



2016-2017 Student Mobility/Exchange Program Returning Undergraduate Student Report

Host University: Emily Carr

Host Country: Canada

Faculty/Department at Host Institution:

Semester: Fall 2016

Date of Report: December 21, 2016

1. OVERALL EVALUATION

How would you rate your exchange experience overall?

Poor Excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why did you choose this host institution? What key factors or issues influenced your decision?

I chose Emily Carr because OCAD did not have options outside of Canada and the US to exchange to for the BA program. I didn't want to travel to the US, so I chose between the West coast or NSCAD on the East coast.

Please share a few of your most positive experiences and a few of the biggest challenges you faced.

The positive experiences I had on this exchange were all social events, the people I roomed with, and the people I met through the exchange. We did a lot of road trips, and explored a lot; made great memories that way!

The biggest challenges faced were with both OCAD and Emily Carr's exchange processes, both were stressful because of lack of organization.

Emily Carr's exchange office was slow on responding, the man in charge was rude and only because I sent him over 18 emails did I get into the courses I had organized with my program chair to take. OCAD was very apologetic of all the pitfalls that occurred during the process.

2. PREPARATION

Please describe your preparation for the exchange, including banking, travel documents and student visa application. In retrospect, would you have done anything differently?

I didn't have to do any preparation as I exchanged within Canada; aside from having to find an apartment to live in.

Are there any important items (e.g. art & design supplies, documents, specialty foods, health items) that a student should take to your host country?

Nope.

3. ARRIVAL

Was anyone at the airport, train station, etc. to meet you? Did you experience any difficulties upon arrival?

I have family and friends in British Columbia, so I had a friend waiting at the airport. No difficulties, we had the address of where we were living and punched it in the GPS.

When should students plan to arrive at the host university? When did you arrive? Would you have benefited from arriving earlier?

I arrived 3 days before the semester started, it was fine, it would have been nice to arrive earlier to enjoy some camping and hiking in the dryer weather.

Was there an orientation session offered at your host university? If yes, did you attend and what did you learn?

There was an orientation, it was entirely geared towards the studio students, I felt like it was a waste of my time, we didn't even go in the library. There was administrative information about setting up bank accounts and cell phones, but being that I didn't leave Canada this wasn't pertinent information for us. The woman (who was lovely) was filling in the position as international student service guide and didn't have a lot of answers for some of the questions we had, promised to send out an email, which never happened either.

Is there a coordinating office for international students, including exchange students, at your host university? Is there a staff person you would recommend students approach with their questions?

There is an exchange office, however the office is going through transition so we never actually went to it. The woman who worked with us, was a great and super friendly but was only filling in and will not be the contact in the future. The two heads of the exchange office only showed up for 2 minutes in the orientation then were never heard from again...

4. ACCOMMODATION

Where did you live during your exchange? Were you happy with your accommodation?

I lived about a 20-minute walk from Granville Island with another girl from OCAD, and from my program. We rented from a young guy, who turned out to be a great resource for BC related things and friend.

Did you have any difficulties arranging accommodation yourself? Did the host institution assist you in finding accommodation?

We didn't have any troubles, we looked on Craigslist and then had a skype interview. The host institution has a housing office which was helpful in telling me which websites to use to look for places. I came across this place in August, I wrote about 21 emails out to potential places and only heard one yes back from the guy we rented from.

5. STUDIES AT HOST INSTITUTION

To better understand the similarities and differences between academic studies at OCAD U and at your host university, please comment on the following:

Level of academic difficulty and challenge: Not difficult, not challenging

Time spent in class (# of hours per week): 10 -12

Time spent working on projects outside of class (# of hours per week): 4

Studio-based work: 0

Written assignments: It was all written assignments

Interaction between students and professors: Great, all professors were welcoming and friendly, students were also very friendly. I've heard Emily Carr is a purist art school and maybe not the best choice for a BA student, the students complained about any written assignments and a lot of the curriculum was changed to accommodate less writing.

6. SERVICES

Were there any extracurricular activities/events scheduled for exchange/international students at your host university (cultural visits, trips, workshops, etc.)? Which ones would you recommend?

There were a couple, a comedy night and a bar night, I didn't attend either of them. There was a facebook group for the exchange but it wasn't advertised, or told to me and so we missed the first social event and were only informed about the fb group when we talked with other exchange students. This put us at a big disadvantage as all the students were already making groups and friends before we showed up, it was hard to break into a group.

