



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	University of British Columbia
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester One 2019
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Arts
<b>Major(s)</b>	Psychology Major, Linguistics Minor

### Academics/ course load

*Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?*

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>	<b>Otago credit value</b>
PSYC305 Personality Psychology			
LING209 Clinical Topics in Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences			
LING140 Challenging Language Myths			

*Any comments about these papers?*

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

I found that the workload for these papers at UBC was similar to that of same level papers at Otago, however the papers tended to be structured to have more internal assignments throughout the term and final exams worth less of your final grade. I found, and other exchange students agreed, that marking of assignments tended to be quite soft, so although the student culture at UBC was to completely stress out and spend all night studying, most assignments and tests were of a very reasonable difficulty with nothing unexpected. The workload of three papers was perfect for me as it left enough free time to explore the city and surrounding area without feeling stressed about uni work.

## Accommodation

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

I was given an offer of residence at Walter Gage residence. This is a very large residence made up of three 17-storey towers with four apartments on each floor. Each apartment was made up of six reasonably sized bedrooms, a communal kitchen and living space, and a bathroom with two showers. I found that the communal spaces were much too small for six people, for example it was practically impossible for more than one person to be using the tiny kitchen at the same time. In saying that, my roommates tended to keep to themselves and most of them did not use the kitchen on a regular basis, so I was usually free to cook when I wanted to. Another thing to note about the communal areas is that they do not come equipped with anything (apart from fridge/freezer, stovetop, oven, and microwave), so you need to bring your own cooking equipment, plates, bowls, cutlery etc. As I arrived in their Term 2, my other roommates had already been living there for a term so had collected many kitchen things amongst themselves, with some things such as tea towels, cleaning supplies, and a few utensils, that they were using communally. After arriving I headed to Ikea and picked myself up a frying pan, pot, cutlery, plate, bowl, mug, and a few other essential kitchen items. Bedding is also not provided so other things on the Ikea list were sheets, duvet, pillows etc. My favourite thing about Walter Gage residence was the location. It is located right on campus so a five-minute walk will get you to most classes, the student building, multiple food outlets, libraries, and the central bus loop.

## Money matters

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

Accommodation cost approx. \$3000CAD

Student fees (including iMED and UPass) cost approx.. \$430CAD

Return flights (AirNZ) approx. \$2700NZD (expensive airfares because departed during Christmas holidays)

Visa \$7CAD

Food costs worked out to be similar to what I what spend in Dunedin, with some things such as meat being slightly more expensive – I would recommend signing up for savings cards at the supermarkets you will be frequently using (e.g., I used the More Rewards card to get savings at SaveonFoods).

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

To access my finances while overseas, I used a Loaded for Travel card. I found this to be super easy to use, you just loaded money in their supported currencies onto your card with the current

exchange rate and then use it like a visa in-store and online wherever you go. I used this for my whole exchange trip in Canada and throughout the US, and so never had to carry cash.

## Visas & Insurance

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

As I was studying for less than six months in Canada, I did not have to apply for a study permit. All that was required was an eTA (electronic travel authorization) as New Zealand citizens do not require a temporary resident visa. The eTA is easy to apply for online for a fee of \$7CAD.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

UBC had a mandatory temporary health insurance for international students that covers you for your whole term called iMED. However full year students are required to get another type of mandatory health insurance as well. You are automatically enrolled into iMED when you register for your courses and the costs added to your student fees.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

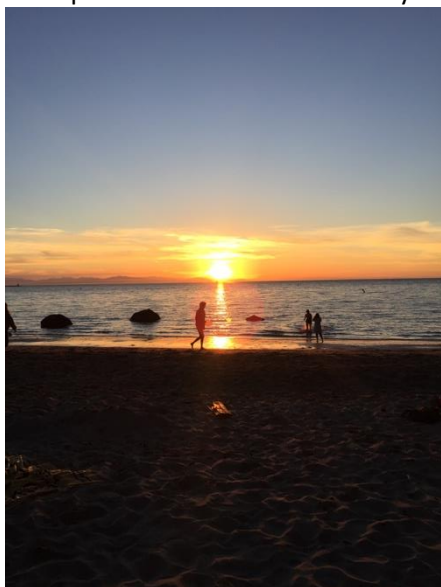
*What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?*

*What was the university/ city like?*

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

*Any tips for future students?*

There are so many clubs available to UBC students, you can join on clubs week. The best club I joined was the Exchange Student Club (ESC). I found that this was the best way to meet other exchange students, especially in the first week when they ran an intro week with lots of activities on and off campus. The ESC also ran weekly events such as movie nights and karaoke at the student bar, but



Sunset at Wreck Beach on campus

also larger trips such as weekends away in Seattle or the infamous exchange student ski trips. I found that the majority of exchange students got involved with this club and the events that they held, so most exchange students ended up knowing each other by the end of the term.

There are lots of things to do on the huge UBC campus, including two museums, an art gallery, the botanical gardens, beaches, and more. All basic amenities are provided for on campus, you don't need to walk far to get your study supplies from Staples, or your midnight McDonalds feast. There are a thousand café and food outlets around the campus and the nearest supermarket is a 5-minute bus ride away. UBC also has a mandatory public transport card called a U-Pass for students, that provides unlimited rides on the city's buses, Seabus, SkyTrain, and Canada Line trains. Not having to worry about paying or getting tickets for public transport was a big bonus, all you have to do is swipe your card.

Downtown Vancouver is only a 35-minute bus ride away, and the public transport is incredibly easy to use (I used google maps most of the time to plan my journeys and had no hassles). The buses can get very busy at times, and they like to squish as many people on to a bus as possible so be prepared to stand. There are also shopping areas closer to campus, such as Kits, whose main streets have lots of cafes and eateries as well as shopping.



Downtown Vancouver from Stanley Park

My biggest tip for future students is remember to tip! Tipping is generally expected when being provided a service, e.g., at restaurants, hairdressers, taxis, etc. It is customary to tip approximately 15-20% of the total bill. Some restaurants add this automatically when in larger groups, but most places you have to add it yourself. Luckily, when paying by Eftpos, most places have tipping options on the Eftpos machine that you can select so you don't have to do the math yourself.

## Overall Experience

*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience.*



Going on exchange to UBC was one of the best decisions I made during my time at university! The campus and city are beautiful, and there's always something to do or get involved in. A big bonus about Vancouver is that there are so many opportunities for travel, in the local area or even throughout North America. During the mid-semester break (or Reading Week as they call it) I travelled to New York with a couple of other exchange students, which was amazing and something I wouldn't have been able to do from New Zealand! It is also so easy to get down onto the west coast of the US, and I was lucky enough to travel that way with my family at the end of the semester, travelling down into California by car. Overall, UBC is a fantastic university, academically and socially, the campus life is great, and the accessibility to downtown Vancouver is easy and fast. I highly recommend UBC to future exchange students!



Snow on campus!