

Final report – Exchange in Wolfville, Nova Scotia (Canada)

Spending 10 months abroad to study at a small university in Canada was one of the best decisions I made. I was very skeptical at first, mainly because of all the paperwork and hours that I knew I had to spend preparing for everything. In retrospective, I can certainly say that it was one hundred percent worth it. If you are at a point where you are struggling and debating whether you should do it, listen to me and just do it 😊 If I, as the most unorganized person ever, could manage to apply and get everything done in time, you can do it too!
So go ahead and apply!

To help, I am going to share my experiences here in my final report and tell you why I choose the university I went to, what you should pay attention to and some other helpful things.

My first bit of advice, which I wish someone would have given me ahead of time, is that you **NEED TO APPLY** for an exchange by the International office **APPROXIMATELY 1 YEAR BEFORE YOU ARE PLANNING TO GO**. That is one of the key things and deadlines you need to keep in mind. Once you decide that you want to go, I recommend you make a list of all the documents you need to fill out and the deadlines you need to keep in mind. Once you sent in your application and you have the spot at a university abroad, make sure to keep track of all you have to do before you actually leave. Make sure to check all the dates and deadlines for your university abroad (applying for a room, insurance, choose courses, choose a meal plan,...). It is all manageable, it will just make your life a lot easier if you start soon enough and get an overview of what you must do and when.

Now I want to tell you why I chose the university I went to which is Acadia University in Wolfville, NS (Canada). I looked at a bunch of different universities and mainly looked for courses that I thought were interesting. I mainly had credits left in English so I wanted to find nice English classes that would not be offered at the university of Freiburg and that sounded interesting. Furthermore, I looked at other classes that I just found interesting in other subjects, in my case biology, and found a bunch of cool courses that really sounded like they would be intriguing. Acadia University had both of those, so it was on a very high ranking on my list. I was skeptical at first because I wanted to go to a big city, but I am really glad I chose Acadia, because it was a completely new and different experience to my studies in Freiburg. The small size of both the campus and town led to a lot of nice memories that I don't think I would've made at a bigger university. I am really glad that I chose this university and I would encourage all of you to give it a try if you can – it is worth it.

Acadia University (approx. 3500 students) is in Wolfville, a small 5000 people village one hour outside of Halifax. Despite its small size, the campus has a lot of free things that it offers: various types of sport (HIIT, yoga, spinning,...), varsity games (football, soccer, ice hockey, rugby, lacrosse, frisbee, volleyball, basketball), sports facilities like a gym and a pool, and a bunch of other random free events, from free food to movie nights, Bob Ross paint nights, plating plants and much more. Just go there, be open and try out whatever you can and feel comfortable with.

The huge variety of things the university offers is definitely one of the major things why I would encourage you to choose this university. Besides, there are a bunch of different other events that are

mostly dry (without alcohol) and are done by various groups on campus. Another reason why I would want people to go there is the beautiful nature, not only in and around Wolfville because of its location in the Bay of Fundy with the highest tides in the world, but just Nova Scotia and Canada in general. That brings me to one of the things I did not like about Canada however. It is a HUGE country and you do need a car to get around, especially if you want to go outside of Wolfville. There are buses to Halifax but they leave once a day and are 25 bucks one way. If you want to go to other small cities around Wolfville to go to a bigger store for example, there are buses for like 2,50 a ride – it is still not too easy to get out of Wolfville. That is one major thing I did not enjoy too much. But then again, I found ways to see places. I found friends with cars and took them on trips with me, I took the bus to places for day trips or I took some other exchange students and rented a car with them. There are ways for you to explore and if you want, you can do it.

If you have time and the money, I would also strongly recommend to visit Quebec City during Christmas, and if you have more time, travel around on the east coast – it is worth it.

Having said all of that, I want to explain why I decided to do a full year at Acadia. I had the feeling that 4 months will be a relatively short time to get to know people and start to feel like home. I thought it would be better to have an everyday life, when I spend a long time at this place. And I can confirm that this is true. The second semester started like a normal semester at the University of Freiburg for me. I had my normal group of friends and an everyday life and that is when I really felt like I was at home. I did so many more things with friends in my second semester and I felt like the first semester was mainly about getting to know each other. If you are thinking about going for the full year, I can just say that I am glad I did it and I think it is a good idea to do so. I did a bunch of cool things like learning to snowboard, spent a week on a remote island, party all night in Montreal just because I met people and decided to go abroad. You will make a bunch of friends and everlasting memories. And I know I make it sound like you need to stay the full year but even if you don't it will still be worth it and a once in a lifetime experience I would not want to give back.

I would definitely go to Acadia University again. I hope my text could convince someone to do the work, apply and do a semester abroad, or even two. And maybe one or two of you will decide to check out Canada. It is a beautiful country with a lot of diverse landscape and very nice people. And if you happen to go to Acadia University, go to the waterfront for me and tell the statue of that one guy I said hi :D

All the best for your application.