



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Warsaw School of Economic (SGH)
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2017
Otago degree(s)	DipGrad – Management
Major(s)	Management

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value (They use ECTS)
Polish for Beginners	English	N/A	4
Business Plan	English	Unspecialised MANT3XXX	3
Enterprise Science	English	Unspecialised MANT3XXX	3
Human Resources Management	English	MANT339	3
Organisational Behaviour	English	Unspecialised MANT3XXX	3
Project Management	English	Unspecialised MANT3XXX	3
Service Quality Management	English	Unspecialised MANT3XXX	3
Management in International Business	English	Unspecialised MANT3XXX	3

- Project management – the most frustrating course I have ever done! The teacher was extremely unorganised and provided no direction as what to include in our reports or what was in the exam – so definitely would not recommend this course!

The academic experience at SGH was very different from Otago. SGH uses ECTS, and I had to do 25 to equal 3 papers at Otago. Most courses are generally 3 ECTS which mean you have 1 1.5 hour class per week. Each course is run entirely as the teacher wants, they can even dictate the passing grade, so make sure you find out at the start of the semester! Generally the classes were a lot easier than Otago, although I found that I had to do a lot of work (e.g. weekly assignments) for each course, however it wasn't hard at all so was very quick and easy to complete. Towards the end of the semester it did get a bit frustrating with the exams because the teachers would tell you to study the whole course material and then the test would be 45 minutes. It was also very common for students to be on their phone during the exam and they were a lot more relaxed. You also have the option to resit if you fail your first try. There is a specified exam session, however most classes offer 'zero term exams' which are generally in the last week of classes, which most students do.

Accommodation

I stayed in the student dormitory 'Sabinki'. It was so good, not to mention cheap. I paid about \$900 for 5 months accommodation, including power and internet. It was in a really good location (about 5 minutes walk to SGH) and had a lot of exchange students there. However, it was quite basic and you needed to buy all cooking equipment, but the rooms were quite well furnished and I had everything I needed. The showers/toilets and kitchens were communal and cleaned daily. You also had to share a room, I didn't get along that well with my first roomie, but it was easy enough to change and things were a lot better from then on. I thought it was nice sharing a room, especially when you arrive and you don't know anyone, so it is nice to always have someone close by!

Money matters

Poland is very cheap! My biggest costs were the flights (\$2000) and insurance (\$600). For the visa I also had to fly to Wellington to go to the embassy and deliver the documents in person, but the visa only cost \$100. Food was again very cheap, as well as public transport. I think a 3 month ticket for the public transport is around \$60, which gives you unlimited travel on everything (the student ID card gives you half price discount). Eating out in a restaurant generally cost about \$10 on average, including a beer. I honestly didn't cook for the whole time as it was so cheap and easy and there are lots of really cool restaurants in Warsaw. Also important to remember that the student ID gives you lots of discounts everywhere in Poland (including the trains).

I had a airpoints onesmart card which was good as it provides you with free ATM withdrawals. However, everywhere accepts credit/debit card so I normally just used that. Some people opened Polish bank accounts but I didn't think it was really necessary.

Once you pay accommodation, you can easily live off the \$178 from studylink each week, it really just depends of the amount of travel you want to do, but overall I think I spent about \$7000 (plus studylink) including flights as I did travel a lot!

Visas & Insurance

You can apply for a visa on the (difficult to navigate) Polish embassy website. You need a Schengen visa (Schengen is a agreement between multiple European countries which means you can travel between them without showing your passport etc.) with multiple entries. I applied online and then had to choose a date to have an appointment, where I had to go to Wellington. They then had my passport and mailed it back to me with the visa.

SGH required that you have travel insurance, I had mine with Southern Cross – make sure it is a worldwide policy (at least covers travel and the countries you will be visiting) and I just had to send the uni a copy of the policy confirmation.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

There is a student organisation called ESN and they organise a lot of events through out the semester! They organise the Orientation week which was a good way to get to know lots of people. Other than that I didn't actually participate in many activities, but they do offer lots and it is all communicated through their facebook page. I probably wouldn't recommend the ESN trips that they did, as it seemed quite rushed and you could do it yourself for a lot cheaper.

The university itself was pretty standard. It was nice enough considering I honestly didn't spend too much time there haha. However Warsaw as a city is pretty cool! It isn't very touristy but there are so many restaurants, bars and cafés to go to which I really enjoyed. It is also a pretty safe place, and I lived about 10 minutes away from the city centre. Overall it's a very cool place to live!

As I said, Warsaw isn't very touristy, but there is so much history surrounding it. I actually only went to one of the many museums, the Jewish Uprising museum, but it was so interesting and would definitely recommend! My favourite place for breakfast was Petit Appetit, which was in the old town. Another good place for breakfast is Orzo, as it is only 1 zloty (50cents) when you buy a coffee! Around Poland, Krakow is a good town to visit, it is the most touristy with Auschwitz concentration camp and also the salt mines – so well worth a visit. I also went to Zakopane which is a town in the mountains and was very nice – especially nice to escape from the city!

Poland seems to run on its own clock, which can be frustrating at times, but you just need to go with it. Everything always worked out in the end, and the Polish people seem to know this so they are never stressed or worry about anything which takes a bit of getting used to.

Overall Experience

There is nothing I would regret about my exchange to Warsaw! It is in such a good location in Europe, not to mention cheap which makes it so affordable. I was able to travel every weekend which was definitely one of the highlights. I also really enjoyed living in Sabinki, you can compare it a bit to living in one of the student halls in Dunedin. Even though they don't have RA's and the food is not catered, it is a similar atmosphere.

Some of the websites that were useful for travel are:

- Skyscanner – shows you the cheapest options for flights pretty much anywhere
- GoEuro – shows all the connections between cities in Europe
- Polskibus – Polish bus line
- Flixbus – German bus line
- Intercity.pl – Polish train lines (you get 50% discount with your Polish student ID)

If you want a different experience to the rest of Europe, then I would definitely recommend Warsaw. When I was there I kind of had the feeling that I was living 20 years in the past, which provided some interesting experiences and some challenging moments, but I wouldn't change it for anything!

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by email (a.hales@hotmail.co.nz), or find me on facebook (Anna Hales). Happy to help with anything!