



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Otago degree(s)	BA (second year undergrad)	Major(s) Major - Media, film communications, minor – marketing
Host University	Queens University in Kingston, ON, Canada	Semester & Year of Exchange Semester 2 2017

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
FILM331 – Women & Film - 3 credits	English	MFCO314	18 pts
FILM335 – Culture and Technology – 3 credits	English	MFCO315	18 pts
FILM345 – Television Structure and Function – 3 credits	English	MFCO203	18 pts
FILM240 – Media and Popular culture – 3 credits	English	MFCO202	18 pts

Any comments about these papers?

All the 300 level papers were taught in small classroom style lectures, with classes consisting of

around 40 people. The lectures were very discussion based and you were expected to ask questions and make comments. Canadian students love to have they say and express their thoughts on particular theories or content etc. However the 200 level paper was in a large lecture theatre with no expectation to speak up.

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

All of my classes were in 3 hour chunks. So one paper or course had either 2x 3 hour blocks a week, or else 1x 3 hour block. So my timetable worked out well for me as I had all my classes jammed into Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and had Thursday Friday off. However since the first 3 days were packed with 3 hour class blocks, I needed Thurs and Fri to catch up on assignments.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in the Kingston Student Housing Co-operative. This was a great type of accommodation that combines living in a hall with living in a student flat. There are around 100 houses in the Co-op but we all eat on the meal plan at the communal dining hall/main house. I was in a house of 10 people on Brock Street. It was awesome as the co-op is filled with both Canadians and exchange students so it's a great way to meet a lot of people. Brock Street was very handy place to live, as it was close to campus and close to downtown, supermarket etc. Most of the co-op houses are on streets either on Brock or near it.

Money matters

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

The housing co-op which included the meal plan, power, rent (everything basically) cost = \$4,500 roughly.

Then I would have spent another couple of grand on shopping items, extra food on weekends (as meal plan doesn't serve dinner on Saturdays and Sundays), alcohol, supermarket goods, and trips away. I definitely spent more money that I expected I would, so it is super important that you save as much as you possibly can before going on exchange. While I was over there I got a little worried about how much I was spending, but then I reminded myself that I was probably only going to be there once so need to make the most of everything.

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

I used the Mastercard Cash passport card every time except for when I had to use cash. I often got cash out from the ATM in large lots as it was handy to always have cash on me, and used my cash passport for everything that did not require cash. It was simple and easy enough – however you need to make sure you have enough on the card as it takes 3 days or so to transfer more money.

Visas & Insurance

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

I applied for the ESTA – which costs something like \$7 and involves a very simple process online. Print it out and have with you before entering Canada.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes – there was a mandatory health insurance called UHIP – it costs around \$200, but it is definitely worth it and allows you to go to the student health center really easily.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

At Queens, there are so many opportunities and activities to get involved in. They have a massive ‘clubs day’ during O week where you can look and join all these awesome cool clubs. There is anything from acapella, to pipe band to outdoors club, or even a swing dance club. There is a huge variety at Queens. I recommend getting involved in as many clubs as you can manage, and the word ‘manage’ is important. It is very easy to sign up to many clubs but have a hard time being able to fit them into your schedule. Remember you need to allow yourself time to relax, socialise, study and also time to travel on weekends (if you desire). I participated in the social rowing club, social basketball and a volunteer program called the breakfast club which involved going to local elementary schools in Kingston to serve the children breakfast before school. It was an awesome club to be apart of that was fun as well. I tried to do a couple of other clubs but they clashed with my timetable, but that was ok because as it turned out I was just busy enough.

What was the university/ city like?

Kingston is very similar to Dunedin in size and that it is a city that revolves around the university students. Queens campus and the student houses or ‘ghetto’ is also very similar to Dunedin. It was strange how being at Queens didn’t feel very different at all, only it was cooler as it was a Canadian Otago Uni. The student culture is very much alike.

Queens University itself is a very prestige and impressive school that is widely recognised across Canada and the world. I did not realise this until I got there, but it is a real privilege to go to Queens. The educational facilities and level of academia are of a very high caliber. I felt lucky to be able to study there and learn from their awesome lecturers.

It was an awesome experience to go to Queens, as they have an unreal sense of school spirit and pride. Everyone who goes there are super proud and stoked to be there. The Queens apparel was like a brand of it’s own, everyone walked around with Queens gear on. It was really cool. Everyone is very enthusiastic and supportive in all aspects of the university, which was awesome to be apart of for one semester. I told my friends back home that Queens was like being in a typical American college movie, except it was even better since it was the Canadian version of that. Where the people are beyond nice, have a lovable accent and I think New Zealanders and Canadians in general are similar minded which just made it even more enjoyable.

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

Definitely take a weekend trip to Montreal, that was one of the best weekends away I had on exchange. A group of us exchange students took the megabus there and stayed in a hostel downtown and it was so much fun, the nightlife there is incredible. It also is on the French side of Canada so that was cool as it kind of felt like being in another country.

