

STUDY ABROAD in NEW ZEALAND

“What information do I wish I had known prior to leaving on exchange?”

Name: **Simon Armstrong**

Exchange University: **University of Auckland**

UX : **U3**

Year : **2011**

McGill semester : **Winter**

Courses

I took 4 different courses (which is the maximum): Engineering geology (set D), River Engineering (set D), Fluvial Geomorphology (set B) and Environmental Impact Assessment (set C). This corresponds to a full-time schedule in McGill.

It is possible to enroll in graduate level courses, but be warned, the workload will be more important. Also, the grading scheme is slightly different than McGill. The passing mark is C- in Auckland but if you don't get higher you won't be able to obtain your credits at McGill.

Visa and health insurance

It took 3 months to obtain my visa. Make sure to get all the required documents (listed on the consulate website) prior to your request.

Cost of living

I was there for almost 6 months, and it cost me about 10000\$ in total (including trips, housing, food and school supplies.) Work hard to obtain a scholarship from the department and apply for the MELS Travel bursary. Even the smallest amount can greatly help.

Housing can be pretty expensive, so make arrangements prior to your arrival. I would suggest applying for international student housing really early since places are limited. I did apply almost a year in advance and there was no more room available. I've spent a few days in a local hostel where I met my flatmates. They were fantastic and we are still in touch today. Try

to avoid cheap private student housing options. You should rather look for a flat to share with local/international students.

Location of Institution

Auckland is a city of over 1 million inhabitants. It's located on the North Island and is surrounded by water, ancient volcanos and islands. If you live around campus, you can go around by foot pretty easily. There are plenty of destinations for weekend trips during the semester. You might even get the chance to travel for field trips.

Before or after your semester abroad, I suggest you take time to make a road trip to the South Island (two weeks or more). You can't be in New Zealand and not visit the South Island.

Suggestions of items to bring with you

If you plan to stay in New-Zealand during the winter (june-october), bring some warm clothes and a good rainjacket. Weather can be cold and damp during that period, even in the warmer regions.

Overall Experience

I had an amazing time in this country and I would go back anytime. The University of Auckland is the only university that McGill has an agreement with for student exchange. If you plan to take any environmental courses, you'll be amazed by the stuff you will learn. Kiwis (that's how New Zealanders call themselves) are masters at protecting the environment.

You can go to another university if you want, but you will have to pay the full "international student fee". If that's what you want I suggest that you go to the University of Otago on the South Island which has an amazing campus. It is located in Dunedin, a "student city" that is less multi-cultural than Auckland.



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Other

I invite you to contact me if you want any photographs of Auckland or any other region in New Zealand. I have too many to put them in this document!

Feel free to contact me (simon.armstrong@tetrattech.com) if you have any questions. I could share more interesting stories ;)
