

Student Exchange Questionnaire

Name: Amber Garrett

Massey Degree: Bachelor of Arts – Major: Media Studies, Minor: Geography

Host university: London Metropolitan University

Semester and year of exchange: Semester Two, 2015, Second Year

- **Why did you choose this particular university and/or country for exchange?**

I chose London Met for my exchange as, like a lot of people, London is a city at the top of my must experience list. I'd previously been to London for a month's holiday and I loved it there, so knew I wanted to go back. Also, being one of the most modern and diverse places in the world, I knew studying there would be exciting.

- **Did it meet your expectations?**

It did 100%. London is truly an amazing place and when I wasn't at Uni, all the sights and activities, as well as amazing food and nightlife, kept me insanely busy. It's hard to be bored when you're in the city of London!

- **What papers did you study while on exchange? Would you recommend them?**

The papers I studied were

- Community, Culture, and Change (4000 Level/Second Year)
- Styling and Journalism (4000 Level/Second Year)
- Youth Culture and the Media (4000 Level/Second Year)
- Contemporary American Television (4000 Level/Second Year)

As I'm majoring in Media Studies, I found Youth Culture and Contemporary American TV were really interesting and reflected my major, so if you're interested in Media Studies these papers are perfect and really insightful.

I am also minoring in Geography, so Community, Culture, and Change was an interesting paper that focused on diversity in Britain. By being actually in the country, I found it useful to study its history, so I recommend this for Geography students.

Styling and Journalism was a bit of a fun paper I chose. This paper focuses on fashion in the media and was a really fun paper to take, simply because I really like fashion! You definitely do not need to be a pro to take the class, just having some interest in the topic makes it worthwhile!

- **Were there differences in the teaching methods and academic environment at your host university, compared to Massey University? If so, what kind of differences?**

I definitely thought there were some differences between London Met and Massey. For one, the classes are in 3 hour blocks, rather than being spread out as a lecture, and a tutorial, and a screening etc. Luckily though, most of my lecturers only used two hours of the allocated time so you didn't feel stuck in there for too long! Another difference I found was that London Met is a lot more research based assignment wise than Massey is. Although you do a lot of research for your assignments at Massey, I felt like lectures

at London Met gave you ideas and information, but the assignments all felt like projects that all had to do with your own research topics.

I wouldn't say there was a big difference, but with all of my papers I only had two assignments per paper and no exams! That felt crazy to me.

- **Did you stay on-campus or off-campus? What was the accommodation like?**

I stayed in off-campus accommodation with family friends, so didn't really check out much other accommodation, but from other people I've heard good things.

- **How did living expenses compare to in New Zealand?**

I definitely have to say that it seemed a lot more expensive to live in London than it does in New Zealand. I came back and couldn't really believe how cheap a lot of stuff is! I definitely recommend saving as much as you possibly can before going to London, as it's expensive to live there, and if you want to travel around that's another expense also!

- **What extra-curricular activities did you participate in at the host university?**

I lived just out of London so I was unable to really participate in any clubs, but I did use their gym facilities. It is a lot smaller than Massey gyms, but it has some good quality equipment and classes, and if you say that you're an international student and staying for a semester only, they usually give you a membership pretty cheap!

- **What's one thing you learnt about your host country or culture?**

In doing Community, Culture, and Change I got to learn a lot about Britain and London as well. I learned that Britain is regarded as one of the most culturally diverse places in the whole world. I also learned that Londoners are crazy when it comes to peak time on the Tube.

- **What were some of the highlights of your exchange experience?**

A highlight for me is definitely just being able to be in London and experience life there. There is honestly so much more to London than what you see on TV and read about. There's so many different areas and sights to take in and explore and it's so cool that everyday you find something new to do.

Another major highlight for me was meeting so many different people on the exchange. There were two other students from the other Massey campuses that did the same exchange and I became really good friends with them. I also got to meet so many other International students – mostly from America – and a few of the local students too, who were lovely and invited us out to pub dates! The people I met on my exchange really made my experience even more amazing.

- **What did you find challenging?**

The most challenging thing for me were getting the assignments in! They all seem to be due right at the same time, and when you have four 3000-4000 word assignments all due in the same week, it can be pretty overwhelming! London definitely helped me to

improve on my own personal management to ensure I got everything completed and didn't mess around too much!

- **What do you feel you have learnt or gained from going on exchange?**

As cheesy as it sounds, going on the exchange really allowed myself to grow. I went to one of the biggest cities on the planet and threw myself into the culture for 8 months and learned so much about a whole new place. By meeting other people that weren't from the same place I was, I was able to learn about them also, adding more and more cultural knowledge to the mix. The exchange made me realise that getting out of the comfort zone is really important to allowing yourself to experience such an amazing place.

- **Do you have any tips for future students intending to travel to the same country or university?**

Just do it! I honestly had the best time of my life, and I would recommend an exchange to anyone. Massey provides you with everything you need, and all you have to worry about is saving up!

If you are really serious about it and know you're committed to going, sign up! You have nothing to lose, and so much to gain.

- **Do you have any comments on the support provided to you by Massey University and/or by the host university before/during/after your exchange?**

I have to say that the International Office at Massey Manawatu was crucial in me being able to attend this exchange, without them I would have been lost. A special shout out to Craig who helped me from day one, and has kept in correspondence with me for over a year making sure I'm right. The team at the International Office are extremely supportive and will do their very best in making sure you get to go on exchange, so thank you to them for helping me with everything throughout my whole experience.



