

# **Acadia University: Fall 2023**

Global Exchange: Final Report

Degree Program in Freiburg: Liberal Arts and Sciences (Life Sciences, B.Sc.)

Classes taken during the exchange in: Biology, Canadian History, Canadian Literature

## **Decision and Application**

Going abroad for an exchange semester was a dream of mine ever since I started studying. I really wanted to go to Canada because it would mean that I could continue taking English-taught classes and avoid communication barriers, while still being in a foreign environment of a culture that I knew practically nothing about. So, in 2022, it was my turn to apply for an exchange for 2023. Now, in all honesty, I have to admit that I realized in early October that the application deadline was already in early November. This left me with not much more than three weeks to organize a TOEFL test, a letter of recommendation from a professor, and to write the various application documents. This included a study proposal (a sort of motivational letter), three short thematic essays, and a list of preferences of host universities. This included a lot of research about the universities I wanted to apply for, since the list of preferences also had to include a list of possible courses at the respective university. It was a lot of work, yes, but luckily, I managed to hustle and get it all done in time. My advice for future students therefore has two sides: of course, try to start a bit earlier... However, if you happen to get into a similar situation, don't let an impending deadline keep you from having the experience of a lifetime. Every single hour spent on your application is absolutely worth it and will give you weeks and weeks at your host university!



*View of the University lawn from the street*

## **Organisation and Communication with Acadia**

Once the International Office notified me that I was accepted for a semester at Acadia, the remaining bureaucracy regarding Acadia was relatively easy and straight-forward. If there were any problems, they were really quick to respond to e-mails. Acadia has its own platforms to handle course selection and student dormitory applications, and it might get a little confusing at times but don't hesitate to ask them for help, as I said they replied really fast and were super helpful. Room selection and course selection starts already quite early in May/June so be prepared – if there are any specific courses you want to get into, they might be full if you wait too long. There is also a “add & drop period” at the beginning of the semester so you can always change your mind and switch. I dropped one of my classes and changed it for another one even after classes had started and that was no problem at all.

## **Arrival in Wolfville**

All exchange students were invited to attend the welcome week that was organized for new students (so mostly first year students). I cannot recommend this enough! They offered an abundance of events – campus tours, a student info fair, a street fair organized by the town of Wolfville, a welcome barbecue on the University lawn, a bus tour for international students... And then there were painting nights, game nights, movie nights, karaoke nights, bonfire nights... I often had to decide between two or more concurrent events! The university really went all the way to give us a great welcome.

## **Studying at Acadia**



*Wolfville waterfront, only a short walk away*

I decided to take four classes instead of a full five-class-schedule. Each of my classes had a lot more assignments throughout the semester than what I know from Freiburg where I often only have one big exam at the end. Instead, at Acadia we had numerous essays, presentations, midterms, quizzes, and tests. And at the end of the semester, there either was no final exam, or it counted no more than 30%. This meant that there was always something to do during the semester and something to work on, and so I was well equipped with four classes. Some of

my friends took five classes but this included language classes or easier / lower-level class, and that way it was also doable too. I guess it depends on the intensity of the classes you want to take! You could also take five classes at first and then you can always withdraw from it before a certain deadline during the semester (for me it was November) if it turns out to be too much.

## **Student residence and meal hall**

I decided to live on campus, and most of the other exchange students did, too. There are also possibilities for private housing in the town surrounding the campus, but it is hard to get into and I would much rather recommend the campus life, anyway! You will get to meet many new people in your residence and benefit from the various residence events. Plus, I enjoyed going to the meal hall and I actually liked the vegetarian food most of the time (although it's of course not Michelin-star worthy to say the least).

I lived in Crowell Tower, and it turned out that many of the other exchange students had chosen this residence building as well. The bathrooms in Crowell Tower had certainly seen better days and could have used a little renovating, but it was fine for me. The people on my floor were very tidy, but I also heard some more unfortunate stories from other levels – I guess you just have to be lucky who



*View from my room (Crowell Tower)*

your floormates are. The single rooms in tower are actually cheaper than the double rooms in other residences, and I can recommend getting a single room because it felt good to have my own personal space after a full day socializing with new people :D I can also recommend going for a higher floor level because the view is amazing. Depending on which room you get, you might even be lucky to get a view of the ocean. On the other side of the building, you will see the most beautiful sunsets (I loved it!). My room was unfortunately also directly next to the elevators, and the walls and doors are so thin that I could hear it going up and down during the night. If you are a light sleeper, you can always look up the floor plan and go for a room further away.

### **Study permit and working**

Since I only stayed in Canada for four months, I didn't need to apply for a study permit or a visa (you only need this if you're staying for longer than six months). Instead, I only needed an electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). This saved me from more paperwork and money, but also meant that I couldn't work in Canada. If that is something you want to do, keep that in mind. The German department was looking for a German tutor while I was there, which I thought might have been fun – unfortunately, I couldn't apply because I didn't have a study permit. But I was on a scholarship from the Baden-Württemberg-Stiftung, which I can also highly recommend applying for! And maybe it's for the best if you're not tied to work during your exchange so that you can freely explore the surrounding area. We did several road trips over the weekend or during Thanksgiving break, for example a tour through the south of the peninsula, which I can also recommend! Good luck with your application and have fun :)

### **Practical Tips: Recommended Apps**



#### Airalo

→ eSim for cheap mobile data abroad

#### ArriveCAN

→ for an “Advance CBSA declaration” that will facilitate your arrival at your first airport in Canada

#### Authenticator

→ used with your Acadia Microsoft account to confirm logins for security reasons

#### Charades!

→ some ice-breaking fun to bond with new friends!

#### Guidebook

→ for the welcome week event schedule

#### Moodle

→ for accessing ACORN, where class materials and assignments and also grades are uploaded

*The walk from Crowell Tower to class*