



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Otago degree(s) <u>Commerce and Science</u>	Major(s) <u>Management and Psychology</u>
Host University <u>Queen's University</u>	Semester & Year of Exchange <u>Fall/Semester 2 – 2017</u>

Academics/course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Service Management	English	Unspecialised at MANT300 level	18points
Managing across Cultures	English	Unspecialised at MANT300 level	18points
Leadership	English	MANT330	18points
Gender and Diversity in Organisations	English	Unspecialised at MANT300 level	18points
Positive Psychology	English	Unspecialised at PSYC300 level	18points

Any comments about these papers?

I thoroughly enjoyed most of my papers on exchange – but I would highly recommend **Managing across Cultures** for all exchange students as it also covers culture shock but it would be of interest especially if you love Disneyland! **Gender and Diversity** was a very interesting paper, which I would recommend to all Business students because of its importance to those wishing to work in organisations and to make a change in the world. I believe that a Diversity course should be introduced in the Otago Business School as today's students will be our future leaders. **Leadership** was a great paper, which surprisingly had fascinating readings that I sometimes could not put down! They were mostly from the course pack that we had to purchase or from the Harvard Business Review – overall very relatable and interesting. Lastly, **Positive Psychology** was the most interesting psychology paper I have taken and I also give credit to the friendly, positive and engaging professor I have ever had! He truly sparked my interest in the subject and I am now applying what I have learnt from the course, regarding gratitude in my everyday life.

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

The style of teaching was very different from Otago because Queen's followed the North American teaching model which strongly emphasised participation and contribution in classes. This took a couple of weeks to adjust and ease into confidently participating and offering my views and opinions in class. I think the Queen's academic experience has helped my confidence grow and enabled me to think more deeply about concepts, with more focus on reflection and application to our future career. All commerce classes were relatively small, which was a change from Otago but I found myself more comfortable with the other students and able to ask the professor questions when I needed help. I took 5 courses at Queen's University which was similar to other Queens students, but unlike other exchange students. This workload was manageable as I had previously taken 5 papers in a semester at Otago and I thought the marking of assessments was less difficult than at Otago. All my commerce classes were smaller than at Otago, which I enjoyed and felt more engaged in this environment.

The Smith School of Business at Queen's also focussed heavily on team work and expected presentations to be of a high standard which included wearing formal wear for presentations. This definitely requires forward planning and organisation for exchange students, as I know some students had to borrow blazers or other formal wear from Canadian students to prepare for the presentations. Therefore, I would advise all future Commerce students attending Queen's, to pack one formal outfit including a black blazer, so that they are equipped for the presentations.

Accommodation

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

During my exchange, I stayed with a family, in a more suburban part of Kingston, Ontario. This was a more unique accommodation experience than most of my friends who either flatbed with other exchange students or local Canadian students. I really enjoyed living with a Canadian family and I liked the homely environment and clean, warm house that I could return to, after class or travelling in the snow! I also appreciated that my accommodation included my room being fully furnished so there was no need for me to search for furniture once I arrived late into Kingston. They also provided their Kingston local insight on good restaurants to go to, when my family came to visit in September.

Unfortunately, my house was around 30 minutes walking distance from university (15 mins on the Express bus or 5 mins in a taxi!) which proved a little inconvenient in the winter or late at night. As I lived with a family, I did not experience living with other Canadians or other international exchange students.

Money matters

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

Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) costs \$7CAD – can be purchased online (Necessary for one semester exchange in Canada)

Mandatory Queen's University health insurance \$204CAD – can be paid once you arrive

Flights – depend on whether you travel home or to other countries before returning home

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

In terms of managing my finances, I used a cash passport card from Air New Zealand and one from Qantas, as a backup card. The cash passport cards worked fine except for when I needed to withdraw cash from an ATM, which charged overseas fees, despite the fact that the main benefit from the cash passport card is the removal of overseas fees. This proved very inconvenient as cash was needed for many occasions including booking a university organised trip to nearby cities like Montreal or Ottawa. I would recommend taking out a Student bank account with CIBC as it is free for students and very convenient as Queen’s has many CIBC ATMs on campus, which enables cash to be withdrawn free of charge.

