



## Student Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Otago degree(s)</b> Bachelor of Physical Education	<b>Major(s)</b> Physical Activity and Health
<b>Host University</b> University of Alberta	<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b> Semester Two, 2017

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Research Methods in Kinesiology (KIN209)	English	Research Design and Analysis (PHSE 391)	3.0
Instruction in Basic Rugby (PAC117)	English	Applied Theory and Practice (PHSE231)	3.0
Canadian History of Leisure, Sport and Health (PERLS204)	English	History of Sport (PHSE204)	3.0
Adaptive Physical Education for Diverse Populations (PERLS207)	English	Unspecified 200 PHSE	3.0
			Total = (3x4) = 12 = 54 Otago Points

*Any comments about these papers?*

I mostly enjoyed my papers. A favourite would have to be the Rugby course that I took. It was very practical based with little time spent inside the classroom. As our paper was based outdoors it only ran for half of the semester to accommodate for when it starts snowing. Due to the shortened length of time it was a pretty full on paper with 3 x 3 hour classes per week, but most of this was spent outside learning skills and playing games.

Adaptive Physical Education for Diverse Populations was another paper which was quite different to any papers I had taken at Otago. It was based around activity modification for individuals with

impairments, however we learnt a lot about the impairments themselves. As well as this we were challenged to think critically about how disability was a social construct and evaluate how this was portrayed throughout the media. There were a lot of guest speakers and we also got to take part in some parasport labs! I'm convinced wheelchair rugby is more ruthless than rugby union.

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

I found the workload and style of teaching very similar to Otago. The main differences would be that the lectures ran for a little bit longer than Otago lectures, however you would have less lectures per week. For example, I had two 1.5 hour classes per week, which would usually be three, 1 hour classes at Otago. I found Alberta also put a lot more weighting on their midterms and most if not all classes has them; it was almost like a second exam period. This took a bit of the strain off at the end of the semester though, as you had already gone through a lot of the content and some classes wouldn't re-test you on things you learnt before the mid-term.

### **Accommodation**

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

I stayed in Pinecrest house which was a residential hall located to the East of the campus. The layout of Pinecrest is similar to that of City College where you have a lot of mini flats in one building. I shared a unit with three other girls, we each had our own room and had two bathrooms to share between us. The unit also had a kitchen and lounge area and was pretty spacious, I never felt like I didn't have enough space. Pinecrest was really close to uni and public transport, you didn't have to walk more than 10 minutes to get to most places on campus or to catch a train or bus from the central university transit centre. Each unit at Pinecrest had all of the furniture that you needed however one of the downfalls was that as a group we had to supply all of our own kitchen and cooking equipment as well as all of our own bedding. This became a real hassle at the end of the semester as we couldn't leave anything behind so had to try and sell/donate/chuck out everything that we had accumulated over the semester.

### **Money matters**

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

I think overall the total cost of the trip for me ended up being around \$10,000.

Flights \$2,500

Accommodation \$3,500

Insurance \$1,000

Food + Spending money \$3,000

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

I used a Cash passport card and I would definitely recommend this to anyone who was going to go on an exchange. I could use it just like an Eftpost card in shops without any fees, and I could also use it to get cash out from ATM's although there was a small charge when I did this. I also travelled to

the USA during the mid-semester break and didn't have any issues with the cash passport card over there either. The only annoying thing I found with the cash passport card is when you wanted to load more money onto it you had to be careful that you did it at the start of the week as it takes a few days to process and nothing gets done over the weekend.

## **Visas & Insurance**

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

As I was in Canada for less than six months I didn't have to apply for a visa or a study permit. The only thing that I had to get was an ETA which you can get online from the Canadian Government website.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes, the UofA had a mandatory health plan that all international students have to go on. However I still recommend getting full insurance coverage and not just relying on the Alberta health plan.

## **Extra-curricular/Social Activities**

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

There was always heaps of activities going on around the campus and lots of clubs to join. At the start of the semester there is a clubs fair set up in the main quad where you can go and have a look at what's on offer. I signed up for a learn to row programme and ending up joining the UofA rowing team, definitely one of the highlights of my exchange. I met so many amazing people through rowing and I got to travel to a few different places in Canada as well. If you're looking to try something new and fun I would definitely recommended considering rowing!

*What was the university/ city like?*

The university was a lot bigger than what I was use to but the facilities that were available to students were awesome. The gym which you could access with your Onecard (Student ID) had a lot of state of the art equipment and it was a great facility to use when the weather started to get a lot colder and running outside no longer became an option.

Edmonton was a cool wee city with lots of different places to explore. Downtown Edmonton housed the CBD and there was lots of high rise buildings, places to eat and things to see. The river valley was a beautiful place especially when the leaves began to change colour at the start of fall.

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

As I mentioned before I would definitely recommended joining a club or sports team. You meet a lot of cool people and get to go on a lot of cool adventures. The outdoors club is also a good club to join. You get weekly emails about upcoming trips that the club has planned and it is a good way to get out of Edmonton and explore some other areas of Alberta.

If you get the chance be sure to take a trip out to Banff. It's such a beautiful place and the mountains are incredible. Lake Louise is also really close to Banff and is definitely worth the trip.

*Any tips for future students?*

Layers are your friend! The weather starts to get really cold at the end of October and going outside is never fun if you are unprepared. I bought a pair of Blundstone boots which I wore almost every day once there was snow on the ground. They were super comfy and as long as I had a pair of good socks on my toes stayed warm and dry too; well worth the investment.

Eclass is a thing! Eclass is the UofA's version of blackboard. Lecturers post the slides, assignments and important dates on this. I didn't know that it existed until I was sitting in my first lecture and saw that the girl in front of me had it up on her screen. After a quick google I was back on the same planet as everyone else.

My biggest tip would be to just get amongst all that you can and enjoy the experience. Try to stay away from spending long amounts of time talking to people back home. It's always good to catch up, but they are always going to be here when you get back. I am guilty of trying to live my life back in New Zealand when I should have been living my life in Canada. You are only there for a short amount of time so make the most of it!

### **Overall Experience**

All I can really say is wow. What an incredible, crazy, eye opening experience. As a bit of a home girl I had never thought that I would voluntarily choose to live on the other side of the world. However I will be forever proud, humbled and thankful that I decided to tackle such a big adventure. During the application process I was so excited to get of Dunedin and try something new. The week before I left, this excitement had turned in pure terror. What had I gotten myself into?

When I arrived in Canada I slipped pretty quickly into the university routine. It was very surreal feeling like a first year student again, getting lost and taking in the new found environment. Something that I probably didn't do that I recommended others do, is to just let yourself have some time to adjust to the new place that you are in. Take time to explore your home, meet lots of people and just breathe in the Canadian air. It's okay to take a step back and let yourself be overwhelmed by the experience. Moving to another country is a huge change and no one is expecting you to settle straight away. However make sure that you don't get too caught up in it all, and end up closing yourself off to opportunity. Pick yourself up and enjoy your time while you can.

Although there were ups and downs to my exchange overall I can say with confidence that it was one of the most amazing, life changing experiences and I would do it all again in a heartbeat. The good, the bad, and the just plain ugly, all made the experience what it was and I feel very privileged to have had such an opportunity. You're exchange will be what you make it, so get out of your comfort zone, try something new and enjoy living life as a Canadian.