I recommend trying Paradiso pizza (but get delivery as it is located quite far away), that was probably that best pizza ive ever had.

Definitely go to the Queens Pub (QP) at least once, it's a really cool place located on campus. They often have quiz nights as well which are super fun. I recommend watching a Queen Football game, it takes a long time but its great to experience watching one. Queens also have a pretty impressive mens rugby team, so I really enjoyed watching them play as it felt very close to home.

Since I went during the fall semester I got to experience a real Canadian thanksgiving. I was able to go home with one of my housemates home in Ottawa. It was so lovely and I 100% recommend trying to organise or make friends with a Canadian if you go in the fall semester because I guarantee they would love to take you home to their families. Canadian families are very welcoming to foreigners and love hosting guests.

One of the most unforgettable experiences I had on exchange was Queens 'Homecoming' weekend. Which is basically the one event every year where all the past students/alumni who went to Queens come back to Kingston and party all weekend. There is a homecoming football game and the school spirit goes on steroids with everyone dressing up in Queens colours, it was so much fun.

Another must do is to study in the Harry Potter room in one of the campus libraries. If you ask someone about it, they will know what you are talking about and direct you to it.

Any tips for future students?

Do not waste time on the decision process to go on exchange, I know everyone says this... but it will not be a decision that you will regret. It is honestly a opportunity of a lifetime to be able to study in another country, and it is something that you do not want to look back on when you are 40 wishing you took the chance when you could. Not many people can say that they've studied abroad at university level. If fear is one thing holding you back, just think of this very special acronym to help you out – F (FALSE) E (EVIDENCE) A (APPEARING) R (REAL). Don't think too much, just do it.

Overall Experience

Going on exchange was the best thing I could have done. I learnt a lot about Canada by experiencing their culture and way of life. Consequently I learnt a lot about New Zealand by being overseas as I had to answer a lot of questions about NZ, but it also made me realise how proud I am to be a kiwi. There is something very special about our country and the fact that there is only a small number of us makes it even more extraordinary. I never heard one bad thing about kiwis or NZ while I was away (unless of course it was a bitter Australian talking about

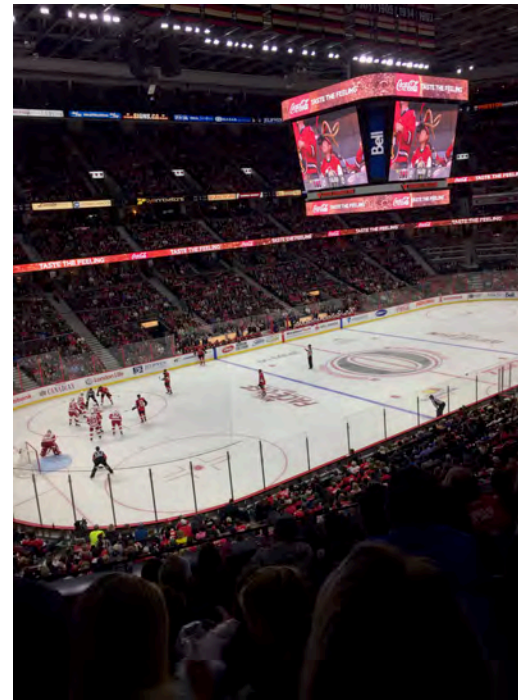
sport). But more importantly, I learnt a lot about myself. I realised that I could be independent in another country without my close kiwi friends or family. I realised that I could cope being on my own at the age of 19 in another country, which to me was a huge accomplishment. I thought to myself, if I can do that now, then I can do that anytime. Going on exchange has been a unreal experience and I will hold those memories from my time in Canada for the rest of my life. One of the most beneficial aspects of going on exchange is making international friends. I was blown away to meet people from countries I hadn't even heard of. My exchange has essentially allowed me to have international contacts all over the world, which I think is extremely cool. By having these friends, this will open up doors to places and people I would never of had if I didn't go on exchange. There are so many benefits to be gained from studying abroad, and I think there holds a lot of truth in the statement that "you never hear of anyone who had a bad exchange". Robert Herrick wrote a poem that talks about making the most of your opportunities... "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, old time is still a flying and this flower that smiles today tomorrow will be dying". Therefore don't wait for this amazing exchange opportunity to pass you by because next thing you know you will be out of university, out in the workforce or at an age where you cannot manage it. Take the chance you wont regret it.



**Queens campus in September
(end of summer)**



**Isabel Bader Performing Arts
Center (5 min off campus,
where I took my courses)**



**Ice skating game in Ottawa during
Thanksgiving weekend**



Downtown Kingston



Queens 'Homecoming' weekend



Queens 'Homecoming' weekend



Queen's football game



Queen's rugby game



Mount Royal lookout in Montreal, Quebec



Downtown Kingston, end of December