

## THE BASICS

Your first name: Joel

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Your partner university: [UNISA – University of South Australia](#)

Your UVic major during the exchange: [Business](#)

UVic session(s) during which you did your exchange: [Spring 09](#)

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## GENERAL EVALUATION

Please rate your overall exchange experience on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: [4.5](#)

Comments:

[Australia is an absolutely incredible country – however it should be noted that Adelaide is not the most exciting city. It is bigger than Victoria, but 10 km from the nearest beach, it is a smaller city. But with that being said- you will slip right into the city and make it your own – whereas in Sydney or Melbourne there is so much tourist activity that I think most exchange students would feel like they were merely a tourist for 6 months. Adelaide is a great city, which is extremely picturesque and not too distracting from studying. There is ALWAYS something to do in this city, you just have to know what to do and where to go on each night. Adelaide is also perfectly situated in Australia for lots of trips throughout Australia and there are always flight sales, so you have lots of opportunities to fly to see the entire country.](#)

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## ARRIVAL

How satisfied were you with your experience of arriving in your host country or city? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: [5](#)

Comments:

[When I arrived in Australia I flew into the city 4 weeks before classes started so that I could see most of the country. I flew into Sydney and left the majority of stuff at a friends place – and continued to travel up the east coast of Austrlia through Byron Bay, Surfers Paradise and Brizbane before flying to Adelaide. It was a great introduction to the stereotypical Australia before heading to Adelaide to focus on School.](#)

What assistance, if any, did you receive when you arrived at your exchange destination?

[None. When I flew into Adelaide, I met a very nice lady from Adelaide who had just seen her daughter off to Vienna on exchange. Therefore she was VERY interested in how my exchanged experiencing was going and she wanted to make sure I was alright. She offered me a ride into the city. Very friendly first impression of Adelaidians!](#)

How difficult was it for you to obtain your travel documents (visa, etc.)?

[The travel documents were not to difficult to obtain, but I was filling out an incorrect form, but I went to Nicola while I was having difficulties and she helped me out. I would suggest applying for your visa well in advance incase you come across any issues in the application process.](#)

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## **ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE**

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to students at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 3.5

Comments:

How easy was it to find information you needed to know right away?

The first day of O-week there was a lot of information given, and immediately they introduced us to the exchange office.

What help did you receive from the international staff or office?

In lecture form, they gave a lot of good advice about finding accommodation and choosing courses. Directly – they helped me with getting my medical expenses covered through my Exchange student insurance.

What was your impression of the international staff or office?

Approachable and relaxed.

What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one, and how well did it suit your needs?

Honestly, it was boring. They gave a lot of information on the Monday of O-Week, and then they told us they were just repeating the information the rest of the week and we didn't HAVE to attend. But this free time gave me the chance to get my courses and accommodation sorted out. But there wasn't even really social activities.

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site and were there people you could talk to about what you were experiencing?

I immediately became close with other exchange students. Especially Canadians. And as we went through different attitudes towards the exchange and being in a while different hemisphere from home and we could always talk about it.

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## **HOUSING**

How satisfied were you with the housing available to students? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 4

Comments

The housing is not directly through UniSA... but there are various buildings in Adelaide that house only students – so they are student residences – they just have students from all the universities.

How early could students move in to housing at the beginning of term?

In my place – UniLodge on Hindley – they were EXTERMEYLY flexible about moving in and moving out, because they were a brand new building that was scrapping to fill the place with students.

What options were available for meal plans or cooking facilities?

None.

How satisfied were you with the food?

....I'm an alright cook.

How close are the residences to the university?

UniLodge was about a 5 minute walk from the City West Campus, and a 10 minute walk from City East Campus. Other Campuses students had to bus to.

Could students stay in the residences during major holidays?

Yes.

Which residence would you recommend to UVic students?

East-West apartments on North Terrace (beautiful and many have balconies) or UniLodge on Hindley – which was great because it was new – but really felt like student housing.

If you lived in off-campus housing, how easy was it to find?

Yup.

What should future UVic exchange students know about living off-campus?

Its going to happen, because you can't live on campus!

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### **COURSE REGISTRATION**

How satisfied were you with the registration process at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

4

Rating:

Comments:

It was very straight forward.

Please describe the registration process at your partner university.

I just registered once I got there and it was easy and I had no problems with waitlists.

What kind of help was available?

People could go to the international student office if they needed help.

How successful were you in registering for classes you wanted?

Got all of them.

What advice would you offer to next year's exchange students about registration at your partner university?

MAKE SURE YOUR COURSES TRANSFER BACK TO UVIC BEFORE YOU TAKE THEM.

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### **ACADEMICS**

How satisfied were you with the academic program at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 4

Comments:

Less time sitting in class compared to UVic. Felt quite easy at times... but they mark incredibly hard.

How did the style of teaching at your partner university compare with that at UVic?

More readings to do on my own time.

How did the workload compare to what you would expect at UVic?

About the same if not a bit less.

How many courses did you take in your first term abroad?

3

Your second term?

N/A

What would you recommend as an appropriate course load for other UVic students visiting your partner university?

4

What specific courses would you recommend to visiting UVic students?

Australian Society and Cultures (Maybe if I HAD to suggest one).

Why?

