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# McGill University

## Exchange report

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Fall Semester 2015-2016**

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## Part I: Activity log

### September 2015

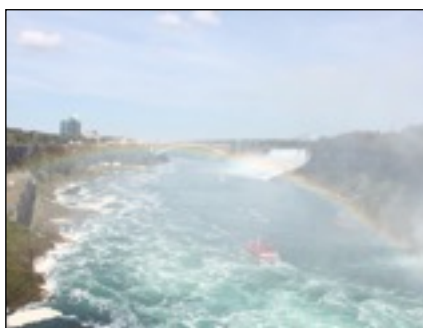
I arrived Montreal in late August as most of the official orientation activities are held at that time. I have joined two orientation events (Discover McGill and Off Campus Connection) which enable me to know more about the campus and make friend with freshmen and other exchange students. However, I didn't join the Frosh which is organized by the Management association. In early September, McGill held an activity night in which you can join the student society there. I highly recommend to join HKSJ and MISN as they will hold activity regularly including tour to other cities (eg. New York, Toronto, Quebec City).

After settling down, I highly recommend you to travel around as September is the month with less workload. I went to Toronto with MISN and Quebec city by joining local tour. It is very convenient to travel around by Greyhound bus, you can take the overnight bus so as to save some travelling time. In China Town, there are a lot of local tourist agency, you can join those one day tour to nearby city such as Ottawa and Quebec city.

**Toronto trip**



**Niagara Fall**



**HKSJ event**



**Vancouver**



**Quebec city**



**Canyon Sainte Anne**



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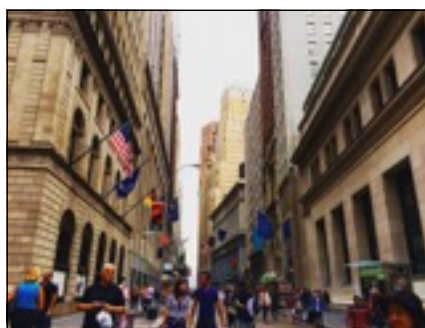
## October 2015

In October, assignments and mid terms start to fill up your schedule as I have taken 5 courses the workload is quite high. Luckily, McGill has a long break for Thanksgiving and I spend the long holiday in New York city. I suggest you to apply for the US visa in Hong Kong earlier as it is hard to apply it in Canada. New York city is worth travelling, I visited the Status of Liberty, Wall Street, Central Park, had a lot of great food and watched Broadway show. October is the most beautiful month of the year in Montreal, the whole city is full of reddish maple leaves. It's definitely the best time to visit Mount Royal! The view is stunning and you can spend a leisure afternoon there. The first snow came in late October, it's my first time seeing snow showering! However, it's abnormal in Montreal history as first snow used to start in November.

**McGill**



**Wall Street**



**Mount Royal**



## November 2015

November is the month packed with a lot of group projects. For me, most of the mid terms are done in October, but from some of my friends still have mid term exams even in late November. It's not a good time for travelling around as the exam is quite hard and you need some time to prepare. For most of the weekend, I have meetings with my group members and I managed to explore Montreal after those meetings. I have been to Old Port, MacDonald Campus and Mile End in November. Montreal is a city of art, there are a lot of beautiful street art and museums in downtown, it's worth visiting even if you are not a big fan of art work. Due to the abnormal weather, November is still quite warm and not much snowing in this year.

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**HKSN event**



**MacDonald Campus**



**McGill lower field**



## December 2015

It's the last month of my exchange and I travelled to a lot of place despite the approaching final exam. As my courses ended earlier than the official school day, In early December, I went to Ottawa and Banff with my friends. I spent a day in the capital where you can visit the Parliament Hill. After the Ottawa trip, I went to Banff, Its such a amazing city. In summer time, the city is the best place for leisure activity you can enjoy the stunning view of the world famous Lake Louise. However, in winter, the Lake Louise is frozen, people go ice skating and ice fishing on the Lake. I tried a lot of snow activities in Banff including ice-mobiling, ice walks and snow shoeing. It is definitely a highlight of my exchange journey. After going back to Montreal, I have to prepare my final exams but I went to watch the McGill Redmen Hockey Match, its very exciting and I really enjoy it despite I am not a big fan of sport.

After the final exam, I went to California with other exchange students. I spent 9 days there and visited Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Grand Canyon and San Fransisco. Its worth travelling to US for you post exchange trip as the temperature in Montreal drops to minus 20 right after the final exams!

**Ottawa**



**Banff**



**McGill Redmen Hockey**



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## Part II: General Exchange Information

### Visa Procedures

For students holding Hong Kong passports, you do not need to apply for a student visa to Canada since semester lasts less than 6 months. However, you need to apply for US student visa in advance if you wish to transfer flight in US or travel during or after the semester.

