



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Edinburgh
Semester & Year of Exchange	2018 S1
Otago degree(s)	BA/LLB
Major(s)	Law, French

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Freud in France	English and French	FREN241, 341	18
Commercial Leases	English	Any 400-level law paper	15
Reasoning using Civilian Authority	English	Any 400-level law paper	15

Any comments about these papers?

Law students are not guaranteed spots in the papers at Edinburgh! I was lucky to be squeezed in but LLB students should be prepared to study only their other degree at Edinburgh.

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

There is a lot more focus on internal assessment. Two of my papers were 100% internal, which is very different from the way law is taught at Otago. I was taking 4th year 'honours' level papers, so there was a lot of emphasis on individual research. This meant very few contact hours – I only had class two days a week.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in University self-catered accommodation. My flat was called 'Fraser Court'. It was good to be able to cook by myself and live independently, and I met a lot of great friends in other flats.

It was also close to a big supermarket, and Holyrood Park (Arthur's Seat) was right next door. I would definitely recommend staying in university accommodation because you pay a fixed sum for power. Edinburgh can get very cold! The only cons would be that I was about a 20 minute walk from uni and the laundry machines were quite expensive.

Money matters

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

In \$NZ:

Flights cost just over \$2000

Accommodation was about \$3500 overall

\$200 ish for 6mth student visa

I would probably spend about \$50 a week on food

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

I wouldn't bother getting a UK bank account if you're only there for a semester. Most banks require you to be in the UK longer anyway. I would recommend either a cash passport or just going to your bank and arranging to pay a fixed conversion rate on your normal debit/credit card.

Visas & Insurance

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

I applied for a short term student visa. I just had to provide my acceptance letter and evidence that I had enough money to live in the UK. I also had to have my fingerprints taken at the High Commission. It was a relatively easy process. Each time I left and re-entered the UK, I had to get a new visa stamped in my passport at the border. This means you need to have a hard copy of your acceptance letter on you.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

I would definitely recommend going on the trips that the international students' association runs. It's a great way to meet other internationals and to see the best of Scotland. The same goes for the welcome events they run during freshers' week.

What was the university/ city like?

The University has a good academic reputation and most of my classes were really engaging. If you are in humanities or commerce, you will be in George Square, which is close to the centre of town. Maths and engineering will be in King's Buildings, which are a bit further away.

Edinburgh in general is such a beautiful and fun city! There is so much history and so much to do but it still has a nice, small city feel. I hardly had to catch a bus the whole time I was there – it was very walkable. Relative to Dunedin it's a bit more expensive but for a major UK city it's relatively reasonable.

It is a bit cold and grey in winter, and spring takes a long time to arrive, but once it does, Edinburgh is hard to beat.

The airport is relatively easy to get to, and from there you can reach almost anywhere in Europe.

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

The National Gallery and Portrait Gallery are both free and are really great collections.

Don't just stick to the centre of town! Dean Village, Stockbridge and Bruntsfield are really nice areas to visit. Arthur's Seat is a must, but I would also recommend the Salisbury Crags and Blackford Hill for walks.

I wasn't blown away by the food in Edinburgh, but Mosque Kitchen, Illegal Jack's and Ting Tai Caravan are decent cheap eats. 'Mum's' is great for traditional comfort food. Try Mary's Milk Bar on Grassmarket for some of the best ice cream around. In terms of cafés, I would recommend Cairngorm Coffee, Love Crumbs and Edinburgh Coffee Cake if you live in Newington. Greenmantle, Peartree and Dog House were the pubs we went to most often. If you're a whisky fan, definitely try the tasting flights at the Abbey (which also does a very cheap brunch).

Definitely get a rail card! You pay \$50 for it, but it gives you a third off every rail journey around Britain. I wish I'd known about it sooner!

You can get to London by train in about 4hrs, or closer to 6 if you want a cheaper fare. I would recommend catching the train to London if you want to visit. Flying may seem cheaper, but the airports are so far out from the city that you end up paying the same price and taking almost the same amount of time anyway.

Any tips for future students?

Travelling around Europe is fun but don't forget to make the most of Scotland!

Overall Experience

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

I can't recommend Edinburgh enough! Even though I was sitting my courses pass/fail, I still had an interesting and academically challenging semester. The city has a similar 'uni town' feel to it, and is very liveable. The contact hours for arts/law were very light, so I had plenty of time to go away on weekend trips. From Edinburgh airport I made it to Paris, Berlin, Prague, Budapest and Copenhagen. I also spent a lot of time travelling around Scotland and the UK. That said, don't try to go travelling

every single weekend. Spend as much time as you can getting to know Edinburgh – you will miss it once you leave!



The tail end of the 'beast from the east'



Sunset in Edinburgh