



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Universität Tübingen
Semester & Year of Exchange	Winter Semester 2018/19
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Christian Thought & History, English

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Deutsch Kompakt Kurs	German	GERM200/300	
Deutsch Aufbau Kurs	German	GERM200/300	
European Politics of Human Rights	English	ARTS100	
Principles of European and EU Law	English	ARTS100	
The European Challenge of Religion and Identity	English	ARTS100	

Any comments about these papers?

The Kompakt Kurs seemed expensive but was well worth it. A five-week pre-semester intensive language course, it was perfect for any speaker of A1/A2 or above to really immerse themselves in the language. Not a course for beginners who have never learnt German before.

The Aufbaukurs was a good follow-up to the intensive. Half the workload and during the semester, classes were allocated according to your level.

The three English-taught courses were taught through the International and European Studies Faculty. Each was a block course about four weeks long. They were introductory courses, mainly for people who had never covered these subjects before.

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

Full lectures (*Vorlesungen*) are open, and you can sit in on any one of them at any given time during the semester which makes for some good experiences. All of the courses I took finished before Christmas, which really is unusual as the semester doesn't end until February—I had to take these courses in order to get home to NZ in time to begin a new course in Auckland. Workload is not too bad. The intensive German requires you to put the work in but is very manageable.

Accommodation

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

I stayed at the *Evangelisches Stift*—the hall for students of Protestant theology who came from the Baden-Württemberg area. This was great as it meant that there were plenty of like-minded people around, they were all students and 95% of them were German which meant I was constantly working on my own German. The other good thing is that German students are nearly all fluent in English, which meant that when I struggled with their language they could help me out.

Money matters

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

I took out comprehensive travel insurance through 1Cover—roughly \$500
Accommodation was covered as part of the partnership between the Stift and Otago Theology Dept. I have Irish citizenship and passport and only travelled through the EU, so no visa necessary
Flights—went from Auckland to London and vice versa. Roughly \$2500. Not including two months of backpacking through Italy and France and various other trips through Germany.
Breakfast and lunch was covered at my accommodation but I also bought a lot of food from the supermarket for my own diet etc. Probably safe to say it was around 30 to 40 Euro a week on food and drinks.

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

I primarily used a Kiwibank Loaded for Travel Card, which effectively works as a cash passport—you can load multiple different currencies onto it and then use it either to withdraw cash or pay with Eftpos. While in Germany I opened a German bank account as well.

Visas & Insurance

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

I did not need a visa as I had an Irish passport and only travelled within the EU.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, but the comprehensive travel insurance I took out here in New Zealand covered that.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There was a group called StudIT for International Students which organised events etc. I didn't go to any of them as those of us who took the five-week intensive course ended up being quite close and organising our own trips. However the university offers plenty of extra-curricular groups and clubs.

What was the university/ city like?

Very much like Dunedin, but older and German. Ideal to have a bike if you don't live in the centre of the *Aldstadt* (old town), but buses are also good. Lots of places to visit, eat, drink.

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

Freiburg, Stuttgart, Munich, the Black Forest are all only a few hours away. Cologne is about six hours via train but well worth the visit. If you like the Oktoberfest vibe, check out the *Cannstatter Volksfest* which runs around the same time; it is smaller and less touristy, but so much fun.

Any tips for future students?

Definitely learn the language if you can. It is certainly challenging but is very rewarding.

Overall Experience

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