



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Bachelor of Law and Arts

French

Otago degree(s)

Major(s)

McGill University

S 2, 2017

Host University

Semester & Year of Exchange

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
MUAR 211: The Art of Listening	English		
ATOC 185: Natural Disasters	English		
CLAS 203: Myths and Legends	English		
FREN407: Pronunciation	French		
			In Total: 54 points for 4 papers

Any comments about these papers?

I wanted to choose papers that I hadn't had the chance to do in Dunedin (this was my final semester) but that also would not be too time consuming study wise as I wanted to see more of Canada while I was over there. McGill in general was a lot more demanding with internal work but all of the papers I took luckily did not require too much work and were pretty straightforward while at the same time being really interesting. MUAR 211 with Jerry Cain is well worth doing, and CLAS 203 is basically story time.

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

As above, internal requirements more a lot harder. There was a lot of prep work required for each tutorial etc and most were marked on participation and attendance so you had to be there and contribute something meaningful. The final exams however were a lot lighter, but the mid terms seem to go on forever. All in all it was pretty similar.

Accommodation

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

I sub-leased an apartment which worked perfectly. The guy was going on exchange too so I didn't end up having to pay anything extra. I've heard that going in S 1 can be harder to find accommodation as most McGill students go away on exchange in their winter. Just join all of the Housing McGill groups and other facebook groups and you should be fine.

I had friends who stayed in some of the accommodation provided by the University and they had a pretty hard time – there were issues with the quality of the building etc so be wary of that. But do your research and you will be fine.

Money matters

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

I didn't get a student visa as students staying less than six months don't have to obtain one, so I just made sure I had the eTA which I think cost around \$9 NZD from memory. If you do this make sure you have your letter of acceptance on you when you arrive in country at the airport. I didn't and had to go through a pretty rigorous questioning before they believed me and let me in.

Accommodation prices can be pretty high depending on where you live, but be willing to budget for anywhere from 600CAD-1000CAD per month.

Flights were about \$1200 NZD each way if I remember correctly – pretty pricy flying out of Montreal as you have to fly via Vancouver or America to get back to NZ.

I got insurance through Southern Cross. I did a full year exchange though so was a bit pricier than one semester. Definitely worth it though – my bag got lost for a full month when I first arrived so the emergency money bought me warm clothes to survive winter.

Food prices are either much higher or lower depending on the item and season. Dairy and cheese are crazily expensive but other things were comparatively cheaper. Remember that there is a tax applied to everything so your total at checkout will be higher than expected.

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

I just used a cash passport and it worked really well for me without any issues. Saved me having to open a bank account.

Visas & Insurance

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

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

McGill has mandatory health insurance even if you have already bought health insurance. From memory it was about 330 CAD for a semester. You have to have paid to be able to enroll in classes so its pretty important.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

McGill has the craziest array of clubs to check out. I didn't end up signing up to any of them which is something I would definitely do differently if I went back.

There are tonnes of incredible one off activities on offer though if you keep your eyes and ears peeled. There are tonnes of movie nights and film festivals that go on not only in McGill but Montreal as well.

If you go in Semester 2 I would highly recommend heading along to the OAP (Open Air Pub) in frosh week to meet people. It's very chilled with live music, good food and drinks on campus.

What was the university/ city like?

The University reminded me quite a lot of the Otago campus, with its mixture of old and new buildings. Most of the classrooms had similar technology and feel which was nice. McGill does have a huge sense of grandeur and there are always tonnes of people around advertising cool initiatives they are a part of.

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

I would really recommend arriving in our S 2 in July. The weather is really hot and beautiful and you get to explore the city and settle in while it is nice and warm and not freezing outside.

Head along to see the Tam Tams (drums) in Mont Royal park – amazing atmosphere.

Piknik Elektronique is a pretty cool summer festival

The art galleries are worth a visit

La Banquise is an insane Poutine place and worth a stop on a trip home from town. Be prepared to wait a bit and go with lots of people so you can order lots of dishes to share.

Fairmont Bagels does a great bagel for cheap

There is a great gnocchi place right beside Fairmont Bagels (can't remember the name) which does amazing pots of gnocchi to take away for \$5.

Jean Talon market is worth a visit.

Go to a Football and Ice Hockey game while you are there.

Any tips for future students?

Just be open and have fun. It is true what they say about Canadians – they are some of the friendliest people on earth and love the kiwi accent. You will make amazing friends.

Overall Experience

Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!

My exchange in Canada was one of the highlights of my degree. Getting to know another University, city, culture and people is such an amazing opportunity. It will be some of the best six months of your life.