

My name is Grace and I am really pleased to have been given a scholarship by CFGW. I am in my third year of a four year Bachelor of Forestry Science at the University of Canterbury. As part of my study I was able to go on an exchange programme for the first semester of this year and study at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. It was an incredibly fun exchange and interesting to see how a different university operates. There were a few minor cultural differences, with some people struggling to understand my accent and vocabulary! I learnt about the forestry sector and structure of different timber industries in Canada, comparing the different species, and seeing benefits and challenges to New Zealand's own systems. The University of British Columbia also offered a class in Aboriginal forestry which was a very different perspective as it was taught by a female First Nation's lecturer. Canterbury did not offer an equivalent course so studying abroad gave me access to a wide range of different educational opportunities.

Going on student exchange is also about trying new things and meeting new people. There is a large social component to University life and it was great fun to meet new people and join new clubs. I joined the BrUBC club, which brew and drink beer together. Most of the members were studying biology so again I was able to meet people with similar interests and studies. For fun and exercise I played casual futsal and indoor hockey, and joined a quidditch team. Quidditch is based on the books by J. K. Rowling but has been adapted for the real world into a new and developing team sport. I played for a social team, but we travelled to tournaments where I was able to meet people who were from other Universities and different regions. With the university brew team I went on a brewery tour of Victoria on Vancouver Island and completed the university challenge 'storm the wall'. Storm the wall involved five stages where competitors swim, sprint, cycle and run, then have to climb over a 12 foot wall.

I am the only female in my year at Canterbury University as it is a job that does not attract many women, but at UBC the gender ratio was more even. There are so many opportunities in this industry and I am glad I have chosen forestry as my future career. I really appreciate this scholarship which has helped towards the cost of being on exchange and decreased my debt on my return. Studying abroad gave me an opportunity to learn about the Canadian forestry industry and broaden my knowledge of international forestry. My semester away was incredibly fun and highly informative. Meeting people and travelling is fantastic, and I felt incredibly welcome and included by my new Canadian friends. I doubt I would have learned half as much about Canadian policy, or made the same connections, visiting Canada as a tourist. Thank you again to CFGW for your support.

