



## Student Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Science	<b>Major(s)</b>	Psychology, Neuroscience
<b>Host University</b>	Queen's University	<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 2, 2017

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
<b>PSYC 335</b> – Positive Psychology	English	PSYC 300 level paper	18 points
<b>NSCI 323</b> – Cellular Neuroscience	English	NEUR 300 level paper	18 points
<b>GPHY 101</b> – Human Geography	English	Interest paper	18 points
<b>HLTH 101</b> – Social determinants of health	English	Interest paper	18 points

*Any comments about these papers?*

I would highly recommend taking the positive psychology paper. It had a very cool lecturer and was unlike anything I had done at Otago. Was a fun paper that easily related to many aspects of your life.

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

The workload at Queen's was more work in the fact that there were constantly multiple things to do. There were always lots of weekly assignments and readings that although weren't worth much meant you constantly had things to do. Also it seemed that the readings there are more assessed for you actually have to do them! I thought that the actual marking was easier than Otago. Therefore although it seemed like you had to do more, you got a decent grade for what I felt was less effort.

### Accommodation

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

I stayed in the Kingston Student Co-operative and I would HIGHLY recommend applying if you are going to Queen's. It was kind of like a mixture between flatting and halls, where you were in large ish flats (average 10 people), but had a dinning hall where breakfast/lunch/dinner is served and social events were held. Everyone had to contribute 3hrs doing something in the kitchen for the food, but I found this to be fun, went by fast, and learnt some valuable cooking skills. The co-op was a mixture of exchange/international/Canadians, which meant I meet a huge range of people and made heaps of friends. It was very easy staying in the co-op, as the rooms come furnished and it was very easy to settle in quickly and make friends. If only going for one semester (and especially if for S2 – their fall semester) you need to apply early. I applied mid march and got put on the waiting list, so was lucky to get a room a few weeks before I arrived in Kingston.

### **Money matters**

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

I found basic costs to be relatively similar (alcohol is a lot cheaper!), but you do end up spending more weekly than at Otago because do more weekend travelling and trips. I paid my accommodation fees for the co-op at the beginning and that included power and Internet.

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

I used a Cash passport and found this to work well. I could load both Canadian and US dollars via transfer from my NZ bank account and it worked just like an eftpos card. As you can load currencies you do not pay any exchange interests rates with this card, which made it a lot cheaper than had I used my NZ bank card. I didn't think it necessary to get a Canadian bank account for the time I was there and this worked out fine.

### **Visas & Insurance**

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

If studying in Canada for less than 6 months you do not need to apply for a study visa. You only need their travel visa (ETA), which is done online and is almost instant- costs around \$12.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes, you have to sign up for the university health insurance, which meant that the doctors were free. However you still need to have your own travel insurance as well.

### **Extra-curricular/Social Activities**

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

There is a huge range of clubs that you can join and there are lots of opportunities to sign up. The outdoors club is a good one that offers weekend trips away almost every weekend. I also volunteered for the breakfast club where we went and provided breakfast to a low decile school once a week, which I enjoyed.

The recreation centre runs an intramural (social) sport competition that you can make and enter teams into. I played intertube water polo, which a lot of fun and not too serious. I definitely recommend doing if you enjoy the water.

*What was the university/ city like?*

The city is like Otago in that it is a university town, and all the students live in a 'student ghetto' around the uni. This made for a great uni lifestyle & gave a sort typical north American uni experience. They have a lot of school spirit at Queen's and are all very proud of their uni, which I found to be quite different from Otago, and fun to get involved with.

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

Kingston is on Lake Ontario, and before the weather turned cold (which didn't happen till end of October) I swam in the lake many times.

Visit all the local cities (Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec), go to ice hockey games, participate in Homecoming, rent a cabin and explore Algonquin park, visit Wolfe Island, climb Mount Dundas, go ice skating on the outside rink, eat poutine and beaver tails and these are just a few of my highlights and tips.

Canada is a huge country but I found Kingston a good base with a lot to visit around it. It was also easy to get down to the east coast of America such as New York.

*Any tips for future students?*

As everyone always says you won't regret going on exchange. I loved my time at Queen's but wherever you choose to go I'm sure you'll love it and have a best time.

### **Overall Experience**

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

I had the best time in Canada and on exchange. Canadians are very friendly and welcoming people, and it was a easy place to live. I would say go with no expectations and you will always have a good time. Remember that things won't always go smoothly but your only there for a short time so make the most of all opportunities.



I experienced a range of weather from 30 degrees when I arrived, to -20 when I left. Make the most of seeing the autumn/fall colours they are beautiful



Rock Dunder



Quebec city is a very picturesque place to visit in winter



Ice skating on the outdoor rink at night

