studying at Otago then the University of Glasgow may not be for you.

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

My favourite places to go in the West End (where the University is located) were:

- Ashton Lane - a cute little cobbled street with fun bars and restaurants and a cool cinema
- Kember & Jones and Cottonrake – my two favourite bakeries for good coffee and delicious baking
- Bar Soba – a good Asian fusion place with a good 50% off student discount if you sign up!
- Ramen Dayo – yummy ramen on Ashton Lane
- Lots of Op Shopping along Byres Rd and around the West End – highly recommend!
- Loop & Scoop – gelato and churro shop
- Kelvingrove Museum – free entry museum/art gallery with some great modern and classical art

I'd highly recommend going on the student bus tours that go to places up in the Highlands and Isle of Skye – they're a fun way to meet new people and explore more of Scotland on a budget. Check out the rest of Scotland when you can – we enjoyed day trips to St Andrews, Stirling and Edinburgh.

I used the student gym (which was free for those living in student accommodation) a lot – it is right on campus and has an expansive gym, pool, sauna/steam room as well as a bunch of great classes to take part in.

Any tips for future students?

Do as much exploring as you can and get amongst the University life at Glasgow! There are so many opportunities to be part of the student community and if you pick the right papers I think you'll find them really interesting and valuable.

Overall Experience

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

I can honestly say that my exchange experience and the travel that I was able to do as part of it has been the best time of my life. Living in a new city with no one from New Zealand around me, surrounded by amazing other international students was such a fantastic opportunity and one that has really changed my outlook on life. I met a lot of inspiring and different people, a few of whom I am sure will be my lifelong friends. As long as you are willing to try and get the best out of this experience I am sure it will be life-changing for you as well. Good luck and have fun!!