Visas & Insurance

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

While studying in Canada for just one semester (4 months), I only needed to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) which can be purchased online for only \$7CAD. Due to the short duration of my stay in Canada, I did not need a visa for my student exchange. This made things easier for me while preparing for my exchange in the second semester.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Queen’s University had a mandatory insurance called the UHIP which all students had to pay, which was around \$204 for one semester. During my exchange, I did not have to use the insurance. It just covered the basic medical insurance like the costs of a doctor’s appointment but any medicine would have to be paid separately.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are many organised activities that are available to international students such as weekend trips away to nearby cities – Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Niagara Falls. The trips are organised by the International Centre (QUIC) and I would highly recommend making use of them! Just remember that the costs for the trips must be paid in cash.

I would recommend getting involved with any social sports clubs and the Outdoor Club if you are interested in hiking. Personally, I did not join any clubs but I joined the organised activities by the International Centre and also organised my own weekend trips with friends. I would also advise to manage your time well, especially if you wish to socialise, exercise often, travel and do well in class – so be wary about joining activities that are flexible or only require a weekly commitment. There are always plenty of activities, volunteering or social events to attend at Queen’s!

What was the university/city like?

Kingston, the city where Queen's University is situated, is a university city – similar to Dunedin! This eased my transition into my exchange but also provided differences to manage as well as opportunities to become more independent and adaptable. Since Kingston was also a university city, I did not experience culture shock which enabled a smooth transition into Queen's student life. Queen's students have an immense passion and pride for their university which makes them very welcoming – be sure to listen out for the 'tri-colour' phrases and look forward to Homecoming where everyone dresses up in Queen's gear (blue, red and yellow) along with alumni to celebrate being part of the Queen's community! I loved being part of such an enthusiastic and proud university community and embracing the student life that definitely felt similar to Dunedin scarfie life.

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

Kingston is a wonderful small city that has plenty of great restaurants, cafes and things to do! Canadians love to study in cafes which was a bit surprising to me, and one of the best cafes to join the locals is 'Crave'! Crave has the best cinnamon rolls and a relaxed atmosphere to study, when you wish to escape the library. Another must visit café is 'Northside' which is based off Melbourne's hip cafes in Australia! In terms of restaurants, Milestones or the Grizzly, are great places to take your family when they come to visit you!

If you are on exchange in the Fall semester (Otago semester 2), I would highly advise visiting Thousand Islands and also visiting the Kingston Christmas Market downtown in Nov/Dec. Definitely make sure that you use the free bus service with your student ID, something I wish we had in NZ! This might include taking a bus ride to the Cataraqui Centre (the shopping mall).

Most importantly, my poutine recommendation place would definitely be Bubba's Pouterie – on Princess Street – definitely get the Chicken Caesar Bacon poutine 😊

Any tips for future students?

I would recommend going to Queen's University in the second semester – Fall Semester, as this is the best time of year! The timing ensures you start off with summer which progresses to fall and ends with just the start of the cold winter season. I would recommend packing a wide range of clothing to ensure that you cover your bases for all 4 seasons. My final tip would be to travel as much as you can, as you are 'only on exchange once' and should make the most of your time overseas!

Overall Experience

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

My exchange at Queen's University has been the most amazing and life changing experiences of my life! Four months seemed like such a long time, but it truly flew by during my fall semester at Queen's. It's unbelievable that I am now writing my exchange report when I can remember clearly being a nervous wreck, about to embark on my first adventure alone to a country that I had never

been to before! I can confidently say that I am glad to have gone on exchange as it was the best four months of my life – meeting amazing people from all around the world, travelling and experiencing another culture and way of learning. Exchange was definitely worth the preparation and excitement that I felt before embarking on a new journey for the best time of my life! One of the most important things that I learnt from my exchange is to trust your instincts and believe in yourself with the values and beliefs you have. Exchange allows you to find out what really matters to you and gives you an opportunity to step out of your comfort zone while staying true to yourself. If you are even thinking about exchange, I would recommend researching it and giving it a go – be brave, open-minded and ready to have the most unforgettable time of your life. I am more than happy to talk to any interested students about my exchange experience at Queen’s – I will never forget all my Canadian antics and adventures!



Admiring the view from Mont Royal – Montreal (weekend trip)



Queen's Homecoming – proud to be a Queen's student!