### Orientation Activity

Most of the orientation activities are held in late August. Although most of the orientation are for freshmen, I highly recommend you to join some of them so as to connect with local students and other international exchange students. I have joined the orientation events organized by the school only as I heard from my friends that the Frosh are mostly drinking events which I am not interested.

I have joined the following two events:

#### (1) Off campus connection:

It is opened to all students who live off-campus, it is the first orientation events and the executive Committee member will introduce you the malls nearby and the cheap restaurants. I meet my first group of friend in this event.

#### (2) Discovery McGill:

It is another official orientation activity for freshman. You will be grouped based on your faculty and the Executive Committee member will introduce the campus to you. After the campus tour, there will be a carnival in lower field, in which you can play around with your new friends!



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## International Services and Activities

I highly recommend exchange students to join events organized by McGill International Student Network (MISN). The activities are of real bargain which you should not miss it! Do keep an eye on their updates in Facebook.

During the semester, MISN organized trips to Toronto, Quebec City and New York. The charges are much lower than going by yourself. They have arranged accommodation and transportation for you. You are free to travel around by yourself upon arrival of destination. Suggested itinerary is provided.

### Accommodation

McGill does not offer on-campus housing for exchange students. I lived in a apartment in Mile-end with another exchange students. It is 45 minutes walk from the campus but it only take 20 minutes by bus. The rent is 500 CAD per month including all furnitures, electricity and Wifi. The apartment is a one room dorm which is a bit crowded for two people.

I found it from Airbnb so that I don't need to sign any lease contract and its cheaper compare to other apartment.



If you want to live closer to the campus, you can log in to McGill Facebook group and there is a housing group which a lot of full time students sub lease or find roommate in that group. For your reference, most of the exchange students live in EVO which is close to campus and its very convenient.

### Course Registration

Before the start of semester, students can register courses by sending a Excel form to Management school and later register on your own through Minerva (similar to SIS in HKUST). I suggest you to enquire as early as you can as the courses get full very early. You can get the excel form and further information by sending email to [bcom.mgmt@mcgill.ca](mailto:bcom.mgmt@mcgill.ca).

For Finance courses, you can only register 2 FINE courses and you should make sure you meet all the prerequisites. Each student can register a maximum of 15 credits (5 courses) and two business courses of the same department, e.g. 2 FINE, or 2 ACCT. I have taken 3 Finance courses as one of them is not organized by the BCom department.



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## Teaching and Assessment Methods

I have taken 3 Finance courses and 2 Accounting courses, normal full time and exchange students takes 4 courses, so I don't recommend taking 5 courses as I did as the workload here is far more heavier than HKUST.

### **FINE 441 Investment Management - Prof. Larbi Hammami**

*Equivalent course: FINA 3104*

workload: medium

1 mid term exam, 1 project, 3 assignments, 1 Final exam

It is a required course for all finance major students in McGill, though no attendance is taken, the exam will mainly base on lecture materials so I highly recommend to attend all the lectures. Hammami is a great professor who is willing to explain to students every detail in Finance world.

### **FINE 443 Applied Corporate Finance - Prof. Larbi Hammami**

*Equivalent course: FINA 4104*

workload: high

10 case report, 1 presentation, attendance every week, 1 Final exam

The workload of this class is very heavy and it is the hardest class I have in McGill. The course required us to submit a group case report every week which mean you have to spend a lot of time to read the case and discuss with your group members. You will need to present one of the 10 cases and the attendance for the presentation lecture is required. The course required students to take Finance 1 and Finance 2 in advance as the cases are based on those materials.

### **CFIN 540 Introduction to International Finance - Prof. Raad Jassim**

*Equivalent course: FINA 3404*

workload: high

2 pop-up quiz, 1 presentation, 1 group report, 1 assignment, 1 individual report, 2 mid term exam

This is a Finance courses for continuing study students, which materials are harder and the workload is heavier comparing to other undergraduate Finance courses. My class is of small size with only 10 students, so I have a great time interacting with my fellows and professor. The course covers a lot of international financial issues and its easy to understand if you attend the lectures.



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## **ACCT 351 Financial Management 1 - Prof. Desmond Tsang**

*Equivalent course: ACCT 3010*

workload: medium

3 quizzes, 1 mid term, 1 group report, 1 Final exam

The best class I have had in McGill. Desmond is a great professor which explain all the concept clearly and he used a lot of real life example to help students understanding the application. The quizzes and mid term exam are very easy but the Final exam is tough compare to them.

## **ACCT 362 Cost Accounting - Prof. Philippe Levy**

*Equivalent course: No equivalent course*

workload: low

2 quizzes, 1 mid term, 5 assignments, 1 Final exam

This course is a required course for all accounting major students. It based on managerial accounting and focus more on the preparation and use of cost accounting information for managerial decision-making and control purposes. It is relatively a class with light workload but the course material is quite hard that you have to do all the assigned question so as to familiarize yourselves of the problem that may appear on exams.

