



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	Aston University Birmingham
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 2 2023 (Aston T1)
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Double Degree: Bachelor of Laws; Bachelor of Commerce
<b>Major(s)</b>	Marketing

### Academics/ course load

*Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?*

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>
BH2274 Employee Resourcing	English	200 Level Management Paper
BM2288 Fundamentals of Strategy	English	MART 301 Strategic Marketing
BM3336 Innovation and New Product Development	English	300 Level Marketing paper
BN2214 Enterprise Systems	English	200 Level Management Paper

Total Otago credits gained:  54 points  72 points  108 points  \_\_\_\_\_

*Any comments about these papers?*

None of my papers had exams, which was amazing as it allowed for travel at the end of my exchange. All of the papers were relatively easy, compared to Otago.

BH2274 – Just had one assessment for the entire semester, which you hand in at the end.

BM2288 – IS the equivalent of the compulsory 300 level strategic marketing paper.

BM3336 – presentation style (only one assessment of just a presentation) you have to create a product and then present it. Was my favourite paper.

BN2214 – Operations Systems – One group assignment, and one assignment at the end. I really enjoyed this paper.

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

Style of teaching is quite different. Not many papers have exams, instead it is discussion based with regular assessments, or just one assessment for the entire paper.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed in William Murdoch, which I highly recommend. It is right on campus, and you are put into an apartment with all other exchange students which makes it easy to meet other people in the same situation. You are also with other British people in your building, making it easy to meet them. You share a kitchen with everyone in your apartment (4 other people) but have an ensuite bathroom in your room. I loved the accommodation. I would recommend staying on campus. I met a couple of people who were not on campus, and it was much harder for them to make friends. They also had to bus to university everyday which was 20 minutes, and it was a weird house. Definitely go for student accommodation.

## Money matters

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

**Flight** to London via LAX = \$1371. Please note if you fly this route you have to get an ESTA Visa for going through the US. I was scammed and paid about \$100 for it, when it is only supposed to be \$20NZD. So make sure you buy it through the GOVT website and not a dodgy 3<sup>rd</sup> Party.

I got **travel insurance**, which was the one recommended by Otago University. This was the student insurance one through Allianz. I **REALLY** recommend getting this. I never thought it would come in use, but I ended up having to make a claim for cancelled flights upon being stranded in Frankfurt Germany. Definitely get this. I think it was around \$500.

No Visa is required for studying for one semester in the UK.

**Accommodation Costs** = 155 pounds per week. This was a short-term lease so 2530.18 Pounds (\$5312NZD) altogether. This was required to be paid in a lump sum around the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. You had to pay a deposit well before arriving. I think this was around \$500NZD.

**Food:** Birmingham has a great fruit and veg market 3 days a week, so I would often shop there as it was incredibly cheap. I would buy about 5 avocados for 1 pound. Otherwise, there are a few supermarkets nearby, which are way cheaper than NZ. It is pretty cheap to live in Birmingham. You can walk everywhere if you are studying on campus. I never used public transport within Birmingham, unless I was heading to the airport or outside of Birmingham. I had come to Birmingham after doing 5 weeks in Europe and had not a lot of money left over, but it was so cheap to live there.

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

I used Wise which is an account which you can use in virtually any country. You can get a physical card, and use Apple pay for this. You can easily transfer money onto your wise account from your NZ bank account and can convert it into virtually any currency. Would highly recommend this.

## Visas & Insurance

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

No Visa is required for under 6 months. However, I would recommend applying for your loan to be interest free for this study period.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes, you are required to get insurance.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are so many clubs, and societies which you can join. You can sign up to join the exchange students club, which I would recommend so that you can meet other people in the same position as you. I think it is called ESN Aston, and they run lots of fun events so you can get to know heaps of people. There are literally so many clubs to join, anything you could think of. I joined the Running Club which I loved.

*What was the university/ city like?*

The University life is great. There is lots to do in the city, Birmingham has the Bull Ring shopping centre which is famous. The canals are beautiful, lots of bars and restaurants along them which me and my exchange friends would often go to. The nightlife is pretty big there as well.

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

Definitely visit the canals, there are lots of restaurants and bars along there which I loved. The German Christmas Markets are a must see! I had never experienced anything like it, it was absolutely beautiful. There are a few great cafes which we would study in at times, called Medicine Bakery or 200 degrees coffee. We would often go to All Bar One and the Alchemist for cocktails and drinks. The nightlife is great, there are places called Snobs, Walkabout, Prysm and Rosie's. This was great.

*Any tips for future students?*

Don't be fooled by the industrial nature of Birmingham. It's a great place to go to meet lots of awesome people from all around the world. It is in a prime location if your goal is to travel. I was away most weekends; with people I met on exchange. Its really easy to get anywhere from Birmingham, 2 hour or 1 hour train to London. Quick flights to the Netherlands, Scotland, Ireland, France (anywhere in Europe). The papers are easy, so I definitely recommend going.

## Overall Experience

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

My Exchange to Birmingham was honestly one of the best decisions I could have made. I met so many amazing people from all over the world, got to travel with them, and explore parts of the world which I never thought I would while still at university. It changed my life. I got to see the world from other perspectives, learn in a different learning environment, and most importantly make lifelong connections. It has caused significant personal growth, and I can't wait to get back over



there. I am still in regular contact with all the friends I made over there, we have a trip planned to Asia in a couple of years. It truly is amazing, but it is what you make it. You have to put yourself out there, be available to try new things and be open to people from different cultures. Although Birmingham is not the nicest city it is a great place to base yourself for travel and meet amazing people. I highly recommend it.





