



**McGill University**

## Exchange Report

Fall 2015

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Year 3(class of 2017)

## Part I – Activity Log

*September*



The summer in Montreal feels pretty much the same as in Hong Kong. It's recommended that you can arrive earlier than the beginning of the orientation, take some time to settle down, get familiar with the campus and get everything ready. I will list more details of that preparation in the section below. Since September is the beginning of a new academic year, I joined the orientation ceremony for all exchange students and freshmen. The orientation begins at the stadium on parc avenue and takes whole day. Some societies will hold counters in the stadium so you can also check them and join the ones you are interested in. There will be another roadshow for you to get to know the student societies later. The roadshow will be held on campus and more societies will join. You will get email notice so you can't miss it. Besides, there is another orientation for all students living off-campus.

I spent my second half-month mainly going around Montreal. You have to go to the old port, there are many traditional buildings, statues, churches there and are worthy for you to spend a whole afternoon to walk around. There will also be occasionally galleries and quite some museum for art-lovers.

## *October*



I spent this month travelling to different cities in Canada. I have intentionally arranged all my classes on Tuesday and Thursday so that I can have a 4-day long break each week for travelling. I have went to Ottawa, Toronto, Mont-Tremblent and Quebec City in this month and some small towns in Ontario and Quebec. Besides, I got midterms of some of my classes in late October so I have to spend some time preparing for them.

## *November*



It starts to get cold in Montreal. The date of midterms in McGill varies a lot from course to course. Some courses have midterm very close to final exam and make it kind of a mock final. Luckily I finished all my courses in early November so I can go travelling again, I went to New York City and got a view some famous places such as The Statue of Liberty, Rockefeller Tower, Wall Street and Fifth Avenue. I specially recommend everyone to watch a show in Broadway. I personally picked “The

Phantom of the Opera ” and it left me great memory.

### *December*



It keeps getting colder and colder and I was told the winter in Montreal can be really cold (about -20 degrees). Fortunately I can leave before it gets too cold to go outdoors. The final exam period is in December and all courses are finished, I started to go to library to prepare for the final exam. And as the Christmas comes, some shops sale at really good discount, especially on boxing day when most shops will offer the best price of the year and many local residents will go on the street and buy stuffs.

## **Part II – General Information**

### *Student Visa*

If you are Hong Kong permanent resident, you don't need visa for exchange to Canada, and if you are mainland student, you can either apply for a visa in Hong Kong or your home city. If you plan to go to the states, you are recommended to get it done before you go to McGill. But in the case that you are not clear about your plan, you can also apply for a USA visa in Canada. It is actually pretty convenience. The office in McGill is quite near to the campus. The time of the applying process depends on the availability of the availability of the appointment slots. But generally one or two week will be enough to get your visa ready.

### *Orientation Activities*

There will be a general orientation held by the university at the stadium and followed by an orientation session given by the Faculty of Management, which is normally in the afternoon of the same day. There will also be several session or gatherings for international students and exchange students to provide useful information and answer question. If you plan to live off-campus, there will also be an orientation for all off-campus students that you can join. Besides, two organized society roadshow will be held. You can get all those information on the school website or through email. All these orientation activities mentioned above are free of charge. There will also be

some charged orientations held by different student societies and you can ask for more details during the roadshow or find the society's counter on campus, which will normally be kept during daytime for several days before the official start of the semester.

### *Accommodations*

I live off-campus and a little bit outside of the downtown so it will be a little farther than university residential halls. My rent is around 500CAD per month for one person so it's lower than the on-campus housing. If your place is not close to the campus, check the bus line and find out if you can bus to school before you make your decision. It can be tough for a long walk during winter.

### *Transportation*

Normally it is ok to walk from place to place in downtown. However, if you plan to take bus and metro a lot, do consider buying a 4-month plan card. It will cover both the bus and metro in Montreal. The applying process includes registration and photo taking so it makes take quite some time and thus you need to leave enough time for it.

### *Course Registration*

Just like in UST, in McGill, you can take and drop courses in the first week of each semester. Do go to see an advisor if you have any questions of your class registration. If you must register for an already filled class, ask for their help and sometimes they can offer you an additional spot. But you are highly recommended to do so as soon as possible because this privilege will end several days before the add/drop deadline. Check the email regularly and the office will notice you all the information and important dates.

I took 5 courses, mainly to cover my major requirement:

MGCR 382 | International Business

FINE 441 | Investment Management

FINE 448 | Financial Derivatives

ECON 426| Labor Economy

ACCT 354| Financial Statement Analysis

### *Networking*

There are many student clubs you can join, find the ones you are interested and you will find it pretty easy to get involved in. There are also some gatherings especially held for exchanging students or international students, where you can reach out and talk to people.

### *Food*

There are a lot of good restaurants in downtown; you can find a variation from Japanese restaurant to French restaurant. You can also go to Chinatown for Chinese food. Those home dishes will taste so good after months of western meals.

### *Insurance*

All the students will be asked by McGill to join a compulsory insurance plan. Get it done as soon as you arrived. The beginning time will be several days after your registration but there will be extra half-month coverage ahead so normally you will be insured after you get your insurance card.

### *Climate*

The autumn in Montreal is actually not that harsh. It feels not very much different from Hong Kong. However, it is true that from September to December you will experience a huge change in temperature, so bring enough cloth with you.

### *Language*

Most residents speak both French and English, but generally their native language is French, plus many signs and menus are written in French so it will definitely be a bonus if you can speak French.

### *Banking & Phone*

There are several banks you can choose. I recommend RBC and CIBC because they have really close branch near the campus. For the phone carriers, I personally used Fido with a 38 CAD plan, which offers unlimited local calling and messages and 1GB network.

### **Part III – Checklist**

1. Clothes for both warm and cold climates
2. Stationery
3. Medicine
4. Money (You can deposit them after you get a local bank account, credit card is always very convenient)
5. Computer, Phone

You are not recommended to bring too many stuffs with you, normally people buy quite a lot souvenirs during travelling.