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**Bristol, UK. Fall 2011/2012.**

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## **INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT**

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Dear Foreign Study Returnee:

The International Programs and Exchanges Office requires that students enrolled in University of Washington direct exchanges or foreign study programs submit a final report to our office concerning their experiences abroad. This report has a dual purpose: to help us evaluate our current exchange ties and programs and to help us inform and orient students who will be participating on foreign study (or are considering applying) in the future. We ask you to reflect on your experiences abroad by addressing each of the topics in this outline. Advice or comments on other topics are also welcome.

The reports are kept on file in the International Programs and Exchanges Office and are available to any prospective student or interested faculty or staff member. If you wish your report to be read by the International Programs and Exchanges Office only, and withheld from all others, please write **CONFIDENTIAL** at the top of your report.

Thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate your time and effort.

**PLEASE TYPE YOUR REPORT OR WRITE LEGIBLY. IF YOU ARE WILLING TO BE CONTACTED BY THE IP&E OR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR CURRENT AND PERMANENT PHONE NUMBERS AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESSES. THANK YOU!**

### **IP&E PROGRAM EVALUATION OUTLINE:**

**-Please list your name, program location, term/year of participation, and your current and permanent phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses at the top of your report.**

#### **1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:**

**a.** Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

I left the day I was allowed to arrive in my student accommodation so I didn't have to stay anywhere before. I would recommend flying into the Bristol airport because of the shuttle service the school offers.

**b.** If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

The University of Bristol had a transportation service from the airport to university accommodation which was extremely useful and helped a lot with stress levels. There was an orientation for study abroad students that covered the resources we had available to us, tips for classes and outlined basic cultural differences.

#### **2. ACADEMICS:**

**a.** Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure

Instead of having multiple hours of instruction each week, there was one lecture for each class with around sixty students and one seminar to discuss the readings with a tutor and around ten other students.

- instruction

Lectures were formal; questions were generally not raised in lecture but held for seminars where there was discussion between the seminar leader and the students

- teacher/student relations

The University was divided into schools as majors are chosen before entry so teachers tended to know every upper year student in their classes from the previous year

- grading/exams

The assignments given throughout the term weren't graded and there were few. The exams for me were essay style at the end of term and one essay which determined the grade for the class. Many students don't have exams for their fall classes until the spring examinations. The grading was tougher and on a different scale which was hard to figure out at times.

- administration

I didn't have much contact with the administration apart from the study abroad adviser who was able to answer all of my questions

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

The library, computer and classroom facilities were all very similar to UW but the classrooms for me tended to be in houses converted to hold classrooms.

**b.** Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

All of my courses were of high quality and were on par to those I've taken at UW.

**c.** Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

Sociology of intimacy and personal life is very interesting, as is media, society and culture.

**d.** How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

It related directly to my sociology major (OVER)

### **3. HOUSING:**

**a.** What housing options were available to you?

The student housing options available were catered halls, self-catered halls, student houses, private accommodation and

**b.** Which did you choose, and why?

I chose a student house because I felt too old to live in a catered dorm but I still wanted the experience of living in university housing with other students.

**c.** What would you recommend?

A student house, I had a great experience. My house was Hillside Woodside, it's far from university and town but is in an incredible location and an incredible house

### **4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:**

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus was very spread out. Instead of buildings with many classrooms (there were a few of these) there were houses that had classrooms in them. The community around it was busy with a lot of shops and restaurants. The area is absolutely beautiful and some of the university buildings are gorgeous (the Victoria rooms and the Wills memorial building in particular).

### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

Bristol is a big city so there is the usual necessity to be careful in certain areas. The areas of Stokes Croft and Bedminster in particular are somewhat dodgy but very cool to see as long as you are careful. There is a large party scene in Bristol so at night (every night during freshers week and most nights during school) there are people walking around going to clubs and most have been drinking.

### **6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

**a.** How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

The first week after arrival there are no classes. It is called freshers week and it is where the students in halls or student houses are assigned representatives to take them to various clubs in order to bond with your house and other students. It's a lot of fun but there is a lot of drinking involved.

- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.  
(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

The major cultural differences I found had to do the pronunciation and usage of certain words. People tended to "take the piss" (make fun of) the way I said a word if it was different than the way they said it (there was a big debate on the proper way to was 'leisure'). It can be slightly irritating but it is usually all done in fun.

## **7. FINANCIAL:**

- a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

I just simply told my banks I was living in the UK and withdrew money from atms when I needed to. This was the best option for me because I was only there for a term but for a year I'm sure there are better options

- b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc

I would recommend around \$50-100 a month just for food and other expenses. I tended to walk everywhere but the public transportation is usually around 2 pounds

- c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

I wasn't expecting to go out as much as I did but it was worth it usually

- d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications?

If so, how did you address them?

I had student loans which helped a lot, there was an issue with my loan for winter quarter but the study abroad adviser in Seattle was able to solve it for me

## **8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:**

- a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

The IP&E administration was great, I always had someone to email if I had any questions and the process was a lot easier because of the support I had.

- b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

## **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

Someone who is open to new experiences, don't go into a program like this with a closed mind. A student who is able to work independently and stay on top of their work with only 6 hours of classes a week.

## **10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

I was worried about the academic aspect because I had heard it was harder. I found it to be tough but manageable if I kept up with the readings and attended every lecture and seminar.

I had an amazing personal experience with Bristol. I absolutely loved the city and the people I lived with. I ended up staying an extra month just to be with my friends longer. I ended up wishing I had stayed for the entire year despite only needing one credit before I left for the semester.



## IPE Program & Exchange Evaluation

### 1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

#### a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

If you fly into Bristol, definitely follow the school's advice and take the Bristol flyer to the train station and then a taxi to your dorm. It is pretty easy to find the Bristol flyer and people are more than happy to help. Since you do not know the city well yet, this is definitely the best way to get to your dorm. Just do not feel scared to ask for help!

#### b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

My program had an orientation that gave us a tour, went over some main aspects about the University of Bristol and had a meet-and-greet with other international students and some current Bristol students. But besides it being a place to meet other students, it was not super useful. Honestly, an orientation program is not going to help you adapt; what will help you, is you going into this knowing that you are in a different country and realizing that you might as well make the best of it because it is an amazing experience that does not come along that often.

### 2. ACADEMICS:

#### a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- **classroom structure**- Classes are a lot smaller, so you are called on a lot. You usually only have one lecture and one quiz section per week, so it is not that hard finding time to get the reading done. It was nice to experience a smaller school, which Bristol definitely offered.

- **instruction**- The University of Washington already relies on its students to do a lot on their own, but Bristol takes that to a new level. Because you are in class for only about 2 hours a week per class, you really have to do a lot of teaching yourself.

- **teacher/student relations**- Some of my teachers, especially those in the higher level classes, really took an interest in all of their students and made sure they knew what was going on. What they expected was clear and you never left class confused. Paradoxically, the teachers in my lower level classes did not seem as available or really care as much. Which I guess is fine, but I wanted to do so much better in the classes in which I felt the teacher actually cared if you learned.

- **grading/exams**- You do not really know at all what your teachers are expecting because they do not make it clear. You can talk to them, which is nice, but often times, you do not know what they expect until after you have turned in your first paper, which is usually half of your grade. Basically, they expect your papers to be very high quality-well researched and written. Almost the same level as an academic paper written by an expert in their profession. So start early on your papers!

- **administration**- I found this pretty lacking. It was hard to contact people and get a timely response. At UW, the teachers usually respond the day of or the next day. At Bristol, school closes on the weekends and you cannot always find those that you need to talk to. I remember one instance, where I was literally set to 4 different places to find the person in charge of accommodation. I ended up finding out that you could never be sure



where this person was because no one knew her schedule. So I had to email her and wait, which was frustrating, especially since she was the only one in her department. Patience was key here.

