
Queen's University

Smith School of Business

Spring 2020

Exchange Report



Photo taken by The Queen's Journal

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Year 3 (FINA & IS)

Monthly Activity Log

Late December - January

I arrived at Toronto with 3 other exchange students from HKUST at the end of December. We spent around 3 days visiting some tourist attractions and enjoyed the New Year's Eve Countdown firework in Toronto. After that, we took Viarail to Kingston on January 2. The orientation day was held on the next day and I watched a Hockey game for the first time.

Semester started on January 6 and workload was not heavy at the beginning of the semester. I mainly spent my free time exploring downtown, trying out some restaurants and visiting malls. On January 24, me and some other exchange students from Hong Kong joined a 2-day Montreal trip organised by ETC. We went to attractions like Mount Royal and Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal. We also celebrated Chinese New Year by enjoying hotpot in Chinatown and tried out the famous poutine at La Banquise as well.



February

I joined the Curling Event organised by ETC on February 2. It was fun to experience something new although I was not good at it. The two weeks before reading week was the busiest as it was full of assignments due dates and midterm exams. After being busy for 2 weeks, reading week finally came and I went to Quebec and Vancouver with two other exchange students from HKUST. Quebec was much colder than Kingston and I often felt that my toes were going to break after spending many hours in outdoor areas. But it's definitely worth it because the snowy buildings and sceneries in Quebec were very stunning. Besides visiting some tourists spots, we also attended the annual Quebec Winter Carnival and went dining at many French restaurants. After that, we took the flight to Vancouver and spent some time at Stanley Park, Capilano Suspension Bridge Park, and tried skiing for the first time at Grouse Mountain.



March

Apart from attending classes and working on some group projects, I mainly spent my time cooking dinner and chatting with friends at each other's home as there was not much places in Kingston for me to explore. On March 14, classes were suspended due to COVID-19. After visiting some more places and restaurants in Kingston with friends in the next two days, I mainly stayed home to plan for my return to Hong Kong and finally left Canada on March 29.



General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

For American citizens, only a valid passport would be required to enter Canada, neither visa nor ETA is needed.

Orientation Activities

There was a mandatory exchange orientation took place 3 days before the start of the semester, which consisted of a campus tour, an information talk and a networking session. The 1-hour talk provided information about academia practices, future activities for exchange students and the Canadian culture etc. The networking session allowed us to meet other commerce exchange students by randomly assigning us into different groups and played Scavenger Hunt around the campus. All commerce exchange students were also invited to watch a Kingston Frontenacs Hockey Game in the evening for free.

International Services & Activities

Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) organises various activities for exchange students e.g. bus trip to Ottawa and bus trip to Maple Madness. Spaces are usually very limited so you have to act fast in signing up. Besides, if you have any enquiries, the staffs at the centre may be able to offer you some help. Apart from QUIC, the Exchange and Transfer Committee (ETC) organises activities like a Montreal Trip, Curling Event, and Buddy Program as well. They sometimes send activities invitation through email, or you may also visit their Facebook page to explore more.

Accommodations

Instead of living on campus in Jean Royce Hall, I chose to live off campus and found my room from the many choices available at Queen's University - Off-Campus Housing Facebook page. Me and another exchange student from HKUST sublet two rooms from two Queen's outgoing exchange students in a 4-bedroom apartment. It is relatively cheaper than living on campus and its location is quite convenient, which is within 10-minute walk to campus and 6-minute walk to Metro Supermarket. For your reference, the monthly rent for my room was C\$566 excluding utilities(around C\$80 - 90 per month per person in winter).

Courses Registration

Queen's uses SOLUS for course registration, which is very similar to SIS so you should be able to use it without much difficulties. Exchange students can take up to 5 courses and no less than 3. The Incoming Exchange Portal and a webinar will provide information about course enrolment. For my semester, I can start to enrol in courses at mid-October. Some of the courses require special permission to enrol, which will be stated in the course catalog. Relevant documents e.g. transcript have to be submitted before the deadline at the end of October.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Course (HKUST equivalent course) [Instructor]	Assessment*	Remarks
COMM104 Business Ethics And Corporate Social Responsibility (MGMT2130) [Karen Humphreys Blake]	Take-home test 20% Term Paper proposal 10% Case assignments x 2 10% Group Indigenous case 20% Term Paper 25% Participation & Professionalism 15%	*require special permission - Interactive: always ask for students' thoughts on different issues - Write some reflection each class at the back of our name card - Randomly assigned into group to work on a powerpoint about an Indigenous case
COMM328 International Finance (FINA4403) [Selim Topaloglu]	Class participation 10% Case analysis 20% Midterm 20% Final exam 35% Best score of the 2 exams 15%	*require special permission - Less interactive: seldom ask questions in class - Form your own group to do 2 case analysis out of 4 topics available - Being very lenient in grading midterm
COMM329 Management of Financial Institutions (FINA4503) [Prof. Bill Cannon]	Case analysis 1 17% Mid-term 18% Case analysis 2 15% Case analysis 3 15% Final 30% Class participation 5% + 5% bonus	*require special permission - A relatively difficult course - Focus heavily on in-depth case analysis - Many readings for each class - Need to recite everything for midterm
COMM492 Managing Data Business Intelligence (ISOM3260) [Dr. Tracy Jenkin]	Team Data Modeling Project 25% Team Analytics Project 25% Individual DataCamp Assignments 10% Individual Final Exam 40%	- a 3-hour class per week including tutorial - A nice professor with a sense of humour - Interactive classes

