



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

<i>Host University</i>	University of Alberta
<i>Semester & Year of Exchange</i>	S2 2017
<i>Otago degree(s)</i>	Bachelor of Physical Education
<i>Major(s)</i>	Professional Studies

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
KIN 245 (Sports coaching)	English	EXCH non specific PE	200
KIN 207 (Youth in Sport)	English	EXCH non specific PE	200
SPAN 111 (Spanish)	English	Extra points	100
PERLS 323 (Aboriginal peoples and physical practices)	English	EXCH non specific PE	300

Any comments about these papers?

Really well structured. Lecturer for youth in sport was awesome and a really cool paper if you are wanting to work with the younger population.

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

The classes were much smaller and they ran like tutorials which was cool because you got to know everyone in your class. They were also way more interactive and in all classes at least 10% of your grade was based on participation so you were expected to contribute to class discussion. I found this tricky at the start but its great practice at developing and explaining your own opinion. The classes were also based on a lot of literature and studies so half of the class content was overiewing research and critiquing it which involved a lot of reading and home work. 4 papers over there = 3 papers here.

Accommodation

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

There are lots of halls to choose from at the University of Alberta. I stayed at Pinecrest House. It is located right beside International House and directly opposite the HUB and the Law buildings. I had such an awesome time at Pinecrest, mainly due to the people I met there. The people were mostly exchange students but also there were a few Canadians as well. It is set out like an apartment building. Each appartment contains four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen and lounge. The rooms are very very

warm and come with a double bed, desk, set of draws and a wardrobe. The downside is that the apartment didn't come with anything else so we had to go and buy a kettle and toaster and things to cook with.

Money matters

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

I worked at a summer camp in Montreal before university so I headed over in June. I didn't have much money before I left and was counting on the camp money to get me through until I started university. I then went travelling for 3 weeks round Canada before university started. Accommodation in Canada can differ a lot. The least I paid for a night's stay at a hostel in Vancouver was \$15CAD – great deal if you don't mind a mattress on the floor and a non-working bathroom. The normal amount for a good hostel would be \$50CAD for two nights. (you usually have to pay for two nights' stay). If you were travelling around I would suggest camping as it is by far the cheapest option and you can do it till about the middle to near end of autumn.

In terms of food the cheapest supermarket to go to is called 'no frills'. I definitely recommend this because it is so much cheaper than the others. Milk and eggs are around the same price but cereal was much more expensive. Also the cheese was orange – random.

Round trip flights to Canada cost me about \$2,000 NZD which is pretty normal. Flights in Canada are about the same price as in New Zealand but you fly far greater distances e.g. a plane from Toronto to Vancouver could be bought for \$350-\$500 whereas return tickets from Dunedin to Auckland are about that price.

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

Do not use loaded for travel with kiwibank. They were absolutely hopeless. I worked at a summer camp before University in Canada so I had to set up a Canadian bank account and that was really useful because some websites don't take visa cards and require credit cards if your card wasn't from Canada. Definitely get a cash passport or something similar for accessing your NZ account. You can put Canadian currency on it via online and they are really efficient.

Visas & Insurance

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

Visas were difficult to find out about. I ended up getting a study permit which cost about \$60. I didn't need it but got it because I wanted to work whilst I was at university in Canada because I knew I was going to run out of money. This got me a job no problem on campus.

Flying to Canada I flew through Hawaii so therefore I had to have an ESTA (an electronic travel visa to just transfer through America). On this ESTA I was able to leave the airport for the day and roam around Honolulu which was cool seeing as I had a 10 hour layover. Your ESTA is valid for 90 days so once you have flown through America it is activated and stays activated whilst you are in either Canada, America or Mexico. I wanted to go through America after my 90 days was up and I was told by an immigration officer I wouldn't be allowed to. I tried it at the airport anyway and it worked so I don't think they are too strict on it – try and get away with it if you can!

To stay in Canada you need an ETA, this lasts for 3 months so will cover you whilst on exchange and is only \$15. My study permit let me stay longer.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes it did. I got one for my whole six months I was there plus the university one because I was going to be skiing and kayaking and the uni one didn't cover those activities. I think it cost around \$1000.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are lots of clubs you can join. I joined the outdoors club and went on a few of their trips to Jasper and Banff which was fun. They also do a lot of day trips and you can hire outdoor gear from them so I definitely recommend joining up.

What was the university/ city like?

University is not that pretty to the eye, but it is so warm and has lots of libraries and food places on campus. It's also HUGE but quite easy to get around. It has a very cool indoor climbing centre too on campus which is great to spend the winter there. All students also get all buses and train rides free with their student cards which is epic, and the gym and pool is free as well and all on campus.

Edmonton is an absolutely massive city but its very low rise so it doesn't feel big at all. The night life is so fun and it's only a 15min walk from uni so you are only nearly but not quite hypothermic from the walk home. Has a huge mall. I'm not a mall person and it has seals in a very small pond in the middle of it so I stopped going but I'm sure it appeals to some people.

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

Go and see the Ice Hockey – probably my new favourite sport. Tim Hortons does really bad filtered coffee but its only \$1 and comes with cream so it's kind of a win. Go to 82 Ave NW, it has the best bars and restaurants.

Any tips for future students?

GO!!!! You'll love it

Overall Experience

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

I definitely learnt a lot about the world and how I want to fit into it. Met the most amazing people. There were ups and downs but was the best year of my life so far.