What were the library and computer facilities like? No assignments required that much research, I never stepped into the library nor the computer rooms. The printing set up is terrible though, and in the end, I just went to Staples to print.

7. COST OF LIVING

How did you prepare yourself financially for your exchange? Did you pay for the experience entirely out of your own savings? Did you receive student or bank loans? Did you apply for / receive any financial awards (scholarships or bursaries)? Did you have help from parents / family / friends?

Student loan from bank, as well as savings from summer jobs.

In general, was the cost of living in your host country higher, lower, or similar to that in Canada? Please explain.

Same.

8. EXPENSES

Exchange rate with host country: 0

Time spent in host country (month/year - month/year): September 2016 – November 2016 /
Yes the semester ended on November 30th.

Would you estimate that you spent more, less, or the same amount as an average, local student attending your host institution?

I spent more, we went out a lot, ate out a lot, travelled a lot.

Please complete the following budget to give other students an idea of what they can expect to spend in the host country.

Basic Expenses in Canadian Dollars:

1. **Tuition and general fees (paid to OCAD U):** \$3000 or so
2. **School supplies:** \$15
3. **Rent or university residence:** \$655 /month = \$1965
4. **Rent-related expenses:**
 - A) **Electricity/Water:** \$0 /month
 - B) **Telephone:** \$0 /month
 - C) **Cable:** \$0 /month
 - D) **Other (specify)** \$0 /month
5. **Groceries or Meal Plan:** \$ /month = \$0
6. **Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.):** \$ /month = \$50
7. **Laundry:** \$ /month = \$1.66 (we had laundry in the house, and bought one bottle of soap that lasted the entire 3 months, split between the two of us)
8. **Transportation:** \$ /month = bus pass was included in student fees
9. **Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.):** \$2000-2500
10. **Travel health insurance:** \$0
11. **Medical expenses in host country:** \$0
12. **Round trip plane ticket:** \$900 some odd
13. **Travel/trips during exchange:** \$2000-2500 (I also counted this in leisure)
14. **Student visa:** \$0
15. **Other expenses (please specify):** \$0

Estimated Total Expenses: \$ 8000-9000

9. ADAPTING TO YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Did you experience any “culture shock” during your exchange? How did you deal with it? Do you have any advice for students on how to adapt to life in your host country?

Nope.

Was there a lot of interaction between local students and exchange/international students? What is the best way to develop friendships with students from your host institution?

There was a small amount of interaction with two students, who were just very friendly. Didn't make any relationships however, always pleasantries.

Best way to make friends... talk to people, invite yourself out, or make plans with them after class.

Did you have any unforeseen problems? Was there anything that you felt was strikingly different from what you expected?

Nope.

10. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Taking an exchange in one's home country is an interesting experience, I would advise students to not overlook the opportunities to learn about the art education that is taking place across the country. However, I would advise considering the school's academics if you are going to focus on liberal arts studies, because it didn't feel like I was attending university (the purist art school comment also applies here). Also, I think that the inspiration that can come from a new culture is much more important than travelling across one's own country.

I don't imagine that when on exchange studies are meant to be the entire focus, and that the experience of living abroad and experiencing a new culture is meant to be just as important. In this scenario school was barely a passing thought some days, and the outdoors took center stage.

I would encourage other students to take an exchange but would also warn them that the processes of doing so aren't easy, and be prepared for some added stress during the winter semester while you apply.

I was also disappointed with OCAD, I went in first year, second semester to talk about wanting to take an exchange, and was told that there would be opportunities outside of North America. That I could consider schools and present them to the exchange office with a course list to potentially attend. When I did this at the beginning of second year I was told this was not how it worked, and was given the list of partner schools. The other disappointing part of this was that the exchange office had poor communicate with the partner schools, and could not give an adequate answer on which schools would work with the BA. When I applied to one in Scotland the response was that they didn't have a program that would work with mine. I feel as though knowing which schools would work for the BA would have given me the opportunity to apply to alternative schools.

Another large challenge was getting information back from OCAD on what the courses would count towards in my program major and minor, that information didn't come until well past the drop dates, so it was a finger cross situation that everything would count appropriately. Of course, it didn't because nothing was smooth in this process and it required a reorganization of my winter term (which I am still dealing with and it is the end of January, I might lose an entire credit because it's past the point I can enter a new course.)

Overall the experience was more stress than it was worth academically.

Please email your report to International Student Services at international@ocadu.ca.