



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Otago degree	Bachelor of Arts	Major	German
		Minor	Linguistics
Host University	Tübingen Universität	Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2017 & Semester 1, 2018

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Startkurs (DaF)	German	GERM333	18 points
Kurzgeschichten (DaF)	German	GLBL202	18 points
Deutsche Nachkriegsgeschichte in Bildern (DaF)	German	MFCO316	18 points
Diskutieren, Argumentieren, Referieren (DaF)	German	GERM334	18 points
Introduction to Linguistics	English	N/A	N/A
Current Trends in Linguistics	English	N/A	N/A
Structure and Meaning	English	N/A	N/A
Morphology	English	LING300	9 points
Teaching Vocabulary and Working with School Texts	English		9 points

Einführung in die Sprachwissenschaft	German	GERM335	18 points
Migrationsliteratur (DaF)	German	GLBL101	18 points
Interkulturelle Kommunikation (DaF)	German	EURO302	18 points
Franz Kafka: Erzählungen und Kurzprosa (DaF)	German	N/A	N/A
Spanish	Spanish	N/A	N/A

Any comments about these papers?

I really loved all of the papers which I took at the DaF (Deutsch als Fremdsprache Fakultät). However, my favourite ones were Deutsche Nachkriegsgeschichte in Bildern and Migrationsliteratur. I would highly recommend checking out what the DaF has on offer! The linguistics department offer lots of great classes too, most of which are taught in English.

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

I found the workload at the University in Tübingen to be slightly higher than at the University of Otago – however, there wasn't a big difference. I found that I had to do more oral presentations in Tübingen than I did at Otago; however, I didn't have to write as many essays as I had to at Otago. I imagine that this varies depending on what sort of papers you are taking though.

When selecting which classes to take at the University of Tübingen, you will notice that there are two main types on offer: Seminare and Vorlesungen. Seminare are similar to tutorials at Otago. They are usually attended by a small number of students and the tutors do expect students to participate. Vorlesungen are essentially just the same as lectures at Otago – they are usually attended by many students and normally you just have to sit and listen to the professors' presentation.

Accommodation

I stayed at Münzgasse 7 – one of the Wohnheime which are organised by Studierendenwerk. The great thing about Münzgasse 7 is that it is located right in the center of the Altstadt (Old Town). Münzgasse 7 has three different floors, and there are approximately 10 bedrooms on each floor. Most of the students were German, but there were also a few other international students. I shared my floor with 10 other students. I had my own bedroom, and shared one kitchen and several bathrooms with the other students.

Money matters

In total I saved up NZ\$10,000 for my first semester on exchange. Although I did end up spending all of this money, I did a lot of travelling around Germany and Europe while on exchange. I think you could easily get by on considerably less money if you don't do much travelling. In the second semester of my exchange I was lucky enough to receive a Baden Württemberg scholarship. This was a huge help – definitely worth applying for!

I paid approximately NZ\$2,000 for a return flight from Christchurch to Frankfurt, which I think is a reasonably standard price. My room at the Münzgasse 7 cost 250 euro per month, which I think is reasonably cheap considering the location. I also had to pay a deposit of 400 euro which I got back a few months after I moved out. Overall, I found the price of food to be cheaper than in NZ – especially fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy products and meat. In Germany it is obligatory that you have health insurance. The University of Tübingen recommended that I sign up for health insurance at the AOK. However, after doing some research I found a much cheaper option. I signed up for health insurance with Care Concept which cost approximately 40 euro per month, about half the price of AOK health insurance.

What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend?

I organised a Cash Passport before I came to Germany and I found it to be really useful. It was super easy to set up – I was given a form by STA travel which I just had to fill in and send back, to get the card. However, I think you can also order one online. With a Cash Passport you can load money onto your card for free, from your NZ bank account. You can select which currency you want. While in Germany you can get money out from any money machine which has the 'Mastercard' symbol on it. While I was on exchange there was no charge for withdrawing money from ATMs, however, I have heard that they now charge a small fee for each withdrawal, so you might want to check that before leaving NZ.