**- library, computer, and classroom facilities-** This is what made me miss UW the most. I feel like UW has so many resources available to its students. Bristol's libraries were probably the most disappointing thing about the school. It rarely had the books you needed, and there was usually only one copy of popular books in which many in one class would need. During exam time, if you did not show up right when the libraries opened, you would not find a seat. You would usually see students sitting on the ground because the libraries were so small and packed. Classrooms were fine- pretty standard. Lack of computers was also disappointing, although the computer staff was super friendly. Overall, UW has a lot more to offer facility-wise because it is such a large, research school.

**b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.**

Like I mentioned before, the quality and content of instruction varied. I found my higher level class much more interesting and therefore, easier. The teacher really knew her area and made sure that everyone understood the content. My lower level classes were some of the worst classes I have taken. My class on the European Union was so boring, which is a shame because that topic is so interesting. I found the same to be true of my Hellenistic History class. The content of these classes, as well as the quality was very poor. But I did not have much of a choice in the classes I took, since study abroad students are some of the last to choose classes. Registration takes place in person, in which you have to go from department to department and see what classes are open and then sign up for them. And since study abroad students arrive so late, they do not have first priority in signing up for classes.

**c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?**

HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa with Dr. Jill Payne was amazing. She really knew what she was talking about and cared if you learned. Also, the way the class was taught made it so interesting and relevant.

**d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?**

I think overall my education at UW is a lot better. But I still would not trade my experience at Bristol for anything. My experience at Bristol was so much more than academics. It was about experiencing the culture, meeting new people and challenging myself. At Bristol you really have to struggle to find the resources necessary to get things done, and you do not always know what is expected of you.

**3. HOUSING:**

**a. What housing options were available to you?**

I decided to room on campus in one of the dorms. This choice ended up being more expensive and not that more social, like I thought it would be. Luckily, I had my own bathroom and room which was nice, and I shared a kitchen with one other study abroad student who ended up being a really good friend. But I would have preferred to have lived in a more social area because let's be honest, that is what study abroad is all about- immersing yourself with other students. It would have been nice if the study abroad program in Bristol hadn't placed me in the Clifton Wing in the Hawthorns, which is where they put all of their much older research students. I know that the Hawthorns

seems nice because it is so close to campus, but do yourself a favor and try to get placed somewhere else, so you can better immerse yourself. If you want to live off campus, I have plenty of international friends who did and loved it. All you have to do is contact the school and they will usually help you. Also GumTree, is like our craigslist, so you can use that.

**b. Which did you choose, and why?**

I chose to room on campus because it was easier than trying to find private accommodation. I did not really pick what dorm to live in; it was the only one offered.

**c. What would you recommend?**

See above.

**4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:**

**Describe the campus and surrounding community.**

The University of Bristol's campus is not separate from the city, like UW. It is incorporated into the city. Although most of Bristol's buildings are gathered together, many buildings are throughout the city, so you might find yourself walking down/up Park Street (one of the main streets in Bristol) to get to a dorm or library. But Bristol is not too big, so the walk to class is not normally any longer than the walk to class at UW.

**5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

**Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.**

Overall, I felt like Bristol was safer than Seattle. That is not to say that crime did not happen there, but Bristol is much smaller than UW and crime rates are a lot lower.

**6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

**a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?**

**(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)**

I went to a lot of the Study Abroad Socials and meet other exchange students through those, both from the U.S. and Europe. I also met people in the different dorms through international students that were friends of mine. Being willing to always grab a coffee with one of your classmates and participating in group trips was a great way to meet people.

**b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.**

**(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)**

It is hard to describe the cultural differences that I encountered because England is so similar to the US, but when I did notice something different, it was a shock. The differences were mostly in the small things, such as customer service, which is not as prominent as in the states. A lot of people also had their own assumptions about Americans that were not true. You just had to prove them wrong in the way you acted and how you spoke. Also, the country as a whole was a lot more liberal than the states, which was interesting to experience. I dealt with these differences just by accepting them and going along with things. I could not change them and just had to realize that was how people are there and I have to accept that.

## **7. FINANCIAL:**

### **a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?**

I did not want to open a bank account abroad because I was there for only six months, but I probably should have. I have Chase and every time I withdrew money, I had a \$5 international fee. Cash was the best way overall for me to access money because charges on my card were a lot greater. I would recommend opening a bank account to future students, which the Study Abroad office in Bristol can help you with.

