



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Prague University of Economics and Business
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2 2024
Otago degree(s)	LLB and BCom
Major(s)	Economics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
International Trade, Investments, and Innovation	English	ECON300
Introduction to Game Theory	English	ECON300
Behavioral Economics and Public Policy	English	ECON300
Introduction to Law and Economics	English	LAWS400
From Kafka to Havel: Introduction into the History and Culture of Czech Lands	English	LAWS400
Basic Czech for foreigners (A1)	English	LAWS400

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

Any comments about these papers?

I would highly recommend doing Behavioural Economics, Game Theory and Basic Czech for foreigners. These courses were taught really well and had a very manageable workload. Only bummer was that Game Theory was on a Friday but the lecture slides were available and very informative.

I would not do International Trade again if I could, as the lectures were hard to understand and the seminars seemed unorganised. Also there are lots of assignments and group projects throughout the semester that are only worth 2 or 3 marks each.

Both Czech History and Intro to Law and Econ were easy.

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

There seemed to be a greater emphasis on presentations here for internal assignments, rather than essays or assignments. The work load was pretty easy to manage and was generally less than what you would expect from Otago. Different lecturers used different platforms to teach, so you had to figure out INSIS, Moodle and Microsoft teams.

Accommodation

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

I was in Eislerova Kolej, the student dorm. I had a roommate in my room, which we shared with another room with 2 people in it a kitchenette, bathroom, closet space and a balcony.

Pros

- Cheap and easy to arrange
- Close to all the other exchange students there
- Cheap bar (Magneto's) down the road where the students drink (\$3.50 NZD for a Pint)
- Supermarkets 2 trams away
- Basketball and tennis courts, small gym, half size football turf, study rooms, big kitchen that can be rented

Cons

- 20ish minute tram ride from university and town
- All of the services you use are charged to your account (EG washing machines, the gym), and must be booked in advance. However they were pretty cheap
- Limited space to socialise as the rooms are small, so it was often in the common room we rented or at the bar down the road
- We had bed bugs for a couple of weeks but the dorm manager was quick to act and covered the costs of removal

Money matters

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

Accommodation - \$2600 NZD for a shared room for the entire semester, paid when you first arrive

Supermarket – roughly \$70 NZD a week

- The university canteen does lunch for about \$6 NZD every day, where you'd get a pretty decent meal

Flights - \$3600 NZD return

Insurance - \$950 NZD for general travel insurance from Student Safe that covered all of Europe

- \$600 NZD for VZP Prague Health Insurance for Foreigners, which is required for your VISA

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

I had a wise account and card which is basically an international debit card with low fees. It was super easy to transfer money from my NZ bank account into my wise account, which you can convert into different currencies with minimal fees from there. Revolut offers a similar service which most of the other exchange students were using.

Some places still only take cash. There was an ATM right next to the dorm which did not charge fees, so we mainly used that. Otherwise Raiffeisen Bank ATM's had very low fees as well.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes, and it was very onerous to complete. It involves gathering about 8 different documents, getting a few officially translated into Czech and sending those, along with your passport, to the embassy in Sydney. It takes far longer than you think – I only managed to get my passport back from the embassy a couple of days before my flight out of New Zealand, so get onto the application process as soon as you can.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, they required a specific insurance for foreigners, which can be found on the embassy's website.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There was heaps of activities and social events put on for exchange students in the first couple of weeks. I would recommend going to the boat party and the ice breaking weekend, as this is a good way to meet everyone in a fun environment. Nation2Nation host parties at clubs in town which are also a pretty good way to meet people.

The University also hosts weekend trips away, and I had a great time on the trip to Krakow. There were others to Budapest, Pilsen, Karlovy Vary and other Czech towns.

5 aside football tournaments were hosted as well.

What was the university/ city like?

The university was smaller than I expected, comprised of 4 main buildings about 15 minutes from the centre of town. The only time I really spent there was to attend lectures or have lunch in the

cafeteria, as the library was very small. I preferred to study in café's that were close around, such as Café Pracovna, Café Edu or the Science Library.

Prague city is unbelievably beautiful, which is why I preferred to spend my time around town then at the university. There are so many café's, bars and nice shops you see while walking around, and it does not feel too busy or crowded. Be wary of the trams though, I had a few close calls walking around at night.

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

Bars/Clubs

- Magneto's bar, next to the Student Dorms, does super cheap drinks and was the hotspot for exchange students
- Dogs Bar – probably the coolest bar I've ever been to, is a network of hallways underground with a DJ room and a live music room, as well as cheap drinks (stay away from the absinthe)
- Keep an eye out for techno gigs hosted by Komiks warehouse (Instagram), we went to one in a warehouse and another on a boat which were very cool (wear black)
- Dubliner/Rocky O'Reilly's – Irish bars with a cool vibe and good pints of Guinness
- Duplex – big commercial club that is always open throughout the week, can get free tickets as a student through the Erasmusinprague Instagram page
- I never went but also heard great things about Biker Jesus and Fuchs2

Activities

- Sparta Ice Hockey games are cheap to go watch and are heaps of fun, did not realise they were such a big deal over there
- Sparta Praha football games
- Riegrovy Sady Park on sunset
- Letna Park – great place to go running
- (a)void café – great place for coffee/beers
- Day trip to Bohemian Switzerland
- Brewery Tour

Any tips for future students?

Keep an open mind to new experiences and get out of your comfort zone – this was the best piece of advice given to me before I went travelling and I'm so glad I tried my best to follow it. I learnt a lot while travelling and I feel like I have developed more as a person.

Overall Experience

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

Prague I think is one of the best cities to live in as a student in Europe. It is affordable (cheaper than Dunedin), has an amazing public transport system making it super easy to get around and explore, is

safe and has a lot of events going on. It is busy but not crowded, and the university ensures there are plenty of opportunities to make friends and meet people from all over the world. I now have new friends from all over the globe who I'll visit in the future, and even a few friends who I've convinced to visit New Zealand!

