



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Corvinus University of Budapest
Semester & Year of Exchange	2 nd Semester 2019
Otago degree(s)	BCom and LLB
Major(s)	International Business

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Project Management	English	MANT 300 Level
Budapest in the Twentieth Century: Historical Layers and Cultural Practices	English	HIST 200 level – a culture paper for international business
Budapest – Explorations of the Urban Space	English	Arts 100 level
Marketing	English	MART112
Cross Cultural Communication and Marketing	English	MART326

I took five 6-point papers that come back to Otago as four 18-point papers. Budapest in the Twentieth Century and Explorations of the Urban Space were both very cool papers, we were only at Uni for around 4 classes and the rest were spent exploring Budapest and visiting many places I otherwise would never have seen. Teri, who takes the former is very cute and fun – I would highly recommend!

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

All of my classes were taught in two 1.5 hour 'blocks' right after each other with a 20 minute break in between. Make sure you are online and ready to sign up when course registration opens and you should be able to give yourself a super cruisy schedule. I only had classes from Tuesday until Thursday at 12pm which left plenty of time for long weekend trips! Try not to have early classes on a Tuesday as Monday night is student night at Morrisons. The workload is much lower than at Otago and the class sizes significantly smaller. Having English as your first language is a huge advantage, they are big on presentations which may take a little prep, but if you go to all of your classes you should be fine. (lots of papers also give marks for attendance and participation.) At Corvinus you also get a 2 week break in the middle of the Semester which is awesome and I used to further travel and explore Europe!

Accommodation

Corvinus do not provide accommodation but it is easy to find a flat / apartment to live in. I waited until I arrived at 'hostel week' to find a flat and flatmate. Hostel week is a week of events each night to get to know other exchange students and find accommodation before orientation week begins. Most people I met during this week had already sorted a flat through a Facebook group or an agency (you will be sent information about these) however I met a lovely Dutch girl who hadn't, and signed a flat with her. This was good as I was able to meet her before deciding to live together and we were able to view the flat and location before signing.

Budapest is becoming more and more popular as a tourist spot so finding a flat in a week in summer was quite hard, I would recommend at least having a look at some options and potentially signing a flat before you arrive as this seems to be the way most people had gone in my semester and most of the flats that agencies provide are nice and in very central locations. Agencies are also flexible and will help / are happy to move you to a different flat if you have any major issues.

Money matters

- Rent was 320 Euros a month plus costs (around 50 euros a month at most)
- My flights were \$1200NZD each way from NZ to London and vice versa
- Visa costs around 90 – 100 NZD
- I paid \$580 for insurance using State
- A student transport pass for train, metro, tram, busses and the ferry is only around \$18NZD a month and is all you will need to get around the city (Download the BKK transport app or use Google maps)
- Food from the supermarket is cheaper than in NZ
- Dining out is super cheap, you can get a good meal between \$5-10 NZD and lunch under \$5.
- Alcohol is also super cheap, both out and from supermarkets or ABC's

I did 2 months of travel before and a month after my exchange as well as traveling to many places during. Unfortunately I therefore can't say exactly how much I spent on exchange however I would recommend having more than you think you will need, especially if you plan on travelling. Exchange is an unreal experience and you want to be able to take advantage of every opportunity you can.

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

I just used my ASB Visa debit card the whole time, the exchange rate was always good and there is only a super small exchange rate fee. I did end up getting a Revolut card half way through (you need your residence permit number to get one). This was good for transferring money to friend's international accounts and paying rent.

Visas & Insurance

You don't have to apply for a visa / residence permit until you get to Budapest. In your first month you need to go to the immigration office with a bunch of documents (the uni will send out a list detailing these) and some forms filled in. The wait at the immigration office is very long (I was there for nearly 6 hours) however hopefully if you have the correct documents and all goes well this will be the only day spent sorting your residence permit – it will then be sent out to you around 6 weeks later.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes I was required to have insurance including comprehensive medical insurance for both uni and to receive my visa / residence permit, you are able to choose who from and how you purchase this.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

Budapest has a number of awesome student organisations for exchange students.

Firstly there is ESN Corvinus which is a student led organisation through the uni who organise an O week, trips, a buddy system and parties for exchange students at Corvinus. There is also Erasmus Life Budapest which is an organisation who puts on parties, events and deals almost every night for any exchange student in Budapest (there are 7 unis in Budapest with exchange students). You can buy cards for each to receive different discounts, but even if you don't everyone is welcome to the events.

I went to many 'Morrisons Monday's' which is student night at the ruin bar Morrisons 2, the first few welcome parties are also really fun and good for meeting people! I would attend O week and Hostel week events as this is where I met most of my friends, as well as at fresh camp which is a camp on one of the first few weekends in Hungary.

What was the university/ city like?

Budapest is a very fun and vibrant city, the nightlife is unreal and the buildings are beautiful. The people aren't the friendliest and don't see the point in small talk but you get used to this and once you become friends with some Hungarians they really are the nicest people. The uni is amazing and right on the waterfront.

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

Budapest has many interesting museums and galleries, most of which have days where students are free. The baths are super nice to spend a day at and Margret Island is great for an inner city 'escape'. Flights and busses to other countries in Europe from Budapest are very cheap and both Wizz Air and Ryan Air (budget airlines) fly in and out of the airport. Below are some google lists of good bars / clubs and places to eat:

Cafes:

<https://www.google.com/maps/@47.4926154,19.065655,15z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!11m1!2sv6N6WZax7sdR6nHWeKbkJ3hRXSmecg>

Restaurants:

<https://www.google.com/maps/@47.5139977,19.0739489,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!11m1!2sh5aVXHLcOG7FFARsx7eGpRdUyE4eMw>

Nightlife:

<https://www.google.com/maps/@47.4985168,19.062524,14z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!11m1!2sH6A1GfeAK4QrHXMBimC6XGSUZ135YQ>

Any tips for future students?

Say yes to everything and grab every opportunity you can, 4 months goes by so quickly and there is something fun to do every day / night of the week.

Overall Experience

Exchange was one of the best experiences of my life, it took me right out of my comfort zone where so many unreal things happened. Everyday something exciting would occur and I met the coolest people from all over the world. Even if you are just considering exchange I suggest you go for it as it is something you just wont regret. Budapest was everything I wanted from an exchange destination and more; cheap living, food, drinks, transport and travel to and from other countries, a gorgeous city with a so much history and a super fun night-life and one of the best Erasmus organisations out there! Feel free to ask me any questions you may have, I'm more than happy to help.