## **Sports and Recreation Facilities**

Students could sign up for gym room and use other indoor facilities like swimming pool. The gym room is not on campus, it takes you around 15 minutes walk to the gym room.

## **Health & Safety**

All McGill students are required to purchase mandatory health insurance covering medical costs in local hospital and specified clinics. It is very costly if you don't have the health card. You will get the card at the time you get your student card in service centre. Montreal is a safe city however it is not recommend to walk alone in mid night, if you really have to do so remember to contact the Walk Safe and don't walk alone the night club area.

## **Transportation**

As I have to take bus to McGill everyday, I purchased a 4-month OPUS pass at 189 CAD. It enabled me to have unlimited rides in 4 month time which is a good deal if you live far from the campus as a single ride costs you 3.25 CAD. Some of my friend purchased weekend pass for 13 CAD so that they can have unlimited rides in the weekend. One thing to remind, the bus never announce the station name, so you have to check google map or ask the bus driver in advance if you don't want to miss your station.

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## Food

It is expensive to dine out as you have to pay additional tax and tips. There is 15% consumer tax in Quebec and a 15% tips is suggested if you dine out. It is around 15 CAD per meal on campus and 25 CAD per meal off campus. It is always a cheaper option to bring your own lunch box as there is microwave oven in Bronfman and SSMU building. To be honest, for most of the time I prefer dine out than cooking as there are a lot of great food in Montreal that you should not miss! There are some local food you must try in Montreal like poutine, bagel and smoked meat. You can also have some good western food near Concordia Guy station and St. Catherine street. For example, Eggspectation for brunch, L'Academie for Italian dishes and Schwartz's for smoked meat.



## Climate

You can experience different season in Montreal if you go on exchange in Fall semester. In August and September it is quite hot there and you can do a lot of summer activity. In October, the maple leaves turn red which view is stunning. However, in October and November, the weather varied a lot and it rains every week. A fun fact I observed is Montreal people don't use umbrella even its rain heavily! Winter came quite late this year, I didn't really experience a cold winter even in December. However, according to my friends the average temperature in December is around minus 10 degree celsius so you should bring some thick jackets and goose jackets. If you are going on exchange in the winter semester, you have better prepare more jackets as the normal temperature in January to May is minus 20 degree celsius! Luckily there are heater in door so it is highly recommended to dress in layers.



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## Communication

Montreal is a French-speaking city, people generally spoke French and they tends to talk to you in French. The street name is written in French sometime even if I want to ask people how to get to a particular street, I cannot read the name. However, you will gradually get used to it and local people are super nice even some who could hardly speak English, they would ask other pedestrians to translate for you. If you decide to dine out don't forget to ask for English menus, as most of the restaurant will provide you French menus if you don't ask.

## Banking

It is more convenient if you open a bank account and deposit your money there as you can settle your study permit, health card payment and e-print payment by the online bank. I opened a debit account in RBC bank. The only document required is your student ID and passport. You don't have to pay extra fee for the account, the only limitation is that you can only have 25 transactions per month if you are with RBC bank. I will recommend you to open a local bank accounting with BMO (Bank of Montreal) as they have unlimited transactions and they offer a students discount card to users.

## Phone cards

I didn't purchase a phone card as it is too expensive and there are wifi everywhere in Montreal downtown. If you need a phone card, I will recommend you to purchase one during McGill orientation week, some of the telecom company will have booth in the campus and they offer discount to student. If I didn't remember wrongly, it is around 45 CAD per month for 1GB data and unlimited call and text.

## Expenditure

<b>Flight ticket</b>	1750CAD	Air Canada(HK - Vancouver - Montreal) Air Canada (Los Angeles - Toronto - HK)
<b>Accommodation</b>	500CAD per month	Mile End (off campus)
<b>Food</b>	1300CAD	mostly dine out
<b>Travel</b>	4500CAD	Ottawa, Quebec city, Toronto, New York, Banff, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, San Fransisco, Grand Canyon
<b>Transportation</b>	200CAD	4 month pass OPUS metro card
<b>Shopping and other expenditure</b>	400CAD	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10150CAD (66000HKD)</b>	

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## **Part III: Checklist**

<b>Items to bring</b>
summer and winter clothes (including goose jacket)
Gloves, Scarf, winter boots
Laptop, Camera and corresponding chargers
Adapters
Stationary, calculators and USB
Basic medicine
Passport, hard copies of Admission Letter and Photo ID (remember to apply for US visa if you wish to travel to the state)

If more information is needed, get my contact from SBM Exchange Team by emailing at [bmugexch@ust.hk](mailto:bmugexch@ust.hk).