

# Student Exchange Questionnaire

**Name:** Ashna Sholehpak

**Massey Degree:** Bachelor of Communication

**Host university:** London Metropolitan University

**Semester and year of exchange:** Semester 2, 2015

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

I wanted to go somewhere where I spoke the language and understood the culture well and was already able to fully immerse myself in. I've been lucky that I've been able to backpack the middle east and Europe before and already had the 'foreign' cultural experience and was not looking for this from semester abroad.

- **Did it meet your expectations?**

It surprised me in ways I did not expect and went above and beyond.

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

Essential psychology for managers

Styling and journalism

Youth culture and the media

Art in London

I thoroughly enjoyed all my papers except art in London. And I would 100% recommend the top 3. They were super interesting and really different to the way we study back home and comparatively easy enabling you to enjoy other aspects of semester abroad while still learning really cool new things.

Art in London is marketed as an 'easy credit' paper catered toward international students. However it had an extremely high and inconvenient workload and was probably the most negative aspect of my semester abroad. It is also a in depth look at art history and not really a beginners course, the teachers have high expectations and you should have a good understanding of art before taking this paper on. My fellow American students in this class shared the same experience as me.

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

Absolutely. London Met is a huge and very diverse public uni with a lot of international students and because of this. Students are looked after are lot more than back home and there is less sense of being an independent student being in charge of your own studies which is nice for one semester, I think students from Massey will find it very easy compared to back home and the workload is less. The staff at London Met are friendly and eager to help and are often on friendship level with the students which I liked.

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

Off campus, my accommodation experience was great (acorn accommodation). It was in a central location which was very exciting but also potentially stressful if you aren't used to 24/7 hustle and bustle especially being from NZ.

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

Its London, its extremely expensive. BE PREPARED. In all honesty though its worth it. you have Europe at your fingertips and travel to other countries out of London is relatively cheap and easy.

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

I had my own radio show on the university radio station, which was lot of work and pressure but was so worth it and an absolute highlight of my time there.

I joined the Persian society (im Persian) which was good banter.

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

Brits know how to party and are an extremely fun night out.

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

The people I met, firstly and the lifelong friends I made.

The radio show, such a unique experience I wouldn't have been able to get back home.

The trips around Europe and morocco.

Except for art in London I loooved my papers.

- **What did you find challenging?**

Understanding the way your new university works can take a while to wrap your head around. London is a massive, extremely exciting, fast paced city with so much happening and so much opportunity its easy to get carried away. And above all, being careful with money!

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

Lifelong friends, new perspectives from the people I met. Time of my life.

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

Budget your money! Its so easy to get carried away.

Be prepared for winter, and very few sunlight hours, take vitamin D especially being used to sun in NZ, Londons lack of sunlight can and **will** affect you. Read up about SAD (seasonal affective disorder).

Travel as much as possible while you're in Europe!

- **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?**

The process was pretty complex, confusing and stressfull, although staff on both ends were super helpful. If there are any ways of simplifying it would be amazing.