*The original assessment scheme before any revised arrangement caused by COVID-19

General remarks:

- We have to put our name card in front of us for every class.
- Many Professors don't recommend / allow the use of electronic devices including laptop during classes.
- Some Professors will provide extra exam time on midterm for exchange students. For final exam, you have to officially apply for it if you need by filling in forms and obtaining Professors' signature.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

A large, multi-storey gym facility is located at the Athletics and Recreation Centre. Students can enjoy free access with their student cards.

Finance & Banking

On the day of orientation, Scotiabank held a booth for students to open bank accounts. But I chose to open a CIBC student bank account later instead. Both of them are free of charge. Having a Canadian bank account allowed me to pay for UHIP (mandatory insurance) more easily and more convenient in sending money in CAD to friends through Interac e-Transfer. Besides, local debit cards are accepted in most of the shops and restaurants.

I also used my Citibank HK debit card a lot as I deposited Canadian dollar into my HK bank account and no service fee will be charged when using it to make purchases in Canada. For withdrawing cash through ATM in campus using it, C\$1.5 will be charged and a maximum of C\$800 can be withdrawn each time.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

Although I didn't join any social club, there are still many great networking opportunities by attending various activities and events. For example, ETC organised activities like Trip to Montreal and Curling Event, which provided opportunities for us to meet and socialise with other commerce exchange students. The Buddy Event also gave us the chances to chat with some of the local students.

Health & Safety

University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) is a mandatory health insurance plan for all exchange students and it costs C\$212. It covers most of the health services and medical treatments in Kingston.

Food

There are many restaurants located at Kingston downtown which offer a huge variety of Western and even Asian cuisine including Sushi, Ramen, Dim Sum, Phở etc. But eating out can be quite expensive and you have to pay extra 10% to 15% as tips and 13% for tax. Therefore I cooked by myself or with friends very often. To shop for food and other groceries, I usually go to Metro, which provides student discount of 10% from Tuesday to Thursday or Food Basics, which also offers 10% off on Tuesday by presenting the student card.

Transportation

Queen's students can take public buses in Kingston for free by presenting their student card and this allows you to access most of the places in Kingston. Using Google map would be accurate enough to gain real-time information about bus arrival time. For traveling to other nearby cities, the most common transportation methods are taking Viarail, Megabus, Greyhound or ride-sharing. You may need to plan your travel,

especially the one during reading week, as early as possible or else the transportation cost may become very expensive.

Climate

Winter in Kingston is always freezing-cold. The daily average temperature normally ranges from -15°C to 3°C. As snowfall is very common, having a waterproof jacket and a pair of waterproof boots are important. You can either bring them from Hong Kong or you can also buy one in Kingston easily. Also, be aware that the ground may be very slippery when snow starts melting and forming a layer of ice.

Communication

I bought 4 30-day sim cards in Hong Kong, each of them costs HK\$160 and includes 4GB of data usage that can be used within Canada, US and Mexico and some minutes for making phone calls. It is a much cheaper option than joining data plan in Canada.

Cautionary measures

When COVID-19 started to outbreak in China and Hong Kong, and hadn't even entered Canada, the face masks at local pharmacies in Kingston was sold out already. Although Canada may have larger stock of face masks for precaution after this pandemic, I would still recommend bringing some medical face masks from Hong Kong in case there are any outbreak of diseases or virus.

Items to Bring

- HKID and Passport
- Acceptance Letter
- Laptop
- Mobile Phone
- Chargers and Power Banks
- Adapters
- Cash and Credit Cards
- Medicine
- Moisturising skincare products
- Waterproof jacket and boots
- Gloves
- Business suit
- Sim Cards
- Stationary and calculator

Useful Links and Contacts

Queen's University - Off-Campus Housing Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1618611005028802/>

Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/quic.queensu.ca/>

Incoming Exchange Portal (NetID and password are required)

<https://smithlearning.ca/d2l/home/114547>

Megabus

<https://ca.megabus.com/>

VIA Rail Canada

<https://www.viarail.ca/en>

Visit Kingston – Fresh Made Daily

<https://www.visitkingston.ca/>

Cataraqui Centre (Shopping mall)

<https://www.cataraquicentre.ca/>