Study Abroad After Exchange Report

**Partner University:** University of Nottingham  
**Country:** England  
**Major/faculty:** History, Department of Arts  
**Dates(term of exchange):** Spring 2019, January-June

**Preparation for exchange**

In preparation for my exchange to the University of Nottingham I started doing a lot of research about the University itself as well as English Society. Going abroad to a different country with its own society was a daunting idea but by researching what to expect I felt better prepared for my abroad adventures. One thing I found for the university itself, is to not be afraid to email people directly. At the University of Nottingham, there was not a separate application process for ‘study abroad students’ so I was filling out a lot of things that were designed for students intending to do full time studies at the school. I found it helpful to talk to people directly about my concerns and make connections with the different departments (financial, my school of study and accommodation support). Course descriptions can be looked up online, and all I simply had to do was email my department on what courses I want to take (Nottingham doesn’t schedule courses in advance so you don’t know your class schedule, or any potential conflicts, till a week before the classes are supposed to start).

In terms of packing, whatever you think you are going to need, you probably won’t need it all. Make sure whatever you bring you can handle by yourself – don’t bring 5 suitcases as you won’t be able to move those around without help (which you wont always get). I ended up bringing 3 suitcases worth of stuff, one large suitcase, one medium and one small, and found that I ended up overpacking. (If all else fails, you can buy things you forgot). With Nottingham being in central England, there are no airports nearby, so I ended up booking a flight to a London airport. To get from London to Nottingham, I took a National Express bus (while the train system in England is great to get around on, you CAN’T use it with lots of luggage. The National Express bus takes you straight to the campus as well). I learned through research that customs can take a while so be sure to plan for extra time between airport and bus. You can also preorder a sim-card before you get to the UK (I got one through GiffGaff – super affordable) so when I landed I had data right away in case I needed to look something up.

Nottingham, England is not a super expensive place to live. I chose to stay on University Accommodations, so I could be on campus and in a community of other students. My plan that I...
chose was catered, which provided me with breakfast and dinner everyday and a credit amount of money to use on campus food shops. This was a super affordable option and gave me access to student life on campus, with it only being a short bus ride away from town. I brought England currency with me that I exchanged before I left and I had a credit card, but I also chose to open up a bank account while I was abroad, which is super helpful. You transfer money once from an account from home, only having to go through the conversion once, and then you have a UK debit card. There are banks on campus for convenience. Most places accept cash and card options. Keep in mind the conversion – while things are affordable here, with conversion things can add up after a while.

**During Exchange**

At the beginning of the term there were a few orientations that they did for international students – where to get help on campus, how to get involved, etc. They email you beforehand about all of these events and how to attend them but there are additional things you can get involved in by choice.

For accommodations, I stayed on campus in a catered hall, Derby hall. It was central to all my classes and uni life – had a great sized room and store credit at stores and restaurants around campus for extra food outside dining hours. You have many options for rooms on campus, but you don’t get to choose a hall, you will be assigned one based off of your room choice and availability. I found it colder that what I was used to at the beginning but much the same weather as Vancouver – sun, rain and clouds.

Classes were in a lecture/seminar format – totaling about 3 hours of content per class. Sign up for courses is unique, as you sign up for courses without knowing timetables and have to change later on if their turns out to be a conflict. As a history student I had 2 assessments only – 50% paper and 50% final exam but I know this changes based off the courses you take.

**Reflection After Exchange**

I had an amazing time while abroad and glad I chose the University of Nottingham. The university itself is inclusive and accepting. I had some initial challenges adjusting when I first arrived – friends, lingo and food, but I became involved as quickly as I could and was open to learning about the society. I definitely advice being social in your first few weeks in excess – go to all the events, sit with people at meals – just try to get yourself out there before you find where you are more comfortable. Its okay to try new things and ask for help, the staff and students are really supportive.

Some advice I have pertains to connections back home – be sure to stay in contact with your friends and family.
back home, as well as with institutions such as your school and bank. You will most likely be doing this
over messages, rather than phone calls, so make sure you have all your bases covered. The most trouble
I had when I was abroad was with my home bank and contacting them. In terms of banks, if you have a
credit card, even by alerting your bank that you are going abroad, your card could be potential flagged for
fraud. I suggest either giving someone at home power of attorney to do things on your behalf just in case
or to make sure you have a way to call your financial institution just in case (collect calls do not exist
internationally anymore so you would have to pay for a skype call subscription).

Location for exchange is important as well – I am really glad I chose Nottingham and not a big city
to do my exchange in. Travelling around to those big cities I felt like I would not have enjoyed staying
there at all. Don’t be afraid to go to one of the ‘small town’ communities, as there is loads to do there still.