

Exchange evaluation

University of Bristol

Semester One – 2017

Bachelor of Arts – Majoring in Education, Minor in Management

Modules taken while on exchange:

EFFIM20018: Analysis in Management

SPOL32008: Children in a Global Context

ARCH20053: Gender, sexuality and the body

I remember the day I got officially accepted for my exchange like it was yesterday. I woke up at 0800 hours because the sun was streaming into my room and rolled over to my laptop for my routine morning check of my emails. And there it was, in all its glory, an email from Bristol University's Global Exchange Office, informing me that I had been accepted to complete a one semester exchange programme at their university. This was by far the most exciting news I had ever received, as traveling to and living in a different country for an extended period of time had been a dream of mine since I was in high school. I immediately got on the phone to my parents to tell them the news, who were equally excited for me. After listening to my parents screaming with joy down the phone for what seemed to be hours I made my way over to the Otago Global Exchange Office to inform my Exchange Advisor, Graeme France. Graeme had been by my side helping me through the lengthy application process which if done on my own would have been extremely confusing. Graeme was equally pleased with my exchange acceptance news, and suggested that I waste no time in arranging myself flights to Bristol, as well as accommodation for while I am living in Bristol. On hearing this I was straight out the door of Graeme's office and walked straight to STA Travel on George Street.

Choosing your course

The way your full time course load will be structured while studying at Bristol University will be a little different to what you're used to here at Otago. For starters your course load will be made up of modules, instead of papers. Taking three modules is enough to be considered full time, and if all passed successfully you will be awarded the equivalent of four papers, or 72 points here at Otago. Obtaining enrolment into the right amount of modules for your exchange at Bristol University can be confusing. First you have to sift through the modules that Bristol University are offering in the semester you will be there, reading each course description and comparing them to course descriptions of similar papers that are offered at Otago University. Following this you are required to meet with the head of your department, whether that is Humanities, Commerce or Science. Together you and the head of your department will decide which Bristol University modules are close enough to Otago

University's papers that they are deemed acceptable to be credited into papers relevant to your Otago degree. This process is officially up to the discretion of the head of your department, but I found that the head of Humanities, Angela Waddell and Ruth Gasson were very accommodating and acknowledged my explanations on why I thought particular Modules at Bristol University were applicable to Otago University papers. Once you have devised a list of Bristol University modules that are both taught in the semester that you will be on exchange, and accepted by Otago University, you then make an application to be enrolled in these modules. My exchange advisor Graeme was very helpful in this process also. I would expect all exchange advisors will be just as helpful, so do not hesitate to ask them for help.

Accommodation

Securing yourself accommodation in Bristol that is of a decent standard and in a good location can be difficult at first. Especially when you are required to apply for accommodation before arriving in Bristol as places are limited and you don't really know the city other than what you can see on google maps. If you ask me you want to request to be placed in 'self-catered' accommodation as this is where you will receive a greater level of independence and a larger amount of students are above first year. I personally stayed in Favell House and found it great. Favell House is part of what is called the three piece accommodation called 'River Side Accommodation' and also includes Waverly and Rakhay. The accommodation itself was warm, dry, and kept to a decent standard, the staff at the front desk were very helpful, and the location was good also surrounded by many bars and the centre of town. I made some friends who stayed in Orchard Heights, Courtrooms and Goldney Hall. Their accommodation was equally as nice as mine. Be prepared to pay more for accommodation than what you might be used to at Otago. But don't feel as though you are being ripped off, as everyone studying in Bristol is in the same boat when it comes to accommodation prices, and you will be getting it much cheaper than students who study in places like London and Singapore. We do have it pretty good when it comes to affordable accommodation here in Otago. Below are example photos of the room that I lived in while living at Favell House. This should give you a good idea of what kind of accommodation you can expect to live in.



Making friends

The prospect of entering a new country where you don't know anybody and having to make a whole new group of friends can be daunting, but I wouldn't lose any sleep over it. On the first night that your exchange starts, Bristol's Global Exchange team will throw a meet and great for all exchange students studying at Bristol University that semester. Take advantage of this as this will be your opportunity to meet the people you will be friends with for the rest of your exchange, as was the situation with me. Everybody will be in the same situation as you, in a new country and not knowing anybody. So you shouldn't feel nervous in approaching new people and striking up a conversation. During my meet and great most conversation started with one person asking what the other person's name was, and where they were from. It's a pretty relevant ice breaker and can result in having a much better conversation than if you had walked up to someone and commented on the current weather status. We all have smart phones these days, so try your best to exchange communication details such as Facebook and WhatsApp with a few people so that you can contact them to hang out at a later

time. Before you know it you will find yourself a solid group of people that will be the main group you hang out with and do activities with for the remainder of your exchange.

The city of Bristol

For me Bristol was a larger, more vibrant and busy version of Dunedin, with much more street art. There's always some form of entertainment going on at the water front, usually in the form of somebody busking. There are many amazing places to explore around the city, each with an abundance of incredible architecture and street art. Allow me to highlight some of my favourite places in Bristol that I would highly recommend you visit. You cannot go to Bristol for a semester without visiting the famous Clifton Suspension Bridge. Only a ten minute walk past the Clifton Hill House student accommodation, and is definitely a real treat. I would suggest that you visit this bridge at least twice throughout your time in Bristol. Once on a nice sunny day where you can get a true feeling of how high the bridge really is, and take some great photos. Then again at night, when the Bridge is lit up in its illuminated multi-coloured lights. Slightly to the left of the suspension bridge is my favourite bar and restaurant in Bristol, the White Lion Bar. This bar has an outdoor courtyard that looks across the valley, and straight at the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Another favourite area of mine in Bristol is Stokes Croft. This area is flooded with street art and hipster cafes and bars. The best place in my opinion to have lunch in Stokes Croft is a restaurant and bar called the Canteen. The Canteen is located in the heart of Stokes Croft and is very student orientated. Between the super friendly staff who are always up for a chat, and the amazing food I would highly recommend.

Some photos of Bristol are below:

