



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Strathclyde
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1, 2024
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts and Commerce
Major(s)	Management & Sports Development and Management

Academics/ course load

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
P3104: News and Feature	English	ARTS100
Z1315: Venture Management Strategy and Growth	English	MANT3xx
BF113: Introduction to Tourism and Managing People	English	ANY

Total Otago credits gained: 72 points

I found P3104 to be quite straightforward, but I struggled with it due to my lack of interest in the subject. Z1315 covered content similar to other management papers I have taken at Otago, which made it easier to grasp. BF113 was interesting, though much of the material was basic knowledge. Overall, I was pleased with my selection of papers. The workload was manageable, and I would definitely recommend the ones I took, provided you have an interest in the subjects.

I found the academic experience and workload to be quite similar to Otago. Two out of the three papers I took while on exchange were first-year papers, and since I'm a fourth-year student, I found them relatively relaxed. This turned out to be beneficial, as it meant I wasn't super stressed, and it allowed me to fully experience the different lifestyle and spend time with my new friends.

Accommodation

I stayed in Birkbeck Court which one of the accommodation options provided by the university, and I loved it. The layout consisted of 17 blocks with four floors, each containing six single-bed bedrooms, two bathrooms, and one shared kitchen.

The bedrooms were very small, but they were sufficient for a stay of less than six months. The hall's location was perfect—only a one-minute walk to the gym, one minute to the library, and a ten-minute walk to the city centre.

One aspect I liked about this accommodation was that I was placed in blocks exclusively for exchange students. This created a welcoming environment where everyone was new and eager to make friends, which made it easy for me to connect with others. The downside was that it was challenging to meet students from Scotland, but I didn't mind much since I formed strong friendships with the other exchange students.

Money matters

My return flights to Glasgow cost approximately \$5,000 in total. Accommodation in Birkbeck Court at the University of Strathclyde was \$4,851 for six months. Since food was not included, I used the kitchen in my apartment to prepare meals, spending about \$50 per week on groceries. The university recommended Endsleigh for contents insurance, which was free of charge. Additionally, I purchased travel insurance through TravelSafeNZ for a total of \$576.75.

To access my finances, I used a Wise card which I purchased online before leaving. The Wise card is a multi-currency debit card that allows you to hold and manage money in different currencies. It is very convenient for travel because it enables you to transfer NZD from your New Zealand bank account to other currencies with low fees. I highly recommend it, as it provided an easy and cost-effective way for me to manage finances while in Scotland and traveling afterwards. Additionally, I always kept some cash on hand since not all places accepted cards.

Visas & Insurance

I have a British and an Irish European passport, so I did not have to apply for a visa.

My host university did not have a mandatory insurance, however they recommended Endsleigh that I use for my content's insurance while at university.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

There were many organized activities available for us to participate in. During the first week of the exchange, the university set up daily events for new and exchange students. These included speed dating, pub quizzes, meet and greets, and information sessions. I highly recommend joining these events as they provided a good opportunity for me to meet other new students and make friends.

Additionally, there were numerous sports teams and weekly social games to join. I attended a few basketball and netball social training sessions, which I really enjoyed.

The university also offers hundreds of clubs. I joined the cocktail club, which was a lot of fun. Every Thursday, we would meet at the university bar and then go bar hopping. It was also good excuse to try out different bars and nightclubs around the area.

The City:

Moving from Dunedin to Glasgow was a real eye-opener as I have never lived in a city any bigger than Dunedin before. The public transport is very efficient—trains, subways, and buses make getting around super easy. For students, Glasgow is great. The city is packed with cafes, restaurants, and pubs that are perfect for a student budget. There is always something to do and places to explore.

The University of Strathclyde is right in the heart of the city, so you have got everything you need close by. The campus is modern and well-equipped, and being in such a lively city means you will have tons of opportunities to explore and enjoy your time.

Recommendations:

I highly recommend taking the train to Edinburgh to explore the city and checking out other neighbouring cities. For a unique Scottish experience, I would recommend the overnight tour to the Highlands organized by International Student Tours—it was a great way to see Scotland. In Glasgow, take the subway to the West End, which is packed with cool vintage shops, student pubs, and great food. A restaurant I would recommend is Sugo, a popular pasta place that's always busy. I would also recommend visiting the OVO Hydro or SWG3 for an event; I didn't get to go myself, but I've heard great reviews.

Tips for Future Students:

Try not to have every detail of your trip planned out in advance, you will make friends along the way and might want to travel with them, which can be challenging with a rigid schedule. Put yourself out there and take advantage of every opportunity, as everyone else is in the same position. Also, make sure to spend time getting to know the city and its surroundings to fully enjoy and make the most of your experience.

Overall Experience

During my semester abroad, I fully immersed myself in the vibrant Scottish culture, which surprisingly felt quite like the culture in New Zealand. This similarity made it easier for me to adapt and thoroughly enjoy my time there. The academic environment at Strathclyde was enriching, allowing me to pursue two commerce papers and one arts-based paper, furthering my studies in a diverse setting.

The opportunity to travel extensively across Europe was a highlight of my exchange. I visited several countries, including Spain, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, and Portugal. Each destination offered unique insights and experiences, contributing significantly to my personal growth. Navigating these diverse cultures and languages taught me valuable skills in communication and adaptability.

This exchange experience has been transformative, fostering a sense of independence and self-reliance. I have grown more confident in my ability to navigate new environments and solve problems independently, which has been a significant shift from relying on others. Overall, this exchange program enriched my academic and personal life, providing me with invaluable experiences and skills that I will carry forward in my future endeavours. I would highly recommend anyone considering an exchange to go for it!!

