



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Glasgow
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2 2023
Otago degree(s)	LLB/BA
Major(s)	Law and Politics, Philosophy and Economics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Politic4002 – British Prime Ministers Since 1945	English	POLS300
Politic4168 – Global Energy Politics	English	POLS300
Politic4173. Shakespeare and British Prime Ministers	English	POLS300

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

Any comments about these papers?

These papers were very interesting as they enabled me to have a greater insight into the UK political system and history, especially the two papers on prime ministers. The Global energy paper also showed the differing world views on energy as we had a lot of different cultural perspectives in our classes. I had the same lecturer for two of the papers which was nice as he was very committed to helping his students and was passionate about what he was teaching. You could tell they would go the extra mile for any student if they needed it!

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

The papers were all Glasgow honours level which meant they were taught in small seminars of around 9-15 people which were 2 hours long, once a week. The classes were similar to a tutorial where prior reading was needed in order to talk about the topics. The lecturer would give us an overview and then the last hour was for more conversational analysis between us. Two of these

papers also required 200 word summaries on the topic for each class. All of the papers were internally assessed, with one of them having an online exam with a week-long submission window. The global energy paper had a paper-wide summit simulation where we were assigned countries to represent and spent the day trying to reach an 'international' agreement. Overall, I found more prep for each class was needed compared to Otago classes but because we only had one class a week the overall workload equalled out, it was just more based on your own independent learning.

Accommodation

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

I was in Murano Student Village which is one of the biggest student accommodations at Glasgow uni. It was a long street filled with multi story buildings with a choice between flats of 4-5 or 9-12 people. I was in a flat of 10 which was filled with other international students. It was pretty basic hall living with a shared kitchen and bathrooms etc. They provided a duvet and pillows but all kitchen equipment needed to be provided by us so our flat just each brought a few things and shared. They don't have RA's or anything, just a central building where you can ask questions or get help if you need so felt like we were flatting rather than back in halls again. Washing is done through circuit laundry which is fairly expensive compared to free washing in halls at Otago. (about 6GBP for a wash and dry cycle).

Murano is about a 25 minute walk into uni but it is all flat and you walk through the west end which is a nice area of Glasgow with lots of shops, cafes and restaurants! Plenty of pubs and things to do around this area as many students live there. I knew some people that lived closer in student apartments but these were definitely less social than Murano.

Money matters

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

Accommodation was about \$5,500nzd for the semester.

Flights return were around \$3,300 and we had booked these quite early on.

No visa is required if you are in the UK up to 6 months.

Groceries were pretty affordable compared to NZ and there were always reduced items etc. there were lots of smaller supermarkets in the west end (M&S, Waitrose, Tesco express) that were more convenient to buy from but are a little more expensive than the big Tesco which was about a 20 minute walk from Murano. Eating out was slightly more expensive than NZ – a Sunday roast being about 18GBP.

I used the student outbound insurance that Otago exchange office recommends with a \$0 excess and it was about \$700nzd.

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 card which was perfect for this and very easy to set up and you can add heaps of different currencies onto it. It is also great if your friends have it as you can transfer between accounts easily.

Visas & Insurance

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

No visa was needed for the UK under 6 months.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

yes

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The uni had so many activities going on all of the time. They have 2 main student unions which put on events so it is good to follow them on Instagram. There are lots of societies that have opening evenings to get new members (usually with free drinks) so those are great to go along to at the start of the semester to find things to do and meet people.

There is also a facebook group that organises trips around the Scottish highlands for international students. I went on a day trip to Oban at the beginning of the semester which was great to see some of Scotland.

The Uni gym is really good with a pool and a sauna and steam room. They had great spin classes and yoga. Membership was about 25gbp a month but if you wanted to be in a sports team you needed to pay 99GBP to the sports society which gave you access to the gym and the ability to sign up to a sports team. I looked into doing social netball but you had to pay an extra fee to join and I was travelling a lot during the semester that it wasn't really worth it, especially because social games worked on a first in first served basis so was hard to get a spot each week.

What was the university/ city like?

The University is so gorgeous and had lots of modern buildings too. It is in the West End which is a nice area to live in with lots of cafes and pubs etc. Glasgow has an underground system which just runs in a circle so we would catch it into town (10 mins) for the bigger shops and bars. Generally, the west end had better nightlife though unless it was for a gig. Kelvingrove park and the botanical gardens are all very close to Murano/uni which are nice to walk around as well. There are so many op shops in the West End which had great bargains.

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

I would definitely recommend going up into the highlands earlier in the semester while it isn't too cold, Ben Nevis the tallest mountain in the UK is in the glen Coe area and has lots of great walks and views. If you can rent a car that is the best way to go to the highlands, but otherwise the organised trips with coaches are good too!

Edinburgh is only a 45 minute train away so we went there for the RWC finals and just caught the last train home (otherwise busses run all night). So it is very easy to do day trips there!

I would recommend going to a ceilidh, which is a traditional Scottish dance. They teach everyone the dances and it's very casual and lots of fun. Glasgow has great comedy shows at the Stand which is a walk away from Murano. Lots of pub quizzes and things to get around as well. The app RA guide is also helpful for finding events on nearby.

Any tips for future students?

Just say yes to everything! There is so much to do in Glasgow you just need to scope it out. Going to uni events was great to meet people and there is definitely a bigger emphasis on societies than at Otago. I would also recommend not forgetting to explore Scotland while you're there as it is easy to get caught up in flying everywhere else!

I would also recommend a raincoat and an umbrella because it does rain a lot!

Overall Experience

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

Overall I am so glad I went to Glasgow! There is always something on either trips or events and the people are so lovely. It felt really safe and due to many street names being similar to Dunedin, eventually Glasgow felt a lot like home. The city's slogan is "people make Glasgow" and they definitely do! The accents are hard to understand at times but people are very chatty and helpful. I used my time there to travel Europe as well and there were always really cheap flights on Skyscanner either from Glasgow, but more often Edinburgh. We went to Dublin for 30GBP return and got a flight to Mallorca for 16GBP. There is a direct bus from Glasgow centre city to Edinburgh airport which made it easy to catch the cheaper flights out of there.

I would definitely recommend Glasgow to anyone wanting to go on exchange, it was one of the best things I've done and wouldn't change anything!