



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

Host University	McGill University
Semester & Year of Exchange	Winter 2018
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Accounting major, minor in finance

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
CHEM181	English	Took for interest	
ACCT455	English	ACCT 300	
MGCR382	English	International Business intro	
MGCR341	English	FINC206	

Any comments about these papers?

In terms of papers be prepared not to get into a lot of the classes you need so fill your pink sheet with as many options as possible! I went over there with 6 options and only got into 2 of courses that would credit back because Winter term is their second semester so classes get registered for a semester before we try to enter them! Also you can take 5 courses or 4, both are full time but if you want to explore more I would recommend only 4 because it's still a lot of work!

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

I found there was a big jump from 300 to 400 level. The 300 levels I took were basically equivalents to core commerce papers back at Otago with a little more info added into them. The Profs I had for MGCR382 and 341 were amazing, would definitely recommend them, and also take advantage of the TAs and tutorials while you're there. They're very helpful, especially for the assignments you get in class. ACCT455 was a huge step up from the level of the other classes but I enjoyed it a lot. Prof Cecere teaches a lot of 300 and 400 level accounting classes and he's a very good Prof to have but be prepared for super hard marking. I also took a food science paper as an interest paper which was very easy, I would definitely recommend taking an easier interest paper to lighten the load if you're already taking a few hard courses.

## **Accommodation**

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

I found a flat in the Plateau to sublet through a Facebook group for McGill exchange students. A lot of McGill students go away on exchange in Winter semester so it's very easy to find a sublet because they sign full year flats in September! I lived about 25-30 min walk away from Campus, closer to Mile-End which is the 'hip/alty' part of Montreal. My location and flat were awesome and it was cool to live with some Canadians who knew what was fun to do and where to go etc.

I had a lot of friends who stayed in exchange student residences and loved that though so would depend what you wanted to get out of exchange. If you live in a res you're more likely to make close friends who want to travel and do more of the touristy things with you like go away to Cuba on Spring Break or travel semester ends, but flatting with Canadians is also awesome because they've been there for a while and they come with a ready-made group of pals so you get to know people very easily! If you live in the Plateau it's a lot cheaper than a res but you are further away as well which is a bit of a pain in winter. The metro is super convenient though so its still easy to get around.

## **Money matters**

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

I paid 550 CAD a month for accommodation, about 50 a month for utilities/internet (is way more expensive in Winter than the later months), flights were about 1200 I think (just keep checking for deals and think about if you want to book a return flight or book one later on when you know what your plans after semester are!). For Canada if you only study one semester all you need is the ETA which you can apply for online, super quick process and is only about \$15 which allows you to fly into Canada (its linked to your passport).

Be prepared to spend a bit more on food and drinks than you budget for. I came over thinking I'd cook all my meals and not spend much on drinks but you go out with new friends a lot for coffee/brunch/drinks and it all adds up! McGill also has compulsory insurance of about \$350 that you have to get for the semester and I got full cover travel insurance for the year (I'm on full year exchange) which was \$1200 ish.

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

I came over with cash and my NZ debit card (overseas debit cards work as credit cards in Canada so would recommend bringing yours just in-case you want to rent something like a car where you need a credit card as a security). When I was here I set up a Canadian bank account which I recommend if you're subletting because they use Interac as a transfer method here (linked to your email) and having a Canadian account made it easy! I also got a Cash Passport later on which I would definitely get if you intend to travel, even just to the States which is pretty likely you will, especially if you join ski club!

## **Visas & Insurance**

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

Canada only requires you to have an ETA which is an online application that gets linked to your passport. Super easy to do! If you're in Canada for 2 semesters you'll need a Canada study permit and another special Quebec licence thing if both semesters are at McGill. The Canada study permit is also online and easy to do but don't apply until you get your second semester acceptance letter otherwise your study permit won't be issued for the right period.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

McGill has compulsory medical insurance which lasts for the semester that you're there. It covers all your doctor's appointments and medication though so definitely good to have. This is the same for all Canada universities though and also a lot of European ones.

