



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Charles University
Semester & Year of Exchange	2019 Semester 1
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Psychology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
HSSC2: European Law in Czech-EU Context.	English		15
HSSC4: Czech Criminal Law	English	Criminal Law	15
HSSC1: Czech and EU Environmental Law and Policy.	English	Environmental Law	15
HSSC3: Commercial Law and International Transactions.	English	International Transactions.	15
AET100162: Popular Culture in Central and Eastern Europe between Socialism and Postsocialism.	English		18

Any comments about these papers?

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

The workload was far less intense than Otago, very few assignments and exams were relatively easy. The teaching is more informal, but lecturers tend to engage more with students during class.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Vetrinik dormitories. It was a great way to meet new people who were also exchange students from around the world and provided less hassle in getting set up. Having a roommate was a bit of a struggle alongside the dorm's general lack of privacy.

Money matters

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

Accommodation at the dorm was very cheap, however accommodation when visiting other countries was fairly expensive. Food in Prague was restaurants cheap as well as long as you shop at the larger supermarket chains.

All in all I probably spent around \$11,000 (NZ) which includes return flights to Europe, travelling to other destinations, food, insurance and social events.

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

I used my normal NZ EFTPOS and withdrew cash frequently, but it may have been best to get a local card.

Visas & Insurance

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

No (British Passport)

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

A massive range of social events were available in Prague, make sure to join the "OhMyPrague!" facebook page which has a bunch of events going on every week from picnics in local parks to sunset rooftop parties.

What was the university/ city like?

The University doesn't have a centralised campus so faculties are split up around the city, but the law faculty itself is an awesome building with great staff. Prague itself is amazing and remains my favourite city in Europe by far.

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

Make sure to go to; Letna Park, the Franz Kafka head, Pizza Borsalino (which is open until 5 AM!), Duplex, Dogs Bar, and some of the many vegetarian places hidden around Prague.

Any tips for future students?

Make sure to invest in a transport card early on, it will save you a lot of money in the long run. The metro shuts at 12:30 AM and opens again at 5:00 AM so plan social outings accordingly. Also be aware that Czech customer service isn't anything like New Zealand so do not expect a smile or pleasantries when eating or being served.

Overall Experience

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

Prague is a wonderful place, the first week I arrived it was covered in a thick blanket of snow and the entire city looked like it could have been out of a fairy tale. Early in the year the city was extremely cold and equipping myself for the weather took some getting used to, but eventually you learn not to walk too fast on ice! Later on, in the year around June it begins to heat up and the weather is more like a New Zealand Spring.

Staying in a dorm I met so many people from different cultures that I learned to love. I can't stress how important it is in the early days to attend all the social events and parties to get to know the people that you will be living with. This is how I met the people that I would travel around the rest of Europe with, making the whole experience more enjoyable (and cheaper).

The Czech Republic is very close to Germany, Poland, Austria and Hungary so these are the places you MUST visit when staying in Prague. Trains and buses to these places are extremely cheap (use Flixbus or Regiojet).

I didn't find it difficult in not knowing the language as most people in central Prague speak very good English, however it is polite to know Czech for at least; "hello, thank you, goodbye".

Finally, be sure to make the most of the experience, try to go somewhere else or do something new every second day and go travelling every second weekend.

