



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Bristol
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2019 (Bristol Semester 1)
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Communications, minors in Marketing and Film

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
FATV20001 British Cinema & Television	English	MFCO 200 level	18
FATV20008 Film & Television Audiences	English	MFCO 200 level	18
FATV30001 Television Broadcasting	English	MFCO 300 level	18

Any comments about these papers?

I had to organise my degree so that I could do the majority of my Film papers in Bristol as they don't offer Communications or Marketing. I found that the second year papers were really similar to film papers at Otago. I enjoyed the Television Broadcasting paper as it was different to anything I had done before – we had to come up with an idea for a TV show including the format, justify why it would fit on the channel and timeslot that we had chosen and then pitch it to a commissioner. I found that it was really practical and a good introduction to the industry.

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

In general I found that the teaching style was quite similar. There was more engagement expected in class – I had really tiny classes so you had to do all of the readings for the class otherwise it would be really obvious. The biggest difference was in assessments. Each course only had 2-3 assessments worth big percentages of the overall grade (50-70%) and I had no exams. The marking system is very different – a pass is a 40% and above a 70% is a first (top grade) and above an 80% is nearly impossible to get.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Riverside which is an area with three student accommodation buildings near each other – I was in The Rackhay. I chose it because it was the cheapest self-catered option of the city centre locations. I was in a flat with 6 people. I was really happy with the location – it's close to shopping and nightlife and only a short walk or bus up the hill to Uni (you get a free bus pass with student accommodation). It was really social and there were events put on such as a Christmas formal. One thing I didn't really think about was how student accommodation would be mostly full of first years, and the age difference between me and the majority of my hall was quite noticeable (I was 22). If I had known I would have looked into the postgrad halls as an option. It was also a really noisy halls (lots of partying as well as construction noise outside every day). I had friends in the Courtrooms and in Orchard Heights – they are more expensive than Riverside but a lot more modern and with en-suites. You will also have to kit out your room and kitchen when you get there. I ordered my bedding on Amazon (prime is free for students in the UK) and got everything else from Poundland. There are washing machines in the building but they're really expensive so I got pretty good at making a load last as long as possible. Overall, Riverside was a fun place to be but I was glad to just have one semester there.

Money matters

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

- Flights: \$2,500
- Accommodation: £2455.74 / around \$5000 NZD
- Insurance: \$490
- Food: hard to track, supermarkets are generally cheaper than NZ but eating out is really expensive in the UK.
- Weekend travel: about \$300 per trip

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

I started with an Air NZ OneSmart card which was fine for travel. When I got to Bristol I opened an account with Monzo as you just apply online and I received the card pretty quickly. I preferred this as I used TransferWise to instantly move money from my NZ account to my Monzo, rather than waiting 2-3 business days for money to transfer onto the OneSmart. The Monzo app is also really user friendly. My ANZ debit card was also fine to use when I needed to as there was no international ATM fees.

The exchange rate was fluctuating a lot while I was in the UK because of all the Brexit changes so that was frustrating. I wish I had transferred a lot more money when the rate was really low just before I left, but this is also a gamble as the rate could go either way. I would do a bit of research about the trends and try to be smart about the exchange rate as I ended up paying a lot more for my accommodation than I would have a few months ago because of a badly timed spike in the exchange rate.

Visas & Insurance

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

I was granted a six-month study visa when I arrived in the UK and showed the immigration officer my visa letter from Bristol University. This didn't require any prior applications. Make sure to take the visa letter with you whenever you travel just in case you are asked about your visa status – I was never asked at an airport but I did have to show it when re-entering the UK through immigration at the Eurotunnel (tunnel between England and France) to prove my student status in the UK.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

For accommodation yes but it was included in the price.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are plenty of clubs you can join. Go along to the student fair in the first week (their version of tent city) where you can sign up to anything that interests you. If you don't want to play competitive sport you can join intra-mural teams, however these are played on Sundays so I wasn't able to join as I was travelling most weekends which was disappointing.

What was the university/ city like?

I really liked Bristol as a city. It's similar to Dunedin in that it's a student city with a lot of events going on and good nightlife, good food culture and pubs, cool street art and lots of different areas to visit. The University is spread out across a suburb in Bristol rather than on a campus. All of my classes were in one building away from the rest of Uni so I didn't spend much time in the main Uni areas. The University experience was a bit disorganised at first and everyone (in my department at least) seemed pretty confused about what to do with study abroad students.

