



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Bristol
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1, 2024
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Politics, Communications

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Perspectives on Power SOCI30062	English	MFCO300
How to Win a Political Argument POLI30020	English	POLS300
Development Studies POLI21213	English	POLS200

Total Otago credits gained: 72 points

Any comments about these papers?


How to Win a Political Argument was a fantastic course if you like in-person group work and debates, and utilising political tools to win debates.

Perspectives on Power followed the same scholars/works taught widely in MFCO at Otago – Foucault, Marx, Weber, Butler, Said – don't take this paper if you have already studied these theorists, it becomes quite repetitive.

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

There was one lecture per week for each class, and a 2-hour tutorial or 'seminar' where a majority of the learning/discussions were had. The UK uni style is such that they expect you to undertake a lot of self-led learning (mostly reading), and do not reveal so much in the lectures.

Beware the UK assessment system is very different to NZ. Of my three papers, two were 100% examined on one singular 3000-word essay (take-home exam), and the other comprised of one 25% and one 75% essay. The marking system is such that anything over a 40 is a pass, but it is almost impossible to score over 80 – this is considered publishable work. The grades are calculated back to NZ standards so not to worry.



Navigate your way through the the British undergraduate degree classification system which grades degrees (bachelor's degrees and integrated master's degrees) in the UK.

Classification	Mark	OU Mark	Equivalent grade
First-class (1st)	70%+	85%+	A
Upper second-class (2.1)	60-69%	70-85%	B
Lower second-class (2.2)	50-59%	55-70%	C
Third class (3rd)	40-49%	40-55%	D

Accommodation

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

I stayed in the mature accommodation (I selected mature) 92 Redcliff Street which was super central in the city. I had 22, 23 and 29-year-olds in my flat. We became very close friends; while Bristol does really well at getting the international students all together and forming friendships, it was difficult to make friends with the Bristol students themselves unless you were involved in the student clubs/sports scene – definitely get involved.

You apply for halls at random and they place you in one – DO NOT SELECT the CARDIFF option. They might scare you with the ‘there is very little accommodation in Bristol’, but people who selected Cardiff had to travel an hour by train/bus to get to uni, and most ended up transferring out of Cardiff and into Bristol itself.

Money matters

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

Flights approx. \$1600 to UK

Accommodation approx. \$8000 **paid in lump-sum at beginning of semester.**

Insurance approx. \$250

Food variable, maybe \$120 p/w with food and beverages out included

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

I used WISE card- very handy, low currency exchange costs. Order to home in NZ at least 3 weeks prior to leaving.

Visas & Insurance

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

No, I hold dual NZ/UK citizenship/passport.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No, buy the Otago one.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Huge variety of Student clubs and good student union – have a browse on the Bristol Students union website – they hold open days, give-it-a-go sessions. Beware that quite a few of the sports e.g Rugby and Hockey are played at Coombe Dingle which is a sports centre 40 minutes bus ride away from Bristol centre itself.

What was the university/ city like?

Gorgeous and green, lively, good music scene and run clubs! The campus is gorgeous with lots of old buildings (refurbished very well) for lecture rooms that look like the exterior of Quad/Geology buildings, and some newer buildings including libraries dotted around the campus. The campus is up a hill – you can either walk up Park street (20 ish minutes from centre city), or the Christmas steps to get there (or take the bus from city centre like my flatmates did).

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

Clifton is gorgeous, nice shops and cafes, go to Burra Bristol in Clifton – it's owned by Kiwi rugby players and they stock Pineapple lumps. Good food and coffee. Thekla is a nightclub in a boat, very fun, huge variety of music. The AJ Bell Great Bristol run (10k and Half marathon) is a great event to get involved in. Study at Arnolfini cafe – such a nice place with art gallery on top of it showcasing UWE student work. Ashton Gate has lots of big rugby fixtures and Bristol City football matches. Bristol Beacon is an incredible music venue with lots of good touring artists.

