



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Queen's University
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2018
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Major Accounting, Minor Finance

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
COMM323 – Corporate Financial Planning	English	ACCT300 or FINC300	18
COMM311 – Financial Accounting	English	---	
COMM312 – Management Accounting	English	---	
COMM376 – Business in the Asia-Pacific Rim	English	---	

Any comments about these papers?

COMM323 is HARD. If you're looking for an easy exchange don't take it. In saying that it is by far the most interesting and real-world useful course I took on exchange. Professor Cannon is highly respected and incredibly knowledgeable in his field. He also has a soft spot for exchange students and will help you to find a group with Canadian students for the group assignments! I learnt a huge amount from this course but it is described at Queen's as the hardest course in a Commerce degree. If you are taking it as ACCT300 equivalent I would take COMM414 or 416 instead as they both credit back but it is incredibly interesting! You will learn to think critically, it involves a lot of case analysis that I hadn't experienced much at Otago, and Professor Cannon will go above and beyond to help you pass.

COMM311 and 312 I took simply to boost my knowledge in accounting going back to complete my final year of BCom at Otago. I don't think either of these teaches you a huge amount that is special to Queen's/couldn't be learnt elsewhere so while they were adequate as fillers I wouldn't waste your choices on them if there are other options.

COMM376 was MY FAVOURITE COURSE that I took on my year-long exchange. The Professor (Nailin Bu) is engaging, passionate and highly knowledgeable in this area. I learnt a lot about the history of Asia and how this has contributed to today's business practices and customs. If you have room to take this course I would 200% recommend it!

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

Smith School of Business is highly group-work based, be prepared for at least 2 group meetings a day in the last couple of weeks. I found this a lot different from Otago, it holds you pretty accountable to getting your work done in time for meetings which is a relief going into the final exam period. Also note that a lot of courses DO NOT have a final exam so you have the option of choosing courses without and therefore finishing early. I didn't find the assignments any harder than Otago, potentially some were easier (MCQ midterms etc) but the workload was pretty constant throughout the semester. Also note that most courses have participation grades for speaking up in class so if you want to get these you'll need to be doing the readings etc.

Accommodation

What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?

I found a sublet here, it's very easy as a high proportion of third year students go on exchange. I was living about a 10-15 minute walk away from campus which is considered 'far' as there is a lot of housing within a 5 minute radius. I really enjoyed living with Canadians (I had 5 flatmates) as they are able to give recommendations and show you around. If you live further out don't worry because the public transport system is really efficient (even in the snow) and free with your student ID.

Money matters

Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance

I was paying \$600/month for accommodation and would say this is pretty middle of the road, it probably ranges from \$550-800 based on where you end up. I was in Canada for a full year so had to get a study permit (anything over 6 months) which was \$160CAD. Food is pretty similar to New Zealand, I spent ~\$50 a week on groceries. I would say this is cheaper than a meal plan so if you can cook I would recommend doing that. Especially since the central area doesn't have a huge amount of food options and you'll probably get sick of eating the same food on your meal plan. Canada requires its students to get compulsory insurance while you study there which for Queen's was ~\$210 for the semester.

What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)

I had a bank account set up with Scotia bank as I was here for a full year, if possible I would recommend setting one up as most outlets on campus only take debit and travel/NZ cards seem to work as credit cards over here which means you have to keep getting cash out (\$1.50 service charge per transaction). I would recommend going with CIBC as those are the ATMs on campus.

Visas & Insurance

Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?

I had to get a Student Study permit as I was here for a full year. This is super easy and is just an online form you fill out and send away, doesn't take too long to get it back.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Queen's has mandatory cover for the semester of ~\$210, covers doctor's visits etc.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

Depending on what semester you come in there are multiple different events/groups that can be joined. In Fall semester (September start) this is the fresher orientation week and the exchange group also organises one (NEWTS week) which is amazing for meeting other exchange students, making friends with Canadians who run the event (Geckos) and getting to know the area. Aside from that the ETC (exchange transfer committee) runs a whole range of activities throughout the semester (check FB or they will likely have a booth out advertising their latest event) and the buddy program is awesome for getting partnered with a Canadian who is interested in the same kind of things as you.

What was the university/ city like?

Queen's felt a heap like Otago, relatively small student city with a huge atmosphere. You'll get used to it really quickly and feel right at home. In the Winter term I think there would be less to do in the city but the university runs so many events etc that its always easy to find something to do.

Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?

In Kingston the 1000 Islands Boat Cruise is a must. I've also heard Wolfe Island is really nice to bike around and the ferry over is free. Everyone visits Rock Dunder (40 minute drive to a really nice hike) and there are a lot of surrounding provincial parks to hike in. Crave Coffeehouse is great for studying or CoGro/The Tearoom if you want somewhere on campus!

Any tips for future students?

Make the most of being so close to major cities like Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. It's easy to rent a car or take the bus and spend the weekend exploring. There are heaps of trips run to places like Niagara for really cheap fares so get on those if you can as well, especially in the first half of semester before you get swamped by assignments! It's also really easy to head to the States (eg. New York and Boston) if you can fit it in.

Overall Experience

Everyone says exchange will be the best time of your life and it really truly is. I spent a year studying in Canada and loved every minute of it. Make the most of the opportunities over here, everything is way closer than when you're back home so you might as well take that extra trip to New York. I've been able to go on some amazing trips through joining clubs so I would highly recommend this, eg. I joined the climbing club and spent 5 days in New Hampshire! I think the best thing is to plan your

trips first and then make your school work fit around it, the all-nighter you have to pull one night is 200% worth the extra few days you get to spend in Montreal! I would also recommend budgeting for more than you expect to spend while you're away, in reality everyone spends more than they think they will so if you can save an extra grand it's definitely worthwhile as it gives you the extra freedom to say yes to the opportunities that come up unexpectedly!



First football Game



Obama cookies in Ottawa



Rock Dunder hike



Queen's Homecoming



Climbing – New Hampshire