Lot of time to chat about cultural differences in the tutorials. There were a ton of exchange students in this course as well. Warning... it is just a basic sociology course though with 1/3 of the focus specifically AUSTRALIAN.

If you studied in a non-English speaking country, what was the availability of courses offered in English?

N/A

What advice would you give UVic students about succeeding academically at your partner university?

Get the work done.. then enjoy the fact that you're in an awesome place. They will always be something fun to do... so get the work done first!

What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, and internet access at your partner university?

Internet access was a bit annoying, and wasn't perfectly compatible with MACs and it messed up my friends MacBook... so I never got wireless on campus.. because I wasn't going to let the IT people touch my MacBook.

What electronic devices would you recommend a UVic student bring (laptop, PDA, etc.)?

Laptop and a camera.

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## **COSTS**

Please indicate currency:

Books - per term: 220 CDN

Accommodation - per month: 785 CDN

Meals - per month: 300

Local transportation - per month: 40

Health insurance - per term: 0

Personal spending - per term: 700 (alcohol, coffee, traveling the county)

Communications (phone, etc.) - per term: 80

Other university related fees - per term:

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### EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your exchange site? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 2

Comments:

I didn't get involved with any. And I most likely would have if the opportunity was REALLY accessible.

What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to students?

There was a surf club, soccer, waterski/wakeboard club.

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

Surf club if you wanna be stereotypical like that.

What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?

Hop on a jet with Tiger Airways, VirginBlue or Jetstar. Book ahead and you can find one way for as low as 35 Aussie dollars. BUT JUST BOOK AHEAD AND ITS SUPER CHEAP!

What opportunities were there for students to work on-campus?

Didn't see any.

Off-campus?

I worked in a bar for a bit. Friends worked in Cafes. Lots of opportunities.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Not sure.

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### SAFETY AND HEALTH

How safe did you feel at your exchange site? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 5

Comments:

I felt completely safe no matter what time of day or night. And I lived in the dirty nightclub district. I would always accompany girls on the street late at night – one of the girls didn't feel 100% comfortable on my street after 10pm.

What are the biggest safety concerns for future exchange students going to your exchange site?

Just use your street smarts and don't take risks and you will be fine.

What are the biggest health concerns for future exchange students going to your exchange site?

Don't get swine flu? It wasn't fun. 😊

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### PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

What was it like making friends?

I made a best friend immediately. Then we started doing things with just the two of us A LOT, and we almost segregated ourselves from everyone else for the first 2 weeks... We had become extremely close and then we each made friends and would always introduce each other to our friends, and our network of friends grew really fast as soon as we became social.

How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students?

About 20% of my friends were Australian... which was definitely an exception. Most exchange students were closest with exchange student.

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site?

Quite natural. Their humor is a bit more abrasive, but just roll with the punches and feed it back and you're just fine.

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging?

Their humor again.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The slower pace of life – an Australian attribute for sure.

How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?

I was totally comfortable in Adelaide. If you feel safe in Victoria... you will feel safe in Adelaide. Also, once the locals find out you are Canadian... not American, they love you! University staff and other aussie students were very welcoming.

As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?

It seemed like there were ramps and such around for students with disabilities. Fairly new facility at city West.

For students who are visible minorities in your host country?

Australia – like Canada – is going for the “cultural mosaic” approach to minorities. You will see everything from Asian, Indian, African, British, and the list goes on.

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### **TAKING STOCK**

What are the three most important things for students to take with them when they go to your host country or region?

A backpack.. with room to buy stuff.

Amenities from home that will make your new place feel more homely – ie blanket, pictures to put on the walls, anything that can make your place feel like YOUR place – this will help fight your homesick-ness.

A craving for excitement and an open mind to exploit every opportunity that presents itself so you have the time of your life.

What are the three most important things you would tell a UVic student who is going to your partner university on exchange?

Make sure your courses will transfer back to Uvic.

Save-up lots of money for when you are in Australia – working over there eats up your time.

You apply really early for this exchange, and there is a lot of time to build excitement. Use this time to research the county and prepare yourself to hit the ground running... because you will get excited for about 12 months... and then 5months in Australia will just FLY by... so you cant miss a single experience because this is it and YOU decide how your exchange experience is going to be.

Is there any other information that you think might prove useful to UVic exchange students attending your host university?

Lots, so if you are going to Adelaide or anywhere in Australia write specific questions to me at [joelhill@uvic.ca](mailto:joelhill@uvic.ca)

What was the most rewarding part of your exchange experience?

That I really feel like I DID Australia and all the different dynamics throughout the country... and I was extremely excited when I got my final grades and I did much better than I had even aimed for!

What was your greatest challenge on the exchange?

When the exchange marks count for pass or fail – this doesn't mean that you put in 50% of the effort and hope for 50%. You have to do the exams, write the papers, etc, so just put in the effort and do well... because its very challenging to give 50%... just do the assignments like you would do them at UVic... and you'll feel better about them as well.

How has your perspective changed as a result of the exchange?

It reinstated to me that life is about a balance of enjoying what you're doing, being responsible towards your commitments (ie school), time management and budgeting. Live in the moment – and seize every second.

What else do you want to say about your exchange experience?

Thanks for the most memorable semester IESS.