



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Amsterdam
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1 2019
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Finance and Economics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Development Economics	English	ECON 303	14.4
Game Theory	English	ECON 300	14.4
Labour Economics	English	ECON 301	14.4
Environmental Economics	English	ECON 200	14.4
Political Economy: Dialectic Methodology	English	ECON 300	14.4

Any comments about these papers?

The papers were a bit of a step up from what I had previously done at Otago. There was a mix of assessment style with some papers having midterm and final exams and some just having assignments.

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

The system is quite different to Otago, with the semester split into two halves with different classes in each half. Because you only have 6 weeks for a course, you are expected to do quite a lot of work and keep on top of things from the beginning. It's worth noting that there are no official breaks, only exam periods so if you take courses with exams you might not really get any breaks.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Prinsengracht student housing run through De Key for the university. It is one of the only canal house options for student housing, and I had a view of the canal from my room which was really nice. It was one of the older buildings, definitely not as modern as some of the other buildings however, and was pretty basic but was fine. The location was really good, within walking distance of pretty much everything and probably the most central student housing available. I also shared my room with a roommate from China which made it super affordable.

Money matters

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

My rent was about NZD\$135 per week, paid monthly. I found food was a bit more expensive than New Zealand.

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

I used a Cash Passport and it worked fine for me. The supermarkets generally don't accept credit cards, so I always made sure I had cash as well. I think it can take a while to get a foreign bank account set up, so if you plan on doing that I would try and get an appointment organised early.

Visas & Insurance

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

I didn't have to apply for a visa as I have a British Passport.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes they had mandatory health insurance, however this was not checked. In my case I just had to declare that I would get it as part of the application process.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The International Student Network (ISN) runs an intro week and activities throughout the semester for exchange students. I would recommend doing the intro week to meet people and make friends, and the trips they offer are usually really good value for money so I would recommend them too.

What was the university/ city like?

UVA is a pretty big university with some students living outside Amsterdam and coming in to study every day, so it can get quite busy at times on campus. There are multiple campuses around the city with some buildings quite far out of the centre. I mostly biked to uni, but you could also get a tram or the metro or even walk depending on how far away you are.

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

There is heaps to do in Amsterdam – lots of markets, museums, concerts etc. so make the most of it! If you plan on going to more than maybe three museums it's worth buying a museumkaart which is about 60 euro and gives you entry to museums all over the Netherlands. There is a big flea market once a month in the north part of Amsterdam called IJ Hallen. It's the biggest flea market in Europe and you can buy clothes and random bits and pieces for very cheap prices.

Any tips for future students?

Enjoy your time in on exchange – it will go super quickly! Say yes to everything, you probably won't get the chance to do whatever it is again!

Overall Experience

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

I really enjoyed my exchange in Amsterdam. I met some really great people from all over the world and had so many great experiences that I couldn't have had in NZ. I got to party on King's Day, see the flowers at Keukenhof, live 10 minutes from Dam Square and see amazing historical architecture every day. I could bike to uni every day and had plenty of free time to explore the city. The opportunity to travel to other countries close by is so worthwhile as well. I got to travel to lots of other countries in Europe and Africa which I loved.



