

# Exchange at Carleton University - Ottawa, Canada

## Fall semester 2016

### General information

I am Tyko Kieskamp, I am in my third year of the study Econometrics and Operational Research. From September to December 2016 I went on exchange to Carleton University in Ottawa, the capital of Canada.

### Preparation

During the end of 2015 I decided I wanted to go on exchange for the following year as I heard great stories about it and that it was an experience you did not want to miss. Then I started thinking about the location I wanted to go to. My intention was to go to an English speaking country outside Europe. Besides that I always had some affiliation with North-America, so I ended up with Canada.

After submitting my motivation letter and curriculum vitae, I heard I could go to Carleton University. I started my preparation with all the things I had to arrange: flight, housing, subscription, courses, etc. The first essential part was my subscription, which included a list of preferred courses and proof of a sufficient level of English. There are several tests to do this, however I did an International Baccalaureate Higher Level English in high school. I sent a mail to the exchange office (ISSO) at Carleton. At first they were a bit hesitant to allow this, but I found a letter with stated that IB English and especially Higher Level showed a higher level in English proficiency than TOEFL test or alternatives. After I had all the documents I needed I sent the soft copy by mail and printed the hard copy, took it to the exchange coordinator of the ESE and they sent it for me to Carleton.

Some time later I received my acceptance letter and further information from the ISSO on how to go further. I could sign up with my student number and pay the student fees: the UPass (for public transport) and the UHIP (for health insurance). There was also the possibility to change courses. Furthermore you could also sign up for a room on campus. I decided to not do this, however this is something I do regret in hindsight as it can be difficult to get a room off-campus and you do get the Canadian student atmosphere a lot more on campus.

### Arrival

I arrived a week beforehand. As I travelled over Detroit I had to get an ESTA, besides the Evisa from Canada. These are really easy to obtain and only a couple of euros. Be careful though, there are a lot of sites selling them for couple the actual price, but taking a lot of money for themselves. At the customs you need to show the letter of acceptance, but I did not get any complications. I was staying at a hostel for the first few days so I took a taxi to the centrum. The first few days I decided to walk around the city and looked for a room. I started this before I went to Canada, however I did not find anything yet. I looked mostly on

Kijiji and found some options. The biggest obstacle was the fact that most rooms are for 8 months at least, but I got lucky and found a room only 5 minute walk from the campus. The first week the entire university had an introduction week and the ISSO organized several events, of which one mandatory, for the exchange students. This included seeing the city, go for shopping to get settled in and other activities on campus. This is a great moment to meet other exchange students, canadian students and the social/sport clubs of Carleton.

## Courses

I took four courses at Carleton. For each of them I earned 0.5 credits, which corresponds to 6 ECTS. For all courses the final was 60% or less, the rest was made up of midterms, tests, assignments and/or papers. This does differ a lot per course. I incorporated all courses into my elective space.

### Principles of Financial Accounting

This course is an introduction to accounting. I choose this because I have no experience with accounting and decided this was a good opportunity to add to my skillset. Only during the first week I found out this was an online course, but the professor makes great videos and available for question on campus, so I stucked with it. It had a midterm and final and some small assignments every three weeks. It was not particularly difficult.

### Introduction to Organizational Behaviour

This business course focussed on working environments and cultures within organizations. It is interesting course in which it was also mandatory to do a research with a group. During the lecture the professor kept the class interactive. This course had several smaller assignments, a midterm, final and a paper which made up your grade

### Functions to a Complex Variable

This course was my personal favourite. It was a small course off about 30 people, so the professor was very involved. It was also the more difficult one, but the professor could explain the complex theories well, which helped a lot. Our grade was based on four small test and a final exam.

### Abstract Algebra I

This course focused on number and field theory. This was the least interesting. Mostly due to the fact that the professor gave rather boring lectures. The course consisted out of three tests and a final.

## Finances

	€
Flight	800
Hostel	200
Housing	2100

Food	1000
Trips	1200
Phone	130
Student fees	265
Other	400
Total	<b>6095</b>

## Daily life

Ottawa is a great city to live in. It has a couple of awesome districts like chinatown, little italy and of course byward market. It does not have the atmosphere or appearance of a big city, and frankly because of that does miss that appeal. There are a lot of events on campus itself and otherwise because of the UPass the busses are free (although they may be late). CUEx, which is a student association for exchange students at Carleton organises some cool smaller events like going ice skating, going to (ice) hockey match, but also bigger trips like Montreal, Toronto and Niagara falls. I had a lot of fun with their events and the executives are great people.

There are a lot of cool trips you can do during weekends and during the fall break. There are some cities near, Montreal 2 hours away, both Toronto and Quebec city around 6 hours. I found all of these great, with each it own style and character. However Canada is a country with nice cities, but great nature, so make sure to see that. I went on a road trip during the fall break to Quebec city and further north to Tadoussac, where we saw whales and a beautiful fjord. There is also other nature closer to home.

Overall Canada is really expensive in terms of food and drinks. Do not be surprised to pay 1.5 times what you are used to for groceries. Also going out can be expensive if you buy a lot of drink at the pub/club. We solved this by doing pre-drinks on campus or at somebody's home.

As final words, I had a great time in Canada, some of the best experiences I had in my life and would do it again in a heartbeat.