



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Nova School of Business and Economics
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 of my third and final year
Otago degree(s)	BA
Major(s)	PPE

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Development Economics	English	ECON 303
Seminar in European Economics	English	ECON 300
Introduction to Modern Contemporary History	English	300 POLS paper

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points

Any comments about these papers?

These papers all had difficulties at times. They start off relatively intense, and mathematical. Since this is a shock to a BA student it felt harder at the beginning. But it got better, and they developed more theory that was easier for me to grapple with. They ended up not being too statistical as the lecturers understand the range of exchange student disciplines. But this was the exception rather than the rule: other papers do, as I will mention, have intense mathematical components throughout the entire course. If you are interested in econometrics, this is the place for you for sure. But if you are like me then there are also SOME courses that will work for you, but that still require some work.

These papers also had key similarities throughout them that made your learning applicable in each class. I particularly enjoyed developmental economics, and the Seminar in European Economics because the content was all completely new, and the professors were consistently engaged. However, while the Modern and Contemporary history paper was interesting, but it involved

memorising a book. The memorising – well, that was not so stimulating, but the course is well structured, and you do walk away with a good theory for international economic and political development. If you are interested in the book that the lecturer bases the course off it is called *Why Nations Fail*.

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

Since the school is a business school, NOVA in most cases expects a high level of math knowledge. This was not made known to me by NOVA, and many of the classes were completely out of my league as I am in the arts. However, if you go to NOVA and are in a similar boat to me – you are going to have to gamble and just see what the course is like during your first classes. This was the primary difference between the two schools.

Food is another difference. There is a fantastically cheap canteen on campus with healthy meals for about three euros. These meals are large too, and they change between days, but there is always a vegetarian and meat option. Also, there is a supermarket within the university which is also cheap and has everything you need (including a 3-euro pizza.) My point is that you do not need to worry about going hungry at Nova especially considering the distance from home that most students take.

That brings me to my third difference – proximity. You are most likely far away from NOVA. This is because many students, like me, choose to stay in Lisbon because it's interesting, colourful and there's plenty to learn there. But this means that you are not in a student hub of flats like Dunedin. Instead, you are in a huge city with all sorts of nationalities, ages and issues. This means the commute takes time – at least one train (from Cais do Sodre to Oeiras or Carcavelos) But this is easy and cheap enough – under 23-year-olds ride for free! Its also only an hour train too and they go regularly (from 5:30 am onwards.) Also, You can choose to live near campus in Carcavelos, and the area is beautiful. If you love to surf you will be on a world class wave too with university right, and I mean RIGHT on the doorstep (another beautiful difference.) There is accommodation at the University called Milestone, expensive but good.

Accommodation

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

I went with a flat that I found with Uniplaces (highly recommend.) I lived with one male who was working. The pros were that it was cheaper than Dunedin – roughly 400 euros monthly – which is just under \$190 per week, extras included (Wi-Fi etc.) It was also a beautiful Portuguese apartment that overlooked the world of Lisbon – stunning and stimulating.

The cons were that it was a wee bit small. But, apart from that – it was perfect – and the flatmate that I lived with was such a character. Although, it would have been hard if he didn't speak English.

Money matters

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

New Zealand in most cases is more expensive than Portugal. Food from Pingo Doce is the cheapest and almost everything, apart from milk, is cheaper. I was probably paying about 30-40 NZD per week for my dinners and breakfast, and then I had the uni lunches which were around 20NZD per week. So around 50 NZD for food in Lisbon – easily compensated for with a student loan weekly budget and perhaps only a dismal interference with your savings.

Visa. You need to sort this early as it takes a long time. You will need to go to wellington to the Portuguese consulate. They will then send this to Canberra to the embassy. This will then come back to you. BUT! Before you do this you really need to know what you need. The documents provided by NOVA were useless. Call or email the Consulate in wellington otherwise you will not have the required documents and you will fail to go on your exchange.

I also went with the Student Insurance recommended by Otago.

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

I would recommend a Wise card. But also, most places want you to pay cash. Many places DO NOT have Eftpos. I did not go with a foreign bank as it was so easy having wise; although, there is a bank at Uni that you can use (Aswell as an ATM right outside for cash withdrawals free of charge.)

Visas & Insurance

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

Outlined above, but good luck!

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No, but it's a good idea considering Portugal's presence of exciting activities and the death-defying surf outside your university. Similarly, I and many others got sick quite a bit – it's good to have a backup.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were many activities available to students. For example, there is the Student Union that ensured that students had something to do pretty much every weekend. However, these were expensive and so I did not engage so much in them. But they really will look after you socially if that is what you are looking for. There are trips all across the country.

Like Otago, there are also student clubs offered. I joined the Surf Club and took part in NOVA's Sustainable Development Club.

I would recommend getting involved in the ones that suit you, and choosing the activities that suit you as well. Thankfully, there are plenty of clubs that can satisfy this point. If you do not find a club that suits you, there are so many exchange students there that are friendly, and they may be eager to do unique activities too.

What was the university/ city like?

The University is modern, unlike the majority of the City of Lisbon. The university has a grand piano for you to play on, and glass is everywhere. While there is a glass ball that hangs in the centre of Lisbon, the majority of Lisbon is paved with fallen apart streets that curl the city in the most amazing way. Take a walk through the city with google maps on your side, a bus card and 10 euros and try some pastry, you'll forget all about the curling streets that try to trip you up. A trip that does not trip you up (generally) is the Metro. The metro is very accessible. Use it to get everywhere! Buses, like Flix Bus, go outside of the city (cheap!)

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

My favourite place was Ericeira. I recommend walking from Rebeira to Coxos along the coastal trail in Ericeira (you can get here from Campo Grande bus terminal and you do not need to pay if you have the monthly bus card.) I also recommend going to visit LX factory in Lisbon if you like art. Look for the tall apartment building and observe the many tags and sentences along the walls within the abandoned building (which is safe and official.) Find the places that make Pastel De Nata in Lisbon. These places are going to serve you FRESH Pastel De Nata, not frozen (although still good) Pastel De Nata. One of these places is in Rossio, in Lisbon.

Any tips for future students?

1. Sign up for the chats that are earlier introduced to you. They are on Whatsapp. They help a tonne with all the information you don't know.
2. There are so many exchange students, but you may not meet the coolest people at uni. Do try and find young people outside of uni too. There are some amazing people out there. I recommend trying to cultivate one of your habits from home in Portugal to do this. Do it within the community.

Overall Experience

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

This was such an experience. I recommend an exchange first for its challenge, then for its stimulation and finally for its food. My experience was longer than any semester spent in Dunedin. People says time flies when you're having fun, and in some cases sure, but there is something that happened to time over there that made it so long, and so very memorable. In short, I found my exchange experience totally unique. If you have the ability, I'm sure you will not regret it – wherever you end up going. Here are a few pictures of it all.