### **b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.**

I did not really keep track of my money on a monthly basis because I tried to spend as little money as possible and I had saved up a lot of money, so I knew that I would be okay. I also checked my bank account a lot. I mainly walked everywhere and paid my rent in one big deposit, so with that out of the way, all I had to worry about was mainly food. I spent about the same amount abroad as I do here on food- about \$60 per two weeks.

### **c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.**

I cannot remember any if I had them.

### **d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications?**

Right now, I am currently experiencing them. Since I went into summer school when I got back, I had to pay tuition early July (less than 2 weeks since I got back), which was before grades were in from my Study Abroad Program. I have also been waiting for my transcript from abroad to come in. Because of these my financial aid has been put on hold because the office does not know whether I passed all of my class and made satisfactory progress. I currently have a short-term emergency loan, which I will pay back once my financial aid has been reinstated.

### **If so, how did you address them?**

See above.

## **8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:**

### **a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?**

I had a lot of friends abroad who were in the UC Program. This program had all of the kids from the UC schools fly out together to London and spend a couple of days together there before their study abroad program began. That was nice because it created a base for those students. Also, their program frequently checked in with them. It would have been nice if the IPE had maybe done a few of these things and got more involved with their students.

### **b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.**

## **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

### **Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.**

This program is definitely suited for those who want to be placed in an uncomfortable situation and to learn how to deal with it. You have to be outgoing and learn how to come out of your shell because otherwise, this program will be a complete waste on you.



You decide what kind of experience you want. If you decide to make the best of your situation, study abroad can be an amazing experience. For me, it definitely was.

**10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

**How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?**

I think my expectations were pretty accurate. I did expect more from the school academically, but I found most of their resources to be lacking. Although I did not like the schooling abroad, I had an amazing experience. I met amazing people, learned so much about myself and as cliché as it sounds, realized that I really can do anything.



Student Name:

Study Abroad Program: University of Bristol Direct Exchange

MAY 18 2011

## 1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION

I arrived in the United Kingdom a few days before the scheduled international student arrival date at the University of Bristol. I stayed in London with distant relatives, but it would be significantly cheaper for students that don't know anyone to stay in a hostel in Bristol if they arrive early, or to just arrive on move-in day at their accommodation.

There was an international student orientation when I arrived. Most of the international students were direct exchange students like me, and therefore did not go with a group of people from their respective universities back home. The orientation got us comfortable with where the international student office was and where to go for academic guidance. They also gave us a list of events and trips that the international student office was organizing so that we could make plans to go on them if we wanted to. It was a good way to meet other international students and plan tourist trips around the UK with other students.

## 2. ACADEMICS

*Classroom Structure:* Much like UW, classes were held in either lecture halls or smaller classrooms.

*Instruction:* There was a lot less instruction at the University of Bristol than there is at UW. Instructors expect you to learn things and do research independently. For all three of my classes I only had a 1 hour lecture twice a week and a quiz section every other week. That meant that I spent an average of 7.5 hours in a classroom per week. However, they expected you to do a lot of outside reading and research on your own time. I found it very difficult because lectures were so large and not very interactive and you only got a quiz section once every other week in order to get a better handle on the material with more personalized instruction.

*Teacher/Student Relations:* I did not interact with lecturers very often. The lectures were large and only 1 hour long, so it did not provide very much time for teacher/student interaction. Quiz sections were more personal and I got to know the "tutors" (the teachers who ran the quiz sections) better, but I only saw them once every other week, so I did not get too much interaction with them either.

*Grading/Exams:* There isn't really any physical homework to do, just a lot of reading. My final grade was based completely on two essays per class for each class. It was a lot of pressure, since there was no homework buffer and no indication of how you are doing in the class besides your grade on the first essay (which, unfortunately, is half of your grade). The essays are also not due in class: you have to turn them in to your department on the due date. I know that most other

students had to take exams at the end of the year as well, but I did not have to because I only did a semester abroad.

*Administration:* I did not have very much interaction with administration.

