

Exchange Report – McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Winter 2017

Jan 2017 – Apr 2017

Part 1 – Monthly Activity Log

January: The month of January is mainly about adapting to the environment. I spent the first week and a half making changes to my timetable, adding courses that I am interested in. Following the end of the add/drop period, I took a day trip to Mount Tremblant to ski, it was about 3 hour of drive to get to the ski resort, it was a very popular destination for locals to ski.

February: The month of February highlights two events, midterms and spring break. Spring breaks starts from the second half of the month, all of my mid terms took place in the first half of the month, so I spent the first two weeks preparing for the mid terms, with weekly case meetings with classmates. I used the spring break to travel to Vancouver to meet some of my friends back in high school, on my way back to Montreal, I spent 2 days in Canada’s capital, Ottawa, I used my time to visit the art museum etc.

March: March is the coldest month of the year in Montreal, the school was forced to shut down for one weekday in the middle of the month because it was too dangerous to travel in the snow. At one point of time, snow alongside the roads got piled up to almost 5 foot beside the sidewalk, there was not much people on the streets because the weather was too cold. Academic wise, March is accompined with a weekly group meeting with my case analysis team for a finance course(“Applied corporate finance”). I recommend visiting the university’s Redpath museum, located in the center of the university, it was very content-rich and mind blowing. At the end of the month, I had a chance to travel to the Niagara fall right beside Toronto. It was a 2-day tour, and if you are interested in it, I suggest leaving more time for this place of interest because it takes long to get to Niagara from Montreal.

April: April is the month of finals in Montreal, nearly all of the finals in the university are held in the school’s gym, during the month my time was split between the library and my dorm, with several lunch& dinner get-togethers with classmates and my friend from hkust. It was an intensive month, with a lot of materials to cover. The library in Mcgill are crowd during the finals period, similar to HKUST, it is hard to find a spot in the library without arriving there early in the morning, I recommend studying in the upper levels of the McLenne Library, a great place to concrete.

Part 2 – General Exchange Information

1. Visa Procedures

Having studied in Canada for high school, I was not required to apply for a student visa during the course of study in Mcgill. However, I do want to remind students who are reading this report that the application procedure could be tedious and the consulate requires documentation from Mcgill university, so please prepare ahead of time to avoid delay in your schedule.

2. Orientation Events

The Discover Mcgill University Orientation is your opportunity to connect with representatives from various Student Services at McGill. You will also receive your orientation package in the orientation. Apart from that, it engages you with the university’s student panel of experts and hear their experiences and advice on navigating through your first year of university.

3. International services & Activities

Desautels’ Exchange Network (DEN): The goal of this Network is to provide a strong and adapted support to incoming Exchange Students to McGill’s Desautels Faculty of Management.It helps to answer questions and inquiries which students exchanging to mcgill may have and create a group for them to be able to get in contact with and communicate amongst each other.

4. Accommodations

I chose to go with on-campus housing provided by the university, a double room in the La Citadell Building, with shared bathroom, a small gym, study room and cafe in the building.

On-Campus: The university provide On-campus housing to exchange students. There are 4 exchange buildings available each with varying room types with the prices as follows:

Small Single Room: \$690.00/month

Regular Single Room: \$754.00/month

Large Single Room: \$821.00/month

They also have availability in apartment style residence Greenbriar with rates for Studio's (\$1127/month) or One Bedroom Apartments (\$1230.00/month). In order to reserve a space, students do not need to pay a deposit, however in the event of cancellation where you are still attending the university, a cancellation penalty of \$600.00 (CAD) will be charged.

Off-Campus: Accommodation can be found in the city, a popular place you can look at is EVO, they offer housing starting from 775 CAD a month. Link can be found at part 4.

5. Course Registration

McGill's course registration system, MINERVA, does not recognize the pre-requisite courses from the home university. They adhere to McGill's own pre-requisites, which means they will not permit you in a course if you have not taken the pre-requisite or its equivalent back home.

As exchange students, we can take one course outside of management (maximum 2 courses), and for these we can register on our own via MINERVA. Please note that other faculties do not prevent registration if you do not have the pre-requisite courses like we do. Some Faculties have waitlists, and you can certainly get yourself on the waitlist via MINERVA if the course is full and the waitlist still has space. Management does not have waitlists.

2017 Winter Term registration opens **December 1st, 2016.**

The courses offered by the management school all have section numbers begin with a 0:

3093	ACCT	351	001	Lecture	3.000	Intermediate Financial Accounting 1.	TR	08:35	AM-09:55	AM	40	36	40	00	Amanda Stephanie Abrams	01/04- 04/11	BRONF 046	Active
NOTES: Enrolment limited by program.																		

