

Exchange Study Programme

Exchange in Acadia University, Canada

CHAN Tsz Na
BENG4-CE, Yr 4

My Blog

Canada is a beautiful place. It has fresh air, a lot of beautiful and breathtaking natural scenery giving people a sense of peace.

I studied in Acadia University for a fall semester. This University is located in Nova Scotia, which is a place that possesses 81 heritage and historical sites and with 7,600 km seacoast. You can hike on coastal trails and sometimes find whales appearing offshore.

My Pre-departure Checklist

- Check whether application for student visa is needed
- Check information of credit transfer
- Check weather and bring suitable clothes
- Buy flight ticket
- Insurance
- Check for pick-up service from the university

Just Arrived...

Though tired, I was excited on the first day. It took me around twenty hours to get to Halifax Airport from Hong Kong. There was pick-up service provided by the university from the airport. Volunteers and drivers were all nice and friendly. We talked in the car and arrived at school after an hour.

With the help of staff, I got to my living place and settled down.

Orientation

Acadia University offered a lot of orientation activities and I joined some of them. I met a lot of international students and made friends with them. These activities were very useful in helping me to get familiar with the new environment.

My Place

The accommodation there was quite nice. I lived in a double room but without a roommate. There were quite a number of vacant rooms. The room was big and warm and was furnished with heater, beds, closets, chairs and working desks. The floor was warm covered with carpet. It was very safe in my dormitory – each floor had a residence assistant and the building was well equipped with electronic security system. We entered by swiping our student ID card.

My First Class

The learning and teaching styles at Acadia University are similar to CityU. They used an online platform called Acorn for course management where students could download notes, make discussions and upload assignments. Professors are nice and welcomed questions and interactions with students during classes.

People I Met

I have made some friends with local students during classes and in some extra-curricular activities. Most of the Canadians I met are friendly and nice.

However, there was one cultural difference that really shocked me. It was their drinking and party culture – nearly 90% of students drank a lot every weekend and got “crazy”. They were literally crazy – some of them broke the wall and destroyed public facilities when they got drunk. There were cases that they needed to go to a hospital. So be mindful during weekends in such an environment and stick with friends whenever you can.

Out of Classroom

There were a lot of extra-curricular activities available for students. Acadia University has an Acadia Athletic Complex which comprises a large gymnasium, a pool, a new fitness center, a group fitness & dance studio, squash & racquetball courts, an indoor walking track, a football field alongside an outdoor walking track, and an arena. Students can enjoy those facilities. I have watched a number of football matches there and ice-skated a few times.

Moreover, apple picking is popular during fall time. The School Union also organized this activity for students.

Goodbye

I missed my new friends very much. But luckily, the provisions of various online and electronic communication channels keep people living in different corners of the world connected. Every moment with them was so treasurable. I will never forget those beautiful moments.

Home Sweet Home

I became more independent after my return. My problem solving skill has improved and I became more confident to face any challenges.

Sharing

Treasure your opportunities. If you never try, you will never know.

Overall Rating

5 out of 5



Exchange in Iowa State University, U.S.

XIE Zhiyao

BENG4-ECE, Yr 3

My Pre-departure Checklist

- Passport, visa
- US dollars or credit card, things for daily use
- Make sure you will get a place to live in when you arrive
- I especially want to mention that if you are already in USA in summer like myself, you need to exit USA and get a new visa for exchange purpose. It took me long to figure out the procedures, so I hope other students will not have similar confusion.

Just Arrived...

I missed the orientation after late arriving because of visa issues. I contacted a local Chinese student to pick me up at the airport, which may be the smallest airport I have ever seen. I was quite tired after the long journey and I really hate jet-lag! Only after check-in, I found that my roommates had switched to other bedrooms. We four students shared one apartment.

I tried to contact one of my roommates, Cooper, before the semester began. I met him later that day. He brought a bunch of guys to have a party in our apartment and got really drunk. I was a bit scared that time, but later on I got to know some of them. Then I found out two of my roommates are American and one is Chinese.

My Place

Iowa State University (ISU) is located in a small town called Ames in Iowa State, which is on the western side of Illinois State. Plenty of orderly maize fields can be observed on the way from Des Moines to Ames. The average age of the town population is 24, typical of a university town. It is a beautiful small place, I thought.

I needed to rely on Amazon a lot there because no big shopping malls can be found in Ames. Personally I was quite satisfied with the house we lived in. That seemed to be the most expensive apartment in Ames, which is quite close to main campus.

There are a lot of bus routes there, which are all free for students. By the way, the moonlight buses running at midnight were extremely useful when I needed to build my circuit in the lab till