

Testimonial – Merindah GOLD: University of Leeds (Semester 2, 2010)



In London, on the river Thames – demonstrating against the rise in student fees.

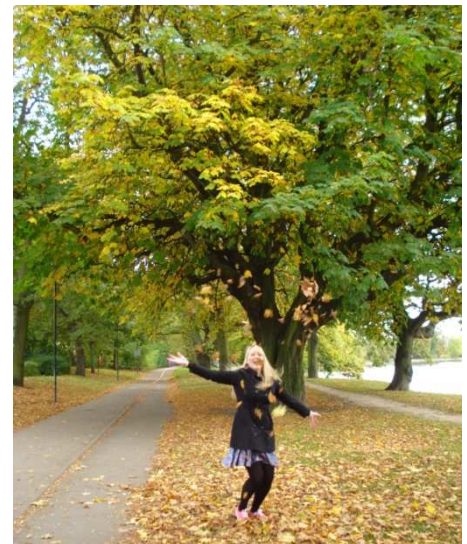
DOOOOO IT!!!!!! Honestly, that is all I can say. Exchange has been the GREATEST, most exciting and fulfilling experience of my life! I have dreamed of going on exchange since I was around 14 and I can truly say that it exceeded all of my wildest expectations (and my expectations were sky-high)!

Leeds was always my choice. LEEDS, LEEDS, LEEDS! The tagline for Leeds is LIVE IT: LOVE IT, and this is definitely true. As soon as you set foot in this wondrous city of students you will start a whirlwind of a journey!

I'm a 3rd year Journalism/ Arts student at UQ and studied Sociology and Social Policy while at Leeds. I found the courses soooo interesting and really inspirational! My tutors at Leeds were world-renowned academics and the majority of my assignments I was actually referencing them! The classes are a lot smaller in Leeds so I found it much easier to learn and interact and make lots of friends!

Leeds is pretty much smack-bang in the middle of the UK so travel opportunities are actually ridiculous! Coming from Brisbane, where a flight to Sydney can cost \$200 – a flight to Paris from Leeds was only \$50! So clearly I took every opportunity to travel Europe. To tantalise your travel taste buds (or just make you jealous) I was able to cruise the canals of Venice, go canyoning in the hills of Austria, drink Steins in Munich, Amsterdam (need I say more), walk the ancient streets of Prague, eat chocolate in Belgium, ski the slopes in the French Alps, master the tubes in London and explore the great castle in Edinburgh!

Not only was my travel INCREDIBLY fun, it was also eye-opening and character building. Being in a foreign country by yourself forces you to become an insanely independent, friendly and outgoing person. What I really stress to you is that there is NO TIME to be shy. At all. Being shy doesn't make you friends, nor does it make you have a good time! If you don't feel confident, fake it, as at the end of your exchange you will no doubt be the most confident and extroverted person!



Playing in the Autumn Leaves in York – so nice to have real seasons!

Leeds University Union has been voted the number 1 Union in the UK multiple times. The Union really does put the Red Room to shame. Leeds has about 5 clubs/pubs that are positively raging every night of the week! And as full-time at Leeds is only 6 hours a week – there is no excuse not to go out at LEAST 3 times a week! Leeds has awesome live music, which I was able to immerse myself in through Leeds Student Radio. I was able to co-host the Monday night show LEEDS: live. This meant that I was able to interview amazing bands, get free tickets to gigs and then go backstage and party with the band! An amazing experience I will never forget!

There about a million different societies you can join at the Uni including numerous sporting, musical and general interest groups. Societies are a MASSIVE thing in Leeds and can be a brilliant way to make friends fast!

My top 5 highlights of the trip

1. The University ski trip in Val d'Isere (France). Most amazing 8 days of my life! 300+ Leeds Uni students partying by night and skiing by day!
2. Protesting in London against the rise in student fees! 50, 000 people demonstrating outside the Houses of Parliament – making history!
3. Leeds Festival! An incredible 4 days of camping and music and an absolutely AMAZING line-up! (Blink 182, The Libertines, Guns n Roses, Two Door Cinema Club, Phoenix – it's in August so book tickets early!)
4. Getting stuck in an airport in Paris because the snow had closed Leeds Airport. Sleeping in a cold Airport overnight, while at the time, not cool, but looking back on it – HILARIOUS!
5. My first white Christmas! In London – just like 'Love Actually'. Although it was my first Christmas away from home, I was lucky enough to have my two best friends from home fly over and we spent Christmas in London, New Years in Prague and then my 21st in Berlin!



Nearly dying on the slopes in Val d'Isere! Good times, good times.



My iconic London photo – had to do it!

I could literally go on for days about the amazing time I've had in Leeds! I think it is the perfect Uni to go to as it is amazing for student life, and so close to everything else! Don't be scared to try it! I know the application process seems like the most annoying/difficult thing to do. But persevere! As soon as you land you will realise it was alllllll worth it! Save as much money as you

can (or borrow as much as you can) as when you're here you'll realise there is SO much to do – and you won't want to miss out on anything because of a little insignificant detail such as money!! My motto over here has been “no regrets”, so don't regret not going on exchange as you will no doubt find it as incredible as I did and have the most amazing time of your life!

Exchange: DO IT!