

Student Exchange Evaluation

Every student loves to hear of other's exchange experiences. These forms are very useful when selecting your exchange destination.

Please include as much information as possible. Feel free to use additional pages, enclose photos, links to blogs/ videos etc.

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Isabella Marie
 Degree: Bachelor of Science
 Name of Exchange University: Queen's University at Kingston
 Country: Canada
 Year of exchange: 2018 (Fall) Language of instruction: English

List courses taken abroad:

STAT 351 - Statistics
 PHYS 316 - Mathematical Methods in physics
 LINA 330 - Morphology
 MUTH 111 - Republic to Revolution

2. EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

How would you rate your overall exchange experience on a scale of 1 to 10?

Poor

Excellent

1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) 8 9 10

Comments:

I had a few problems and got off on the wrong foot, so it was less enjoyable because I got quite jaded. It was a valuable learning experience.

3. FINANCES (AND equivalent)

Total cost: \$11,000 + tuition fees Room: ~ \$750 incl. utilities. per month

Airfare to host institution: \$2,300

Holidays/travel expenses: ~ \$1,500

Other: \$300 furniture, \$100 bedding/towels,
\$200 books/supplies, \$250 shoes/clothes for winter
\$60 p/w on food, ~\$500 miscellaneous?

Vancouver, Montreal,
Toronto, Ottawa,
Niagara Falls

↓
3 months in
the flat,
~ \$2000 spent on
AirBnB/motel while looking

★ You will have to pay UHIP (health insurance) which is \$200.
 UWA insurance doesn't cover everything the same so Queen's makes you pay for theirs - in cash at Bank of Montreal in Kingston.

food was more expensive, groceries & eating out - especially due to taxes + tips on top of the listed price.

Drinks were a lot cheaper.

Travel to Montreal/Toronto/Ottawa - by Train: \$150 round
by Bus: \$60 round

Did you spend more than you expected? What was more/ less expensive than you expected?

I spent much more on accommodation than was expected, as I had 3 weeks not in accommodation staying at a motel, which charged high prices as it was summer. Due to this I didn't have a kitchen to cook in, so I was not eating well because eating out for every meal was pricey.

What was the best way of accessing money during your exchange programme?

I used my regular debit card at ATMs but the fees do add up, so I would not recommend this.

Do you have any advice about finances, budgeting or the cheapest way of living/travelling?

Cook your own food. Eat a lot of rice. If you want to go on trips be careful about when you choose to go because it can get randomly very expensive and stops being viable.

4. ARRIVAL

Was there an airport pickup/ buddy service available?

No - I arrived by train from Toronto.

5. ORIENTATION

What was Orientation like? Was it useful? Were there social activities?

You can pay to take part in a week-long orientation especially for exchange/transfer students (NEWTS) but I didn't. There was a 2hr session for exchange students in each faculty which was compulsory, but it was not ideal for socialising. Once students start arriving in Kingston a few days before classes begin, bars/clubs are very busy.

6. ACADEMICS

What differences did you find between the UWA system and the system at your host university?

Contact hours: Very similar

Homework: More reading

Course (lectures, tests, etc.): Easier to pass, but just as hard to do well - tests were more regular but depends on unit.

Workload (heavier/ lighter) and assessment (harder or easier): Same workload

Exam results came back really quickly.

7. FACILITIES

What were the library/ Wi-Fi/ email facilities like at your host institution?

There are 2 main libraries which are very good. Wi-Fi was decent, and we had university email accounts.

8. SOCIAL

What kinds of social events were there? Was it easy to meet people?

It was easy to meet exchange students / Canadians wanting to go on exchange at QWIC & IPO events, but I did not always maintain a friendship. Seek out events / parties for all students (Homecoming, Halloween, Start of Year, Exams, etc.) or clubs / things you are interested in.

9. ACCOMMODATION

Was on campus housing available? What were the rooms like? Were you on a meal plan or did you cook your own food? Are the residences close to the university?

Please add any additional information that you think be of interest with regard to housing.

It is very difficult to find housing in August/September, especially for 4-month leases. I lived with 1 other student in a flat near Princess St / Division St, which was the optimal location but it was unfurnished, more expensive than average, and took me 3 weeks to find one (I arrived. I only heard bad things) about student dorms - internationals get put on west campus which is a bit isolated.

10. PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

What was the most difficult aspect of planning your exchange?

Corresponding with study abroad / faculty office about units. I lost approval of one of the core units I needed to do to continue my degree, which extended it by a whole year. I struggled to replace it and only took 4/5 Queen's courses because of this, as it would be excess if I did a full load.

What advice do you have for future exchange students?

Absolutely arrange a place to live before arriving - don't bother trying to get somewhere furnished (I bought all of my furniture on Kijiji (=auntree) and often the sellers would deliver & help move in) Just make sure it is walking distance to town / uni and you'll be grand.

What are the 5 most important things to take with you when you go to your host university?

1. Your trusted deodorant (they don't make them the same over there...
I learnt the hard way)

2. Normal winter gear (It doesn't get that cold - a decent jumper under a coat is warm enough into Dec.
 3. Milo (I was burnt by a false canadian version - just not the same) so don't waste
 4. Your accent! you money on
 5. Basic cooking/cleaning skills. Please! (Canada goose or anything)
- For fun: AU\$5 note (you know why)

11. General impressions

What were the most rewarding aspects of biggest disappointments of your exchange experience? How has your perspective changed as a result of your exchange experience?

Remember that students are interested in reading about both good and bad experiences.

Going on exchange felt like a gap year for me (and has actually delayed my graduation for a year because of one core physics unit). You should be wary of the impact it might have on your degree and not expect it to be seamless. Personally, I found it useful to live on my own for the first time and fend for myself. I gained maturity and also appreciate my life back in Australia more - we take it for granted how nice Perth is.

I found myself a bit stranded when I first arrived so make sure you are social when you first arrive if you don't know anyone - even though you'll be lost and jetlagged.

The most different thing about Queen's is that I lived so close to all of my classes. I could wake up after a lecture had begun and if I got going straight away I could get there while the first section of the blackboard was still up! This is lucky because nothing is recorded, and not all profs even put anything online. It sounds daunting not to have all the resources but you adjust easily.

Food was pretty lackluster overall, and no cheaper than it is here. On campus they have a few cafeteria-style places and one chip truck near the Library - there is no such thing as sausage rolls or meat pies/pasties so I was out of luck when I needed something quick. Poutine isn't all it's cracked up to be, honestly.

Thank you for your time.