*Library, Computer, and Classroom Facilities:* There were many libraries scattered throughout campus, as well as computer labs that were open 24 hours a day for students

Overall, the main difference between UW and the University of Bristol is that you are expected to do a lot more independent study and work, which was hard for me to get used to. You are expected to include in your essays things that you discover during your research that were not discussed in lecture at all. It was especially hard for me because I chose to study history and politics which I was there, which was completely unrelated to my accounting degree at UW. I was behind other students in terms of their history/politic essay writing abilities because they had more practice doing it, since they had been studying those subjects at their high school as well. English university students are also required to take courses together, so while my classmates were taking all of the same courses, including a history writing course, I was only taking random history classes. I would recommend not taking courses that are out of your field of study, as they are very specialized and catered to students that are majoring in that field.

### **3. HOUSING**

The housing options available to me were to either find an apartment on my own in Bristol or to apply for student housing at either a residence hall (which are like dorms) or a student house. I did not want the extra stress of trying to find an apartment on my own in a foreign city, so I chose student housing. The university placed me in a student house, not a residence hall. It was located on St. Michaels Hill, which was a very central spot to both the city and university. I lived with 11 other students in the house. Most of them were English students, but a few were from outside the UK. None of them were study abroad students however. They were all completing their degree in Bristol. It was a great experience that I would recommend to everyone. I was completely immersed in the English student lifestyle because my housemates were all English. The university has a program for all students living in student housing, which plans parties, pub crawls and dances for the students in student housing, which made it easier to meet and socialize with other students. They also had liaisons (students who had been in student housing in a previous year) to help the newcomers get situated. It was a really great experience.

### **4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE**

The University of Bristol is located in the city of Bristol in southwest England. It is near the city of Bath and the city of Cardiff in Wales. It's about a 2 or 3 hour train ride from London. Unlike UW, Bristol is not a campus college. Instead its buildings are interspersed throughout the city. The residence halls are all about a 30 minute walk to the main building.

## **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Overall, I did not notice any health or safety concerns. In the student orientations I attended, however, they stressed not to walk home alone from pubs or clubs at night as there had been some knifings recently. There were also a few rapes that had occurred in the early morning time to runners in a park called The Downs.

## **6. CULTURAL ASPECTS**

Much to my surprise, the UK university culture is a lot different from that of the University of Washington. The easiest way to integrate myself into the culture was by befriending my housemates. They taught me a lot about the culture. I also joined a few clubs, such as the chocolate society and indie society, which would schedule meetings and pub crawls so that the members could get to know each other better.

One of the biggest cultural differences that I noticed was the importance of going out on weeknights. In the U.S. (maybe because I was not 21 before I went to England), I would never think of going out on a weeknight. However, once I got to England, my housemates and friends would go out to pubs and clubs 3-4 times a week, which was hard for me to get used to. There is also a lot more smoking there. Another thing that was hard for me to get used to was that people mostly walked everywhere instead of driving. Finally, stores close a lot earlier. You need to get grocery shopping done early or the store will be closed.

## **7. FINANCIAL**

I found that the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S. was to either use my credit card or use my debit card to get money out of ATMs. As a warning though, credit cards are not as widely accepted there as they are here. Per month, I spend about £250 on rent and between £360-400 on food and entertainment (however, you could scale down your spending a lot). Things are pretty expensive for the most part in the UK. Luckily I did not have any unexpected expenses. I did also did not use Financial Aid to fund my exchange.

## **8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION**

The IP&E administered my program/exchange. They did a good job of keeping me informed and up to date about the application process and then checking in with me during my study abroad.

## **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE**

This program is best suited for students who like independent study and are willing to do a lot of research and studying in the library on their own time. They should be willing to go above and



beyond in their research. This program is also well suited for outgoing people who enjoy going out and doing things at night.

#### **10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Overall, this was a wonderful experience. It opened my eyes to different cultures and world views. I made some great friends who I will keep for a long time. I loved it! This experience definitely exceeded my personal expectations. I really felt like I got to integrate myself into the culture and I made friends there pretty easily. Academically, it was harder than I thought it was going to be. I wasn't prepared for that style of learning. But I did learn a lot in all my classes and it was eye-opening to experience studying in a university abroad.

1) ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION

a. **Please recommend accommodation for future students upon arrival**

I arrived on the day of move in, so I went straight to my accommodation, using the free bus service supplied by the University from Bristol Airport.

b. **If your exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?**

There was an orientation in the Wills Memorial Hall (absolutely amazing place), and they gave the general instruction on what needs to be turned in, how to sign up for classes and what not. They did try to give advice on how to acclimate to England society, but it didn't help too much for me. I had gotten along really well with my flatmates by then, and they were a more useful source of peer information. They did however, repeatedly warn us about SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)... but coming from Seattle, there were no problems because their weather is EXACTLY the same.

2) ACADEMICS

a. **Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:**

i. **Classroom structure**

The classes are much, much smaller, and more personal. Depending on which units you're taking, it is still lecture format for most classes. There was really no great difference that made it a problem for me.

ii. **Instruction**

The instruction was pretty much the same as the UW. Much less course work, and the reading lists are very, very vague, because they simply just list many books that are "suggested" to be read... do not worry too much, as long as you get the gist of what the books are saying (and it's generally the same thing) then you will be fine. Abstracts, intros and conclusions.

iii. **Teacher/student relations**

Depending on the size of the class it is much easier to talk to your professors. Most of them are tutors for students in their department so they are very used to helping their students that come to them with their problems and questions.

iv. **Grading/exams**

The grading system is the most jarring of all in England I think. We're so used to 90 as a great score, 80 as a good score, and 70 as passing. In England, 70 is considered fantastic. 90 is near impossible, and even 59 is considered a good score. The exams seem to be generally the same. Although the only exam I took was for an open unit, so it was not as stressful as I'm sure other exams would have been.

v. **Administration**

I didn't really have much interaction with the administration. Only when signing up for classes, and orientation. Everything however, went as planned, and after the first few weeks, I never really had anything to do with administration after that.

vi. **Library, computer, and classroom facilities**

The Arts and Social Sciences Library (next to the Sports Hall) is very updated, and new. They have a café in the front, and it's quite easy to navigate once you figure out how. Classrooms are a bit... archaic. Most of the university precinct buildings, at least along woodland road where my lectures and seminars were, are very old homes that have been converted, with an extension into the back that connects all of them. As a warning, many of the older buildings have codes that you need to enter AND exit, so make sure to ask for the code when signing up for the classes. I got trapped in the basement once, because no one told me the code, and I followed some students in...

b. **Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction**

All of the professors clearly know what they are talking about. I didn't deal with TAs, so I don't know if Bristol (or any English Uni) employs them.

c. **Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend for future students?**

I would just recommend taking units that can't be found at the UW.

d. **How did you study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?**

I took Teaching English as a Foreign Language, as well as Children in Society while I was in Bristol, which helped me to eventually indirectly push me into what is now my major. The classes got me very interested in education, and language.

3) **HOUSING**

a. **What housing options were available to you?**

b. **Which did you choose, and why?**

c. **What would you recommend?**

I stayed over in Stoke Bishop, in University Hall. It's about 35-40 minute walk from the university precinct (but they introduced the new U6 bus service this year, luckily for me), and also a long walk from the nearest Tesco and Sainsbury's. However, the location is not quite as important as the people are. All of my flatmates were freshers so everyone was eager to make new friends; older students I noticed, had already found their niche and are not necessarily as eager to make new friends. I chose University Hall because it was one of the cheapest ones, and I had heard stoke bishop is where most of the students were located. I would definitely recommend living in the University accommodations but be aware that you might be living with some immature (at times) 18 year olds that just became of drinking age. If you do decide to go with the university's accommodation, the "About Me" free write is very, very important. Be sure to write about yourself as accurately as possible, or as my flatmate did, describe yourself as the type of person you want to live with.

4) **EXCHANGE SITE**

Bristol University is located right in the middle town, with a Grammar school mixed into it. There is the Clifton Downs area, a huge grassy field where residents and student go to play football.

