

UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

STUDENT EXCHANGE REPORT:

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON



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Bcom in IS & MG

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the following people without whom my exchange program would not have been a successful one:

- I would like to thank the almighty God who gave me the courage to go and study in a country which was totally new to me and overcome my fears and weaknesses.
- I would like to thank my parents who fully supported me for this program. They financially supported me such as paying my rent and other expenses.
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- Finally, I would like to thank the staff and students of Victoria University of Wellington who were a great support to me. They helped me in locating lecture rooms and giving me more information about the university.

Introduction

After getting all the application forms, I had to find which University offers the units which I want to take. After doing some research, I found similar units offered at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The next step was to get the cross credit of units approved. I had to make appointments with the head of school and visit them to get it approved. After getting it approved, I submitted the application form at the international office on the last day of the due date. I was called for an interview two weeks later. All together there were four students whose interviews were to be taken. I asked basically asked general questions and some questions about New Zealand. I got a call after three days informing me that I was selected for the student exchange program. I was very excited. I then had to apply for a student visa and get my medical done. I was informed that it would take 25 working days for the visa to be processed and I would be in New Zealand before the orientation day. 25 days had passed away but I didn't get my Visa. The orientation had started at VUW and I was still in Fiji. I got an email from immigration NZ that I need to buy the return ticket and only then I will be issued with my visa. International office arranged my return ticket and then I went to collect my visa.

Preparation for Exchange

- **Include information you would have found valuable when planning your exchange**

Before going on the exchange program, I found out most of the things about the University and the City where I will be living in. I joined a Facebook group where I could find flats or rooms where I could rent while studying since I had to arrange my own accommodation. I had to know all about the travel insurance and also the medical insurance and whom to contact in terms of emergency.

- **Packing, what to bring**

I did not have enough time for packing before departure as I was issued with the ticket one day before my flight. I had reached home at 10pm and my flight was at 9am and there was no electricity and water supply due to cyclone Winston. I packed winter clothes mostly since winter was about to start in New Zealand. The documents which I took with me were travel insurance documents, my passport and ticket, my offer letter, and the registration of courses.

- **Travel and transportation**

International office had paid my return fare. I had to depart from Nadi International airport and arriving at Wellington airport. My parents dropped me from Tavua to Nadi.

- **Financial details**

My parents supported me financially as I was not given any allowance for the exchange program. My parents were sending me money through western union every month which I used to pay for my rent and other expenses.

During Exchange

• **Arrival and orientation**

I had arrived in Wellington one day before the orientation so I made it to the last day of the orientation but I was told that I had to register to one of the orientation days. I registered for the other week Monday. I met the international mobility officer there and she took me to a room where orientation was going on. Only international students were there and I was the only Indian there. She helped me in the registration of units and how I can find information about my lecture and tutorials.

• **Accommodation and living**

I had arranged the accommodation before I arrived in New Zealand. I stayed as a boarder at an Indian family's house. It was 20 minutes away from the University I was going to. I had to catch a train and then a bus to go to the campus where I had my classes. The standard of living in Wellington was very high compared to the standard of living in Fiji. It is a technologically advanced city. It took me a while to adjust to that kind of living standards.

• **Academic details (lecture format, schedules, grading, etc.)**

I was taking four units in the exchange program in Victoria University of Wellington.

The units are as follows:

<u>USP Units</u>	<u>VUW Units</u>
IS333	INFO231
IS323	SWEN223
MG214	PUBL211
MG315	MGMT317

Each lecture was of 50 minutes and all the units had a 1 hour tutorial. Attendance was not compulsory for the lectures and tutorials but I always made an effort to attend all lectures and tutorials. The lecture theatres had two projector screens for showing the lecture slides. All the units had about 5-7 assignments. So every week, there were two or three assignments due. The grading system for pass was A, A+, A-, B, B+, B-, C, C+, and C-. The grading system for failing was D and E. The final exams were of 50% which means that 50% was from the assignments.

- **Country information (culture, weather, places to visit, etc.)**

New Zealand is a very peaceful and beautiful country with lots of tourist attractions. I was staying in the capital of New Zealand which is Wellington. It is one of the windiest cities in the world. It is a very big city. My university was located in the city. Winter started at the end of April so I had a chance to experience the cold and windy weather of New Zealand. There was a large museum in the city which I visited twice. There are also many places to visit such as Mt. Victoria which is a look out place, Wellington botanical garden and many other places.

- **Social and extra-curricular activities.**

I joined a local soccer Indian soccer team and we had weekly trainings and tournaments in the local grounds. The university did not have social nights but they had a lot of extracurricular activities where students took part in.

Reflection after Exchange

• What you've learned and the challenges you faced

The main challenge I faced was living in a different country with different lifestyle. It took me a lot of time to adjust to the New Zealand lifestyle. I had travelled in train for the first time in New Zealand and it was totally a new thing for me as I had to get used to the time table of the trains. If I missed a train then I had to wait for 30 minutes for the next train to come. Another challenge was getting used to the cold weather. I had to buy warm clothes in order to stay warm. One of the challenges was getting used to the new way of learning. The teaching style at VUW was totally different from USP. I had to cope up with lot of assignments.

• What you wish you knew before you left

I should have found out that I had to register in one of the slots for the orientation. I had missed the first day of lectures because I had to attend a different orientation which fell on da first week. I wish I knew how to travel to and from home and university since I found lot of difficulties in travelling.

• Words of wisdom for other students

I would like to encourage all students to apply for the exchange program as this was a life changing moment for me. It will help me in my future career such a securing a better job for myself where I will expand the knowledge gained. This exchange program was an advantage point in my career so I suggest that everyone should give it a try.

Photos



Attending the Exchange Fair



Attending VUW Graduation



Morning Lectures



Visiting the National Museum