



DLE Internationale Beziehungen
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(Bitte spätestens 2 Monate nach Beendigung Ihres Auslandsaufenthalts vollständig übermitteln).

☒ Ja, ich bin damit einverstanden, dass dieses Formular zusammen mit meinem Bericht für Mitstudierende auf der Webseite zur Ansicht zur Verfügung steht (falls zutreffend, bitte ankreuzen).

ABSCHLUSSBERICHT: UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

von [REDACTED]

Period of exchange: Autumn Semester 2016 (September 2016 – December 2016)

Programme: UF English, UF Psychology and Philosophy (Diplomstudium)

Studying abroad is an excellent opportunity to get to know a country, its culture and its schooling system. In this report, I would like to give some tips and insights into the life of a student at the University of Ottawa, oftentimes called uOttawa.

University life & courses:

At the end of May or beginning of June after receiving the acceptance letter, I was in direct contact with the Faculty of Arts at uOttawa to negotiate my course preferences. As we received our acceptance letter extremely late this year, most of the courses were already full, which limited the courses or the desired sections of the courses I wanted to take. In the end, I opted for four courses. However, already in the first week of classes I noticed that I was not entirely happy with two of my courses, which is why I went to the Faculty of Arts right in the first week to drop out of and sign up for new courses. This procedure is super easy: You simply go to Simard Hall and change the courses there in person. Many students drop out of courses in the first two weeks of the semester. This means that even if you do not get into your desired option at the first try, you can give it another go a few days later. The courses I took in the end were:

ESP 1991 Elementary Spanish I

ENG 3134 Jacobean Shakespeare

ESL 3373 Build your Word Bank Vocabulary

PSY 3101 The Psychology of Death and Dying

I was absolutely satisfied with my course choice in the end. All of them were extremely interesting. The only thing I felt disappointed about was that the Faculty of Arts did not allow me to enrol in linguistics courses as they thought that I did not meet all the required prerequisites even though I was certain that I did meet them. I later heard that this happened to a number of other students in different fields of studies too.

As already stated by a number of students, courses in Canada are more work intensive than in Vienna, which is a good thing, though. As you are doing assignments, tests and quizzes throughout the semester, the final exam is not as much effort as in Vienna. I only revised one

day for my Spanish final exam, for instance, as we had been given so many assignments and tests throughout the semester so that there was no need to study everything from scratch for the final. As I was aware that finals could take place until the 22nd of December, I decided to stay in Ottawa over Christmas when I booked flights in July. The other option would be to wait until you get your final exam dates in October and then book your return flight, which might turn out to be the more expensive option, though.

What I really appreciated about uOttawa was that all buildings (except for one) are located on one and the same campus. Besides, the library of uOttawa is enormous! It comprises six floors and it is open until 2am every day; during the exam period it is even open 24/7. The library also has its own coffee shop inside the building and it is furthermore connected with the UCU, where you can find a supermarket, another coffee place, the bookstore etc. When it gets colder, you start to appreciate that most of the buildings on campus are connected through tunnels. What is more, as a uOttawa student, you can use the gym facilities for free, which I found brilliant.

Accommodation:

I would either recommend staying directly on campus or coming a few days earlier to Ottawa and do the Rent A Place tour. Staying directly on campus has the benefit of meeting lots and lots of other exchange students plus you do not have to worry about accommodation. However, the residence is relatively expensive (800C\$) and most of the time you would be better off looking for off-campus accommodation. I did a tour with Rent a Place and found an apartment located in Sandy Hill, the student area close to uOttawa. The apartment was a 10 minute walk away from campus and I shared it with five other exchange students for around 710C\$ per month. It was a newly renovated apartment and even though we had some issues every now and then it was overall a good place.

Food:

Food in general is extremely expensive in Canada, especially milk products. Moreover, the food quality of bread, for instance, is not quite the same as in Austria. On average, I spent around 50+ C\$ on my weekly shopping. Be aware that Loblaws (the main supermarket) has two days each week on which students do not pay taxes. I always tried to do the food shopping on those days, which helped me to save a bit of money. If you want to go out for food, I would recommend Warehouse (every meal for about 5C\$ excl. taxes) or Social Laurier (about 6C\$), which is only a 5 minute walk away from uOttawa.

Travelling:

I was a little disappointed by the International Office in Ottawa to be honest. They did not organise any trips and only few events during the semester, which made it hard to meet new people. I would suggest organising your travels yourself or doing some trips with Roundtours Ottawa. I did one trip to Niagara Falls with them and I absolutely enjoyed it. I organised all the other trips to Toronto, Montreal, Mont-Tremblant, Kingston and Gatineau together with some exchange students. Quebec City and New York City should be on your bucket list too, as they are also not too far away from Ottawa. However, I did not manage to make it to those places because I was sick and because it was quite cold from mid-November onwards.

Useful information:

The weather in Canada can change unbelievably quickly. When I arrived in Canada at the end of August, we had temperatures above 30 degrees and even in September and October it was still relatively mild. At the end of October, temperatures suddenly dropped and from mid-November onwards we had snow in Ottawa. During the exam period in December, it got as cold as -21 degrees!! So do not forget to bring plenty of warm clothes with you but also summer clothes for your first few weeks in Ottawa.

In terms of booking flights, I booked a one-way flight straight in January when I received the email from the University of Vienna. The idea behind this was that even if I had got refused by the University of Ottawa, I would have still gone to Canada, at least for a holiday. The cheapest flights in my opinion are flights from Dublin to Ottawa with a layover in St. John's or flights from London to Ottawa with a layover in Toronto, both operated by WestJet.