

# Student Exchange Questionnaire

**Name:** Jordan Gowan

**Massey Degree:** Bachelor of Communications

**Host university:** Università degli Studi Tuscia, Viterbo

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



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

I chose Italy for my exchange destination as it is a place I have always wanted to visit, being especially attracted by the culture, language, people and food! Università degli Studi Tuscia was my first choice university based on the courses offered and its central location.

- **Did it meet your expectations?**

I think I can safely say it exceeded them!

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

I studied Elementary Italian 1, Elementary Italian 2 (Audit), Italian Cinema, Gender, Media and Communications and Travel Photography.

I would highly recommend all the papers except Gender, Media and Communications.

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

There were several differences, mostly with teaching style and class times. The teaching style was generally more relaxed and with a higher amount of student involvement than Massey – though this had varying degrees of success depending on the individual teacher. The class times were a lot longer than Massey and the timetable generally a lot more demanding on one's time.

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

I stayed off-campus in an apartment with two other Italians. The accommodation was definitely liveable, generally very clean and warm, however there were a few difficulties with various things which are the usual with flatting – difficult flatmates, electrical problems, etc.

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

I think living expenses were around the same, or slightly cheaper than living in Palmerston North. The Euro – NZD exchange rate made this difficult to calculate, but overall living in Italy was very cheap, with food prices a lot lower than in New Zealand, and rent and other living costs also quite low.

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

I went on all the offered field trips within the Lazio, Tuscan and Umbrian regions. As well as this I attended several university functions with other exchange students and varying festivals around Viterbo outside of the university but with other exchange students.

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

Italy is a truly diverse country, so it's hard to put down one thing! I especially appreciated learning about the



Italian way of life through language classes and making Italian friends.

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

Nearly every day was a highlight! I loved the close community atmosphere of Viterbo, and how the university program was set up to encourage the exchange students to get to know each other well. Another highlight was seeing a lot of the Lazio region through field trips and personal trips. Travelling with friends all over Italy and Europe was a definite highlight as well! Finally there was the “language partner” program the university had which really helped my language learning as well as making friends.



- **What did you find challenging?**

The language barrier was one of the more challenging things of the whole exchange. I definitely was unprepared for this before departing from New Zealand.

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

I learnt a lot from going on exchange, most importantly how to treat and respect other cultures different from your own. I also gained confidence in my own abilities and an increased understanding of the world around me.

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

Go for a year! And make sure to learn as much of the language and/or culture before you go overseas, it really does help!

Appreciate every moment of your time there, and do your best to make friends/connections within the community – it’s worth it!

- **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 support provided by the host university was incredible, definitely one of the best things about this exchange program! They were always around to help with any student’s needs and really went above and beyond simply providing services.

My communication with Massey was limited, but I really appreciated the understanding shown by university lecturers for my extramural paper, as well as the contact from the home office after the Paris attacks checking I was ok.