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

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

There are about a million different clubs you can join at McGill. I would recommend going to the exchange student days/brunch etc at the start of semester just to meet some people, especially if you aren't at a res! Ski club is a must if you're into skiing or boarding, they run trips every weekend to fields in Canada which are epic and if you can get on the Jay Peak trip to Vermont!

*What was the university/ city like? Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?*

There's so much to do in the city, it's definitely a city that has universities in it rather than a student city like Dunedin. In Winter you're a bit limited because it will be super cold, prepare for -30+ some days and wind chill, you get used to it pretty fast though! Mont-Royal, ice-skating, bagels from Mile-End, IglooFest and poutine are all must do's but there's heaps to see if you walk through the neighbourhoods! In Summer definitely rent a bike (\$5 for 24 hours) and bike off the island and down through Mile-End, Little Italy and the further away suburbs.

*Any tips for future students?*

Prepare to spend more than you think you will and make an effort to get to know people early on because everyone on exchange is epic but you'll get way more out of the experience if you have a group of friends to make plans with so you don't miss out on things like Spring Break planning or long weekends away!

### **Overall Experience**

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

I can honestly say I had the most amazing exchange experience in Montreal. I moved into a flat in the Plateau and couldn't have asked for a better group of friends to spend the semester with. Be prepared for it to be cold! I got off the plane with my Huffer Puffer like yep this is going to cut it, update. Huffer does not cut it in -33 + windchill, Canada goose is the way to go if you can find one. Montreal has so many festivals and fun things to do that you don't have to leave the city if you don't

want to; would highly recommend getting amongst IglooFest, TamTams in the Park in Summer or just any of the concerts that happen while you're there. I took a couple of trips to the States which were epic, New York is a must if you haven't been! I was only there for 4 days and you can see a heap for very little \$\$ if you try; Central Park, Staten Island Ferry and Times Square are all must sees! Jay Peak ski trip with SSMU ski club was a highlight of my semester, the exec is heaps of fun and you'll have the best weekend skiing, partying and making new friends. We also took some trips in Canada on weekends to Ottawa, Quebec City and Toronto which are all cool places to visit and easy to get to, if you're older than 24 the insurance is super cheap, especially if you fill the car, so would try to get a big group for it so it costs you ~\$50 each including petrol! Exchange this semester has been unreal and I would 2000% recommend McGill if you're thinking of going on an exchange!



IglooFest



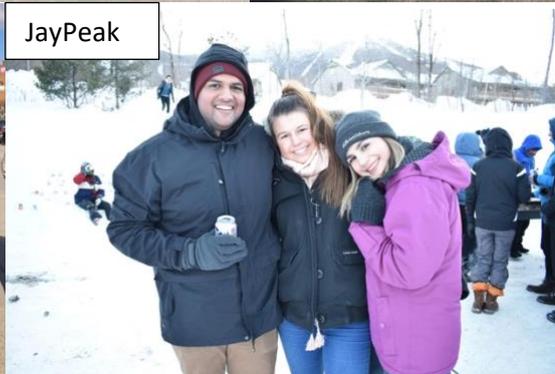
Confiture – McGill doggo



Bixi bikes



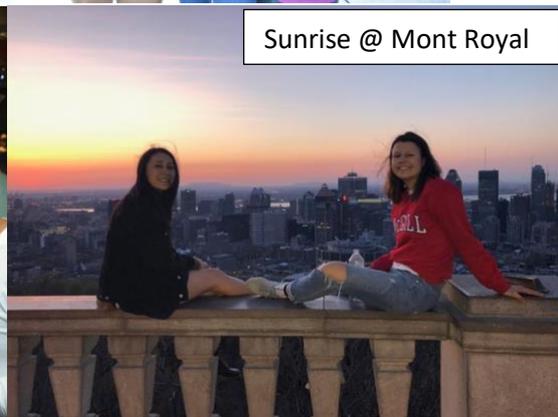
Ottawa  
Obama  
cookies



JayPeak



Bar des Arts



Sunrise @ Mont Royal