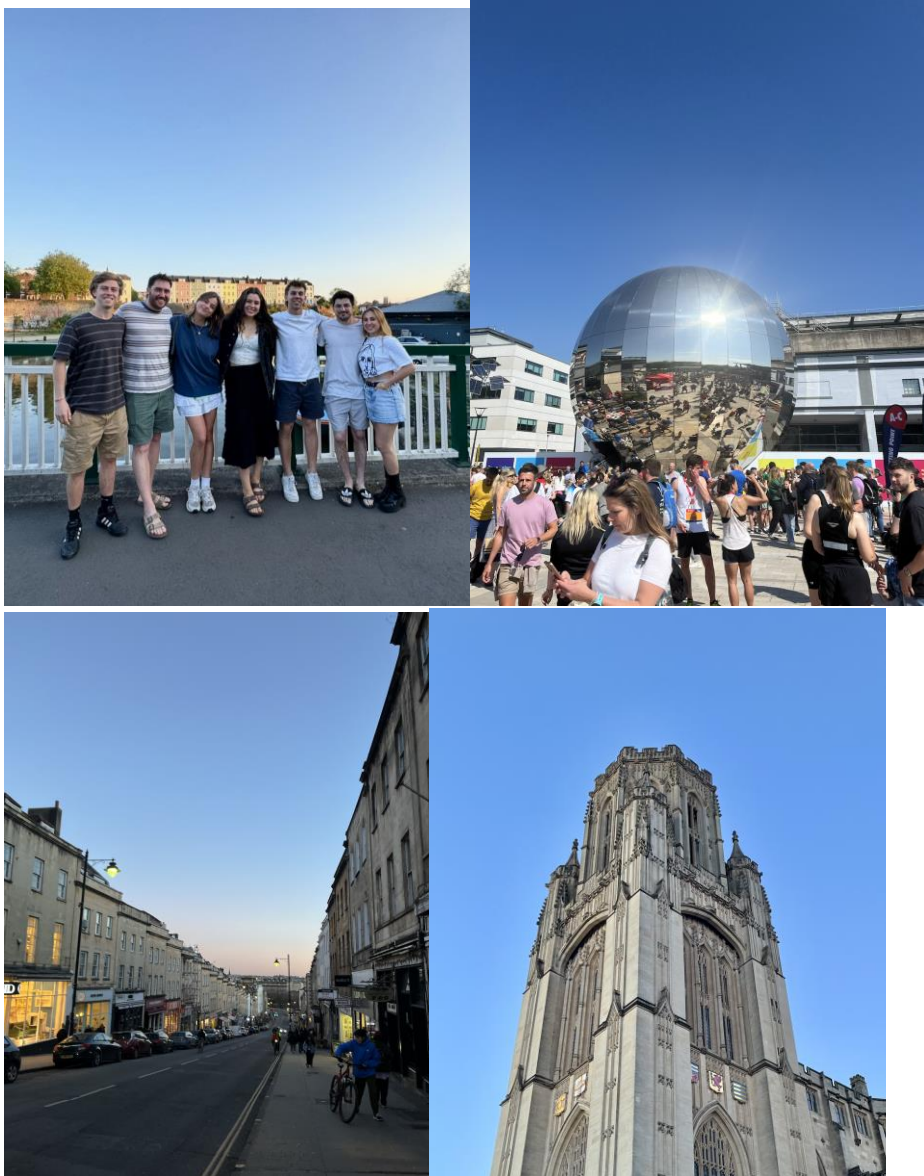
Any tips for future students?

Try hard to make friends in seminars, through clubs and sports – it's hard to make Bristol friends otherwise. Wills Memorial building is stunning – definitely check it out/study in there. Bristol has heaps of great libraries to study in.

Overall Experience

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

Bristol is a gorgeous, green, lively city and perfect for students. People are very kind and there is a huge variety of clubs, sports and activities to get involved in. The university takes your mental health and well-being very seriously. The staff were kind, motivated, highly involved and cared about their students. A lot of the staff are undertaking big career projects, lecture across the UK or have published numerous books – they are well qualified, and it shows in the teaching standards. Bristol airport also had also had cheap flights to a lot of Europe, and the mid-semester break is THREE WEEKS LONG. When you come back from the break you have 2 weeks of classes, before it is study break and then exam period. Therefore, there is only around 11-12 teaching weeks. Bristol in the summertime is BEAUTIFUL – I did not want to leave. Exchange is what you make of it – say yes always and put yourself out there for new opportunities and friendships.



Wills Memorial building (Bottom Right), at the top of Park Street (Bottom Left).