



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Edinburgh
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 2018
Otago degree(s)	BA
Major(s)	Psychology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Psychological Therapies	English		20
Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience: Infancy	English		20
Music and Technoscience: Cultural and Historical Perspectives	English		20

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed the Psychology courses that I took at UoE. The department is fantastic and the lecturers are so friendly and helpful. The content of the courses is also really great and includes really recent studies.

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

There were a lot less contact hours than there are at Otago. It was mostly independent learning, which means that you have to be really motivated to complete your work. There were also a lot less assessments. I only had 2 assessments per course across the whole semester.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Fraser Court, which is one of the university accommodations. This was self-catered and was comprised of blocks of flats. I was in a flat of 4 people. I really liked Fraser Court. It was recently done up so the rooms were quite nice and the common area had great facilities, such as a pool table, a TV, and plenty of space to chill out or study. It was quite different to the typical Otago Uni accommodation, because you got to know the people in your flat rather than having a whole floor to get to know. It was a 15 minute walk to the university and a half hour walk to the main street, so the location wasn't ideal, but it was a good place for science students to live because it was between the science campus and the humanities campus.

Money matters

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

Accommodation: \$4000

Flights: \$2500

Food: \$70 per week

Insurance: \$700 for 1 year

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

I just used my visa debit card. I bought a cash passport but didn't end up using it. I used an ANZ account to withdraw money overseas because they don't charge any overseas ATM fees, just the conversion fee. I didn't set up a foreign bank account as it seemed like too much of a hassle for only 4 months.

Visas & Insurance

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

No I did not have to apply for a visa.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

It was required to have some sort of insurance that covered certain things. I bought 1 year of travel insurance from STA travel and that covered the things that were required by the university.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

I joined the International and Exchange Student Society, which organised heaps of events for international students, including trips around Scotland. I also joined the Psychology society. They organised lots of academic talks on different branches of psychology.

The University of Edinburgh has heaps of different societies that you can join. There is definitely something for everyone. I had to stop myself from joining too many clubs because I just wanted to join so many.

What was the university/ city like?

The city is very much a university city, with 5 universities in Edinburgh. There is always something going on, so the hardest part was making a decision about what to do.

Edinburgh is a very international city. The university has a large amount of international students, so it is a great place to meet people from all over the globe.

I fell in love with the buildings in the city. There is nothing to compare them to in New Zealand, and I have never travelled to a city quite like it.

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

Edinburgh is a really cool city to just wander around and see what you stumble upon.

The student union building (Teviot House) has heaps of bars and cafes inside and they do great food and drink deals.

They say that you have to walk up Arthurs Seat during freshers week for good luck on your finals, so that is a must. It's a super easy walk and only takes about 20-30 minutes to get from the bottom to the top.

Stockbridge market has some great food and runs every Sunday.

Any tips for future students?

Try to get involved in as much as you can. It is such a great university that offers so many options, so there's something for everyone. I found that the best way to meet people was through the societies that I joined through the university, so really make an effort to get involved in those.

I think the International and Exchange Student Society is a really awesome society for international students to join, because you can meet so many people from all over the world, including international students that are completing their full degree at Edinburgh.

Overall Experience

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

Exchange was such an incredible experience. As cheesy as it sounds, I really did learn so much about myself and had some amazing experiences. I made so many great friends from all around the world and went on heaps of cool adventures around Scotland and the rest of the UK. I'll admit that there definitely were some tough times trying to adjust to a new city and not knowing anyone in the city, but that just made me much stronger and much more confident to approach others and start a conversation. Studying at a different university took some adjustment, because teaching styles and assessment guidelines vary a bit. However, the lecturers were very passionate about their work and the content that they were teaching, and were always available to answer questions. Exchange was a great way to get to know a new city and a new country. The university offered a lot of ways to get involved with the Scottish culture. I went along to Ceilidh's and tried the local beer and whiskey, as well as haggis!



IESS trip to Isle of Skye



IESS trip to St Andrews



Victoria St, Edinburgh – Great food shops and leads to Grass Market, a really cool area.