We need to attempt registration first, if the course is restricted, an electronic form would be send to our ust account. We need to fill it out and email it to a representative from Mcgill. He will collect all information, and the school will take a look at the requests and reply if they have any questions and/or concerns. Registration will be processed in the first week of December. A full load at McGill is 15 credits (equivalent to 30 ECTS), usually 5 courses. We may take 12 credits (24 ECTS) if hkust permits, which is still full-time status. Lower than that is not permitted.

6. Teaching & Assessment methods

Unlike HKUST, Mcgill adopt absolute grading. The point breakdown could be found below. Assessment and teaching methods are similar to that of HKUST's. We have classes that have both lecture and tutorial. Assessment methods include midterm, final and presentations.

Grades Grade Points Numerical Scale of Grades

A	4.0	85 – 100%
A-	3.7	80 – 84%
B+	3.3	75 – 79%
B	3.0	70 – 74%
B-	2.7	65 – 69%
C+	2.3	60 – 64%

C	2.0	55 – 59%
D	1.0	50 – 54%
F (Fail)	0	0 – 49%

7. **Sports & recreation activities**

If you live in on-campus housing, some of the dorms offered by the university comes with a small gym in the building. Off-campus housing such as EVO also comes with gyms in the building. The university itself has a big-scale fitness center right beside its football field, which opens to all McGill students.

8. **Finance & banking**

I did not open a bank account in Montreal, all relevant tuition/accommodation charges could be settled by credit card/cash at Scotia bank right across the university's service point. *One thing to take note of is that you need to go to the service point to ask for an invoice before heading to the bank right across the street.

9. **Social Club & Networking opportunities**

Throughout the semester, the management department offers alumni talks to management students, an opportunity for students to step out of their comfort zone.

10. **Health & Safety**

In general, Montreal is considered to be a very safe city, given that, please watch out for the home-less in subway tunnels & along the streets. They are usually not aggressive, just walk away if you came across them. In rare occasions when they are drunk, they would be more proactive, approaching you for some change.

The university itself has a medium-scale clinic, the waiting time is moderate. Hospitals in Montreal, however, generally have a long and tedious waiting line, from my personal experiences, I have waited for 6 hours to see a physician, so please be prepared for the long line if you go to a general hospital.

11. **Food**

Montreal offers a lot of traditional French restaurants; my primary dining area is the canteens under the dorm buildings. McGill requires all students living in university dorm to sign up for their meal plan (2000 CAD in total from Jan to May), therefore I usually eat at the school canteen. The weather gets cold starting from Feb, you can consider using the APP Foodora to have your take-outs delivered to your place as at times the weather gets too cold to go out.

12. **Transportation**

My main method of transportation is by foot as the management building is within 10 minutes walking distance from my dorm La Citedella. The subway is a very convenient way of travel, if going to places afar, uber is another popular choice in Montreal.

13. **Climate**

The weather in Montreal during winter times are very cold, starting from Feb, temperature drops below -10 degrees, and stays around -20 degrees for one month. The city's infrastructure is not well-developed, in occasions of heavy snow, roads would be covered in mud, so please bring a pair of boots to Montreal, otherwise your shoes would be muddy.

14. **Communication**

Montreal has a very large percent of French-speaking population, it has for long been a bilingual city, most of the people living in the city have native English skills, communication has not been a problem for me during my time in Montreal.

15. **Cautionary measures**

When there is heavy snowstorm, the university may cancel classes on the day. You can follow the university's official Facebook account for updates, that's the most efficient channel per my knowledge.

16. Other notes

- Upon arriving at Montreal, please be reminded to pay for your international student insurance and get your insurance card, which covers medical expenses during your course of stay, at **McGill's service point**. The address of the service point is: **3415 McTavish St, QC H3A 0C8**, right beside McLennan Library.
- *****VERY IMPORTANT:** At the end of your exchange semester, McGill would automatically mail/email your official transcripts back to HKUST, given that you have already cleared all relevant expense back in McGill. A lot of exchange students forgot to pay for their printing expense before they depart for home, that often incurred problems for them later on. According to my understanding, McGill would not email/mail official transcripts back to hkust unless one have cleared all tuition/food/printing/accommodation expense.
Therefore, please remember to settle all your university expense before leaving Canada.

Part 3 – Items to bring

***Important**

Boots*	Winter coat*	Gloves
Cotton hats	Humidifier	Hand/ facial cream (dry climate)
Medical files	Towels and washcloths	Scarf

Part 4 – Useful Links and Contacts

Links:

Step by Step guide: <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/international/students-coming-mcgill/next-steps>

McGill University Residences: <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/housing/rez-options/exchange-students>

Off-campus housing: <http://www.evomontreal.com/>

Grading Policy: http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2015-2016/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/gi_grading_and_grade_point_averages

Contacts:

Amanda Rosenberg - Service Representative, Student Housing and Hospitality Services

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Seve Ching - Community Assistant, EVO, Off campus housing

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