I also signed up for a German bank account. I believe you have to do this if you are staying in one of the student residences run by Studierendenwerk, as they take the rent from German bank accounts only. I chose the Sparkasse because they offer accounts to students for only a small fee of 2 euro per month.

Visas

As a New Zealand citizen, I didn't have to apply for a visa. However, I did need to apply for a residence permit (Aufenthaltstitel). In order to do this you need to visit the Ausländeramt in Tübingen. They have unusual opening hours, do it's best to check that online before you go there. The good thing is that the Ausländeramt is located in the Old Town (Altstadt) which is not far from the University.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

There are heaps of different activities on offer to students at the University of Tübingen - in just about every field you can imagine. What I would really recommend to future exchange students, is checking out the sports programs which the university has on offer. If you look up 'Hochschulsport Universität Tübingen' you will find a list of the sports on offer each semester. There's a huge range of sports available, including a lot of less well known sports such as Quidditch and Piloxing!

What was the university/ city like?

I love Tübingen University. It is located within walking distance of the center of the city and most of the university buildings are all located around one street (Wilhelmsstraße), which makes it almost impossible to get lost. The city of Tübingen is very much a student city (a lot like Otago). There are students everywhere, and it's really easy to meet new people and make new friends. The Altstadt is located on the river Neckar. Some students signed up for the discounted public transport ticket for the semester. However, I just walked everywhere on foot – the city really isn't that big.

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

There are lots of different restaurants in Tübingen which offer a wide variety of foods from all over the world. Tübingen also has a lot of cafes and restaurants which cater for vegans in particular. If you want to try some local German dishes, check out the Neckarmüller. This restaurant is in the Altstadt, right next to the Neckar river. El Chico is situated directly above the Neckarmüller and offers a lot of tasty Mexican dishes as well as cocktails. Both of these restaurants offer great views and balconies where you can dine outside during the summer.

I would recommend visiting the Alter Botanischer Garten (Old Botanical Garden) in summer. This is a very popular place for students to get together, lie in the sun and have a picnic. The Freibad is another great place to go in summer. Here you will find lots of big outdoor swimming pools surrounded by gardens. Another must-do during the summer, is to take a ride on one of the famous Tübingen Stocherkähne (long wooden boats, similar to those in Venice).

Any tips for future students?

I think that most important thing to do while on exchange is to make the most of as many opportunities as possible - extra-curricular activities, clubs and other social groups are all great ways of getting to know other students (both international students and German students). During my first semester on exchange I didn't get involved in many activities and groups, which I really regret. However, during my second semester on exchange I got involved in a lot more, and that really made my exchange experience a lot more enjoyable.

Another tip would be to sign up for the Startkurs. The course takes place just before the beginning of the semester and runs for 3 weeks. Not only was this a great way to meet new people, it is also a great opportunity to practice and improve your German. The teachers were very helpful and we all got a lot of support in completing all of the relevant paperwork, which needs to be done before the semester starts. There really is a lot to do but it isn't too difficult as long as you know where to go and what to do.

Overall Experience

I spent 2 semesters on exchange in Tübingen – first the Wintersemester and then the Sommersemester. The climate in Tübingen is fairly similar to Dunedin. However, the winter and the summer are a bit more extreme in Tübingen – it's colder in the winter and hotter in the summer. All of the professors and students I met were really friendly and helpful and I got to know so many new people from all over the world. Tübingen is an amazing city – I really love it!

I did a lot of travelling during the holidays – both within German and around Europe. I visited France, England, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Holland, Norway, Denmark and Belgium all within one year. Ryan Air offers lots of super cheap flights all around Europe – definitely worth a look!



Glühwein! A must do while on exchange in Tübingen for the Winter Semester is visiting the Christmas Market in Tübingen – one of the most beautiful Christmas Markets in Germany.



Nordsee (North Sea). During my time in Tübingen I started to really miss being near to the beach. I really recommend visiting the Nordsee or the Ostsee if you get the chance.



Berlin. Definitely worth a visit while on exchange in Germany! There is so much to see and do and the city is full of history.