Whiteladies Road is a long road up a hill that is lined with shops and pubs, and houses the biggest Sainsbury's within walking distance. Along Whiteladies road, there is also a pub called Penny Farthing that my flatmates and I enjoyed, it's right across from Sainsbury's. College Green is also a really nice park area that has fountains and great buildings around it. (Park Street also has Vincenzo's, an AMAZING Italian restaurant, and Swinky Sweets, which has delicious cupcakes). Cabot Circus is where the main shopping area is and they have a german festival set up around Christmas time. The Clifton Suspension Bridge is a sight to see as well. Lastly, at night, Jason's Doner Van comes out in front of Habitat on Queen's Road, and they have the best chips ever.

5) **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

I would suggest bringing along some Theraflu, or some back up medicine, because the fresher's flu spreads around easily. Other than that, you should be perfectly fine.

6) **CULTURAL ASPECTS**

a. **How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?**

I made quick friends with all of my flatmates. Because they were all freshers, there were many activities made for first years, such as bar crawls, meet and greets, and such. Most of the people I met were those that lived near me.

b. **Describe cultural difference and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.**

England is a much, much more liberal state than the United States, even in Washington. It was a huge shock to hear exactly how different their political views were. It is just important to be very open-minded about what you hear, and remember that you may be the odd one out.

Also their slang takes a little getting used to (courgette is zucchini, and aubergine is eggplant), and they have different pronunciation of certain words. But it's a great conversation starter, talking about dialect differences, so that may help you talk to English students.

7) **FINANCIAL**

a. **What is the best way to access/transfer money from the US?**

I was a member of Bank of America, and they have an alliance with Barclays, which you can take out money with no additional fee (or 1% fee I think). That was the best way that I could find (without opening a bank account). Also, there is an HSBC on Whiteladies, so that may be another option.

b. **How much spending money do you recommend per month? Rent, food, transportation etc.**

Since I stayed in accommodation, I paid everything is one big lump sum. For food, I spent about £25 per week maybe even less. Depending on how much you go out, nights are usually about £20 to £30 depending on where you go, and how much you want to spend. Taxis are generally £2-£3 per person when you share.

c. **Please describe any unexpected expenses you incurred**

Didn't really run into any surprising expenses... just be careful with your budget, and research a lot before you leave.

d. **Financial aid**

I'm a student of the Husky Promise, and everything transferred very smoothly, I had absolutely no problems with financial aid.

8) EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION

a. **Comment on admin services**

Everything went smoothly once they made sure that I knew what I was doing, everything was set. No problems at all.

9) PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE

**Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited for.**

Someone who can be very independent, and is interested in English society is suited for this exchange.

10) OVERALL EXPERIENCE

**How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?**

It was the first time being completely on my own, so I had no idea what to expect academically or personally (I had very far-fetched hopes that I didn't expect to really happen). I just hoped that I would be able to get along with those that I lived with, and although the people I met were not at all like the people I was expecting, I'm very glad that it didn't go the way that I'd hoped. All of the surprises taught me to adapt well. Bristol is a fantastic place, and I've made friends there that I never want to lose touch with. I'm sure that anyone who goes will not regret it. The only thing I regret was signing up for only a semester stay.



DA✓

APR 16 2008

January 10, 2008

## International Program/Exchange Evaluation Report

### 1. Arrival Overseas/On-site Orientation

- a. I recommend Bristol's campus housing. Housing was completely taken care of by the university, and the RA was available to help me move in even though I came a week ahead of schedule.
- b. My program did have an orientation. It covered important information for registering for classes and what classes at Bristol were like, information for things like cell-phone purchases, and important information about what the city has to offer. I found the information regarding classes to be the most helpful because I was able to figure out a lot of the other information on my own.

