



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Bristol
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2 2025
Otago degree(s)	LLB/BSc
Major(s)	Psychology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
World in Crisis?	English	Geography
Approaching the Object	English	Arts
Law and Policy of the European Union	English	Laws

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

Any comments about these papers?

I think Law and the EU was a good paper to take as an incoming law student because everyone is on the same footing (i.e. UK students are also unfamiliar with the EU legal system). World in Crisis was an interesting, broad paper—many topics are covered by different lecturers. Approaching the Object was a History of Art paper and every week we'd visit a different site in Bristol. I'd highly recommend it as it got me to areas I probably wouldn't have seen/known about otherwise. Art History was also not on offer in Dunedin when I went on exchange—so it was nice to be able to try my hand at it.

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

Learning is definitely a lot more self-directed than Otago. Each week usually has more reading to do than classes—in fact I think I only had about 10 hours of contact time a week and possibly 2-3

articles/readings for each of those classes (varying depending on the subject). Reading content is usually not covered in class, so keeping on top of it yourself is really important.

The university expects you to manage your workload independently. A lot of weighting is put on end of semester exams and assessments—there aren't really opportunities to build up your mark or get feedback during the semester unless you're very proactive about reaching out to tutors and lecturers. Group projects in first year papers are more common than Otago but this was a great way to meet some new people.

Attendance is expected for most classes, and students check in to the lecture theatres with the University of Bristol app.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in halls, specifically Brunel House. It's at the bottom of Park Street, which leads up to the main campus (about 5 minutes walk from the law school). While the location was great as the crow flies, Bristol is a really hilly city so planning ahead to get to classes on time is definitely something to get used to. That being said, it's probably one of the closest halls to campus.

Brunel is close to the harbourside and city centre. I had an ensuite and shared a flat with 10 other people, which was a great way to make new friends. We shared the kitchen and lounge. There is barely an outdoor area, which might bother some people, and I have to pay for laundry on top of my fees.

Accommodation in the North Village is more similar to the old colleges in Dunedin (think Selwyn and Knox)—these are older buildings and tend to have more of a hall culture. The only downside is it is very much out of the way of campus, and students need to bus in every day. That said, the North Village has a bit more of a community than the halls dotted around the city centre.

Money matters

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

Brunel House – 7200 NZD for the semester (bills etc included, think of it as paying for halls back at Otago). Flights – 3000 NZD total, although I spent time in China on the way there and back, so this may affect that price. Visa – not applicable, as I have a UK passport. Food – I spent roughly 36 GBP a week on groceries, and a further 30 GBP on events throughout the week (around 130 NZD total, but I was doing something every weekend, you could definitely be more conservative). Insurance – roughly 900 NZD, though this covered three months of travel in addition to my time studying. I bought an eSIM plan with VOXI which was roughly 30 NZD a month and gave me unlimited social media usage, calls and texts, and 120 GB of data.

I'd say on average, my total costs (including trips out of Bristol most weekends, groceries, and events during the week) would probably amount to about 300 NZD per week.

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

I used a Wise account because I knew I'd be spending a lot of money in different currencies. It was really straightforward and can be used as both a digital and physical card. Each week I'd transfer NZD from my home bank account into the Wise app and use that for spending.

Because I'm a UK passport holder I was also able to set up a Monzo UK bank account which was useful for changing my app store (as it's a requirement to make the switch). This was also a bit easier for transferring money to and from my UK friends.

Visas & Insurance

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

No, I have UK citizenship.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Not that I can remember.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are 150+ clubs and societies at Bristol, so there's absolutely something for everyone. These range from social to political to cultural to sporting, and most clubs give you a chance to try them out in the first couple of weeks of the semester. There's also a big fair at the start of the semester where you can talk to members of the societies to gauge whether they'd be something you'd be interested in.

I highly recommend joining the Bristol Exchange Society as this was a great way to meet not only other inbound exchange students but also Bristol students who came back from exchange elsewhere. Many of my friends joined sports societies which offered weekly social events—these were a great way to meet other people and also keep active.

What was the university/ city like?

The university is not a campus university like Otago. It's spread over a series of streets, so getting from class to class can be a bit of a race. The city feels bigger than Dunedin, but the centre is very much full of students and has a great nightlife. Buses are pretty expensive (about 6 NZD one way) but they're relatively reliable and you can get long term passes if that suits you. One thing I wish I knew is how hilly the city is. The campus sits at the top of a hill so once you get there everything is pretty accessible.

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

A couple of places I went to on my Approaching the Object paper that I recommend visiting are Bristol Cathedral, the Mount Without, M-Shed, Bristol Museum and Gallery, the Bristol suspension bridge, and the Colston pedestal. Take the train to Bath, it's about 10 minutes away and a very pretty town. London is a 1h train or 2.5h bus away, and Cardiff is 1.5h by bus—definitely make the most of being able to take day and weekend trips.

For food and studying I recommend Fed in Clifton, Boston Tea Party, and Watershed by the Harbour. Arnolfini and Ah Toots are also great cafes.

Any tips for future students?

Use FlixBus and National Express to get coaches—they're cheaper than the trains if you don't mind a longer trip. If you do want to get trains, get a railcard as it'll pay off in about three or four trips. I'd also recommend getting supermarket loyalty cards (Nectar for Sainsbury's and a Tesco Clubcard) as these will get you the best deals. When furnishing your room when you arrive, UK students get free Amazon Prime and Sainsbury's can make deliveries to your accommodation—I found this helped especially because I didn't have a car. Join the central library for a large selection of books (this is also a great place to study).

Make sure you sign up to StudentBeans and UniDays with your UK student information as there are many deals on there for clothes, food, transportation and more. Too Good to Go also lets you pick up leftover food from cafes and restaurants which is great when you're on a budget and not too fussy about your meals.

If you have the savings and the time I'd recommend travelling while you're in this part of the world—it's so far away that you might as well make the most of it. If you do want to explore the continent for a longer period of time, look into a Eurail pass as it'll make train travel a lot cheaper.

In terms of papers, I'd make sure you save your 'elective' papers for your exchange—this gives you so many more options for papers while abroad and may even let you take something not on offer at home (e.g. Art History).

Overall Experience

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



I thoroughly enjoyed exchange at UoB! The student culture is very similar to Dunedin, and little things like the food and humour make it a lot like home. People are really friendly and it's relatively easy to make friends if you put yourself out there. The classes I took were really interesting and varied, and I was lucky enough to do papers not on offer at Otago. I will say that it was a very different academic experience, and it definitely challenged me—self-motivation and effective time management became my best friends. Through flats, societies, and my classes I have met so many awesome people and packed in a lot of fun activities (including day trips to Cardiff, Dublin, and London). I was also lucky to be able to travel across Europe for two months before my semester started as well, and I'd highly recommend this if you have the means to do it. This is such an awesome part of the world with so much to explore!