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

There is so much to do in Bristol and I definitely didn't get around to everything that I wanted to. The best thing I did was a walking tour around Bristol one weekend ('Blackbeard to Banksy'). I found it was the best way to see how all of the different areas connect up and learn about the history and culture. The harbourside area is a really nice place to sit and have a drink. Most food places, especially in the Uni area do a student discount - even if there isn't one advertised it pays to ask. I spent most Wednesday nights in Mission Burrito because that was the cheap student night. M-Shed is a great museum, a visit to Clifton and the Suspension Bridge is a must, as is Cabot Tower and Brandon Hill. Take a train/bus to Bath, Cardiff and London for day trips.

Any tips for future students?

I found that Facebook was the best way to see what was going on – just using events and searching 'Bristol'. The Erasmus network also put on lots of events, as well as a company called VIVA Trips. Get as many papers as you can approved by Otago before you leave, just in case there's an issue once you get there. Embrace the culture – it's grungy but super fun, and there's something for everyone.

Overall Experience

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

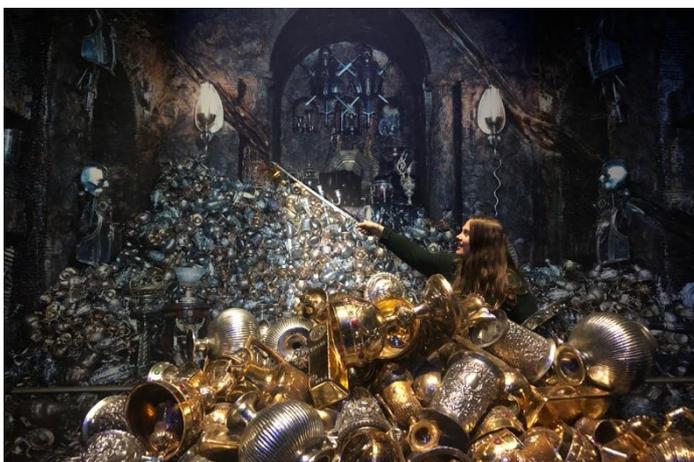
Going on exchange is a great way to experience study in a different country while pushing yourself out of your comfort zone and seeing some of the world at the same time. It was quite hard at first, I sort of expected to instantly have a group of study abroad friends but it wasn't quite like that as you don't all live together like other Universities. As long as you expect there to be a bit of loneliness (as well as going in with no expectations) and recognise that everyone is feeling the same, you will find your place in no time. I ended up doing way more travel than expected and managed to visit 17 new countries! Bristol is a great base to fly to lots of places in Europe from. Having a Winter Christmas was also a bucket list experience – there's nothing quite like the European Christmas Markets. I met some of my best friends on exchange – both at Uni and while travelling around. Try to say yes to everything... because that's how you come home with some pretty cool stories to tell!



Split, Croatia



Boxing Day in the Scottish Highlands



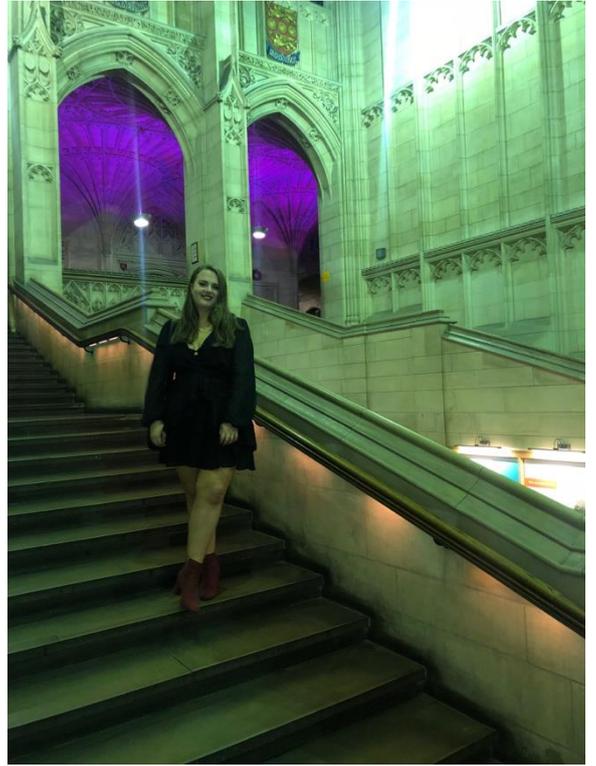
Harry Potter Studios



Amsterdam



Park Street, Bristol



Riverside Christmas Formal



Christmas Market, Bruges, Belgium



High Tea in Bath