

Student Exchange Questionnaire

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Massey Degree: Bachelor of Business Studies (HRM)

Host university: London Metropolitan University

Semester and year of exchange: Semester 1, 2016

I had the privilege of going to the London Metropolitan University in Semester 1 in 2016. I went on an exchange with my husband. Together we decided on the United Kingdom because it is a country that has always intrigued us, as well as the fact that it is so easy to travel around Europe - with the UK being so close. Unlike New Zealand! I wanted to go to London Met because I heard that it is a very diverse university, and that really excited me towards it. I had an incredible time at the university, and in the UK. London Met definitely met my expectations, in terms of how diverse it was, and overall I was very glad that I went on this student exchange! I did three elective papers, and one of my papers compulsory for my major was able to be cross credited, as the content was similar to the one at Massey. My three elective papers included; Spanish 1B, People Management and Performance in Contemporary Organisations, Organising and Managing Across Cultures, and my compulsory paper was Approaches to Diversity Management. I thoroughly enjoyed all of my papers, and would recommend them, especially the last one. The papers listed totally opened my eyes to new perspectives, and helped me to further my understanding of how people are managed.

The papers were taught in quite a different way, as I noticed there was an apparent emphasis on group work (group presentations and reports). Also, I noticed that there tended to be no such thing as mid-semester tests, but the assignments would carry a heavier weighting. For example, one of my papers had an essay based on a given case study worth 80%, and the other 20% counted towards a group presentation. So, it was safe to say that this semester my exams were minimal, but my group assignments required a lot more attention than usual! This was one of the main academic differences between Massey and London Met.

One of the things I took note of was how expensive it is to live in the UK, especially with the conversion rate being about 1GBP to 2.06NZD! But, the benefits is that you really learn how to budget, and how to be wise with spending. We found ourselves visiting McDonald's quite frequently, but we also did make quite a few theatre trips... we spent our money on what we thought was most important to us. With regards to food, fruit, vegetables and junk food were actually quite cheap in the UK, whereas meat was very expensive. But, it was still affordable.

There were many lessons I learnt from the British culture. I noticed how much more private they are than your ordinary kiwi. If there was one piece of advice I would give you if you are thinking of making your way to the UK it is this: make sure you entertain *yourself* on the trains (which are very safe, and convenient by the way)! Often, time on the train seemed to be a time that people would set aside to do something they enjoy, such as reading, working, listening to music, browsing facebook etc. So, it is best to occupy yourself, and not disturb others, unless you need

to. So, an important lesson I learnt was to respect the boundaries differing cultures may have in comparison to the one I am used to, as well as to adapt to that culture.

One of the highlights would most definitely be traveling around Europe and England. We had the opportunity to visit the Netherlands, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy! The great thing is that it is so cheap and quick to fly to another country. I mean you can be in London at 2pm and at 3pm you are in Italy again. So, it is very convenient to travel. That would definitely be a highlight! Another highlight I had was meeting so many new people from such a variety of cultures, and then getting the opportunity to become friends with them was wonderful! My group assignments really helped me to bond well with those in my group.

I have never been away from home for such a long period of time, so missing my family was definitely a challenge - especially acknowledging that they were thousands of miles away. But, technology makes things so much easier! We were able to Skype as much as we desired, which still enabled frequent contact. Also, the cultural difference was hard to adjust to at first - you can imagine coming from a small, closely knit family to a culture that is very private would have been quite difficult to get to grips with initially.

The lessons I have learnt from this exchange are as follows:

- There are many opportunities out there - not just in NZ! Be open-minded.
- There are many perspectives and outlooks on life - not just your own!
- You have the ability to make the most of every opportunity you have. Enjoy them.
- Meet new people, and don't be afraid to make many new friends along the way!

As well as all of these lessons learnt, I feel as though I have gained a lot. I have grown and matured a lot as person, and feel like I have been through many lessons of self-discovery. I have also gained a marvelous and unforgettable experience abroad, meshed with many different cultures, values and habits. My eyes have been opened in an incredible way, as I have learned that opportunities are plentiful, but not exclusively for those in NZ. I believe that going on an exchange is a real eye-opener - so I would highly recommend a student exchange for anyone willing to take on the challenge of being immersed in a different culture!

Just a warning for anyone willing to go on an exchange: there is *a lot* of paperwork! But in saying this, it is all totally worth it. There is also much friendly help offered by Massey exchange coordinators!

All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed my student exchange, and would certainly recommend it to anyone thinking about it!

Best Wishes,

Jamie Harris