



## Student Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

|                        |                    |  |         |
|------------------------|--------------------|--|---------|
| <b>Otago degree(s)</b> | Law and BA         | <b>Major(s)</b>                        |         |
| <b>Host University</b> | Charles University | <b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b> | S1 2018 |

### Academics/ course load

| Course title             | Language of instruction | Otago equivalent  | Otago credit value |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| European Union Law       | English                 | Public Law        |                    |
| Czech Business Law       | English                 | International Law |                    |
| European History         | English                 | History           |                    |
| Music and Youth Cultures | English                 | Geography         |                    |
|                          |                         |                   |                    |

Classes were all in English as they were run as part of the exchange programme at the university (so all these classes are with other exchange students).

Work load really varied but they were all easier than Otago papers. Classes were in standard lecture format. 3 of my papers had exams, only one was a take home essay (music class).

### Accommodation

I stayed in one of the Charles University hostels called Vetrnik. You room shared and had a set of bathrooms and shared kitchen on each floor. The accomodation was very basic (but warm!). It was also a bit out of town so took half an hour on public transport to get there. You can withdraw from the accomodation so I had friends try out their hostel and then leave to find flats. You just have to pay one month of accomodation costs to leave. I stayed because it was cheap and I was travelling lots so didn't spend much time there. I was also room sharing with another Otago student which was really fun!

## **Money**

Accomodation was very cheap! I paid \$62 NZ a week for the hostel (which was like I said very basic). Food at the supermarket was reasonable, a shop that would cost you \$20 in NZ would cost you \$10-\$15 in Prague. Beer is cheap, about \$3 or less. Visa cost me a couple of hundred dollars because you have to get your documents translated officially into Czech, plus there are other costs like administration fees to pay. Flights I did through STA travel and cost me about \$2000 return and insurance cost \$500.

I used my NZ account and withdrew cash. They are a big cash economy plus I found easier to keep track of my spending. I had a cash passport with euros on it to use when I was in Euro zones.

## **Visas & Insurance**

Applying for a visa was quite difficult. NZ doesn't have a Czech embassy, the closest one is Sydney. There are quite a few documents to get in order like a current police check, copy of your finances etc (the documents are all listed online). I got all my documents together and sent them over to the Sydney office in December (I was arriving in Prague in February). They then told me to go check in with the embassy in Prague when I arrived. So when I arrived in Prague I had to go into their office 3 times to sort out collecting my biometric card (which was the visa). It took them quite a long time to sort out my documents, but you have 3 months that you are able to be in Prague without it.

It would be easier going to the Czech Republic if you have a European passport. Their processes are very slow and in the offices you can be dealing with people who do not speak such good English.

## **Extra-curricular/Social Activities**

There is an Erasmus group that organises lots of trips and parties. I went on some of the weekend trips around the Czech Republic which was a good way to get out to some of the places which otherwise would have required you to organise quite a bit!

What was the university/ city like?

City is beautiful. There is the old town square where all the tourists are. But there are also lots of cool up and coming places which you find the longer you are there. The residential parts of town are not the most inspiring, there are lots of tall dull looking apartment blocks, so it's good to get out and explore the more vibrant parts of the city.

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

There are some cool underground bars (like Dogs Bar) that you will definitely get taken to. I really like the Riegrovy Sady Beer gardens. There are lots of places to eat out so definitely do try them. As a vego their cuisine was not the best for me, its lots of stewed meat etc

Any tips for future students?

Sort your visa early. Buy a 6 month travel pass when you arrive because it gets you on all modes of transport and its really reasonably priced.

### Overall Experience

I enjoyed Prague. It was a handy location to visit other places, plus it was somewhere friends came and visited me. Being cheaper made it a really liveable city too. University was not very demanding, I had classes on 2 days a week so travelled lots. At the start of exchange I sat down and wrote down all the countries I wanted to go to then started looking at what weekends I could do them. Time really disappears quickly so I'm glad I'd done a rough plan of what I wanted to do when! I never regreted paying to do an activity or going to visit somewhere. You are only there for one semester so you really want to make the most of it.