### 2. Academics

- a. Classroom structure was pretty similar to the structure here at the UW. The only real difference was that the classes were taken only by majors of that particular subject, like how majors-only classes are here. For example, I took a first-year classics course, and I was the only non-classics major in the course. Instruction was almost completely the same as it was here at the UW. My computer science classes were in lecture format, and my classics courses were part lecture, part discussion. One big difference was that there were very few assignments given. My classes only had two assignments each for the entire semester. Teacher/student relations were very similar to the UW. The teachers had office hours where it was possible to discuss assignments, course material, etc. Grading is on a very different scale than the UW's grading scale. 70 out of 100 is considered a very good grade, and 100's are not given unless the assignment or exam could basically be published. Grades in the 50-70 range are normal and translate well into UW grades. The only exams I had were the end-of-year exams. They were phenomenally important for my grades, and they were very different from typical UW exams. In Bristol, you get about a month-long exam period in May and June, and, like our finals week, there are no classes during this time. People work really hard revising (their word for studying) during this month. The exams consisted of about 4-6 questions, I got a choice of 3-5 of them. All questions were short answer/essay questions, even on the computer science exams. The libraries were closed more often than the UW libraries are, but otherwise they are similar. The computer facilities much more limited than the UW's. There is a 24-hour computer lab, but it is very small. What was particularly jarring for me was that the computer science laboratories were not open 24 hours, which is something I am used to here at the UW.
- b. The quality and content of instruction was very good at Bristol. The only complaint I have, is that my Image Processing and Computer Vision professor decided to change the class schedule halfway through the course, and, because I was the only student not only enrolled in CS classes, I was only able to come to one class per week.
- c. I would recommend that computer science or psychology majors take Computational Neuroscience at Bristol. Bristol is well-known for research in this area, and there is not a comparable UW class.
- d. My study abroad coursework counted for 2 400-level computer science courses, and 3 honors humanities courses.

### **3. Housing**

- a. University housing and private apartments were the options available to me.
- b. I chose university housing because I did not want to try to find an apartment.
- c. I would recommend university housing provided that the house is not Elmgrove, which is where I stayed. I visited other university houses and they seemed decent. Elmgrove, however, was notorious for being really bad housing. The people in Elmgrove were very nice though.

### **4. Program/Exchange Site**

The University of Bristol is right in the middle of Bristol. It has a couple blocks that resemble a distinct campus, but it is more integrated into the city than the UW is. University buildings are all fairly close to each other, so walking between them is not a problem. Bristol is smaller than Seattle and is for the most part a walk-able city. Bristol is very residential except for downtown, which has shopping, dancing, etc.

### **5. Health and Safety**

I had no health or safety concerns. We had access to University medical facilities, but I never had occasion to utilize them.

### **6. Cultural Aspects**

- a. I met members of the community through the University housing and through extracurricular societies (clubs). I joined the "Explorers Society" which met in a pub once during the week, and then had a weekly hike.
- b. I didn't encounter any big cultural challenges.

### **7. Financial**

- a. I don't know if this is the best way, but I accessed money from the US via checks, and debit card withdrawals. Bank of America has a deal with Barclay bank in the UK where they don't charge the international transfer fee. This is where I got money for everything besides rent. For rent, I used checks, even though they incurred a fee.
- b. I would recommend about \$900 per month.
- c. When I arrived at my University housing, I found that the kitchen was not stocked with pots, pans, and other kitchen necessities. My flatmate (who was also from the UW) and I had to stock the kitchen.
- d. I did not use financial aid.

### **8. Program/Exchange Administration**

- a. I thought that the IP&E was very effective at administering my program/exchange. I particularly liked the chance to meet with former Bristol students during the orientation last December. I can't think of a service that I would improve.

### **9. Program/Student Type**

This program really would be suited to any student, as long as he or she wants to spend time in England. Bristol is especially good at science and engineering, so I would recommend it particularly to those types of students. The student would have to be comfortable in situations where he or she may not necessarily understand every word being said (the accent took a bit of time to get used to) or every cultural reference.

### **10. Overall Experience**

My academic expectations were realistic. I wanted to experience computer science classes in England and compare them to how US computer science classes are run. I also wanted to

take humanities classes that had something to do with the country/area I was in. This last expectation was not entirely met. I could not sign up for a British history class like I had wanted to, but I signed up for a class on the city of Rome, and was able to visit Rome for a week during the spring break. My personal expectations were also realistic, which I am particularly thankful for. I wanted to see how college students in another country interact, spend free time, etc, and I wanted to have spend time with these people. Through my housing and the Explorers Society, I was able to do that.