

Study Program: International Business Administration
Exchange semester: Fall
Academic year: 2018-2019
Host university: University of Victoria
Country: Canada

I General information about the school

- The school and its surroundings
 - o Victoria is a not a big or a small city, it's around the same size as Tilburg. Especially downtown Victoria is cozy and has a lot of shops/restaurants/pubs. The city itself has a lot of hills, it's not as flat as the Netherlands. The city has a few parks, if you want more nature, you can just take the bus to the edges of the city or an hour outside the city and you can find great parks. (Goldstream/Sooke Potholes)
 - o The campus is located in the more eastern part of Victoria. It's around 30 minutes to downtown from the university. Around the university are almost all facilities you need, e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies.
 - o The campus is bigger than the campus you are used to in Tilburg, this is because in Victoria the student housing is partly on campus and the sports facilities are on campus as well. In the middle of the campus is a big grass field with a lot of big trees. This is a very nice scenery, especially during fall. The sunsets from this point are amazing as well, when you're standing in front of the library.
 - o One of the best places to eat if you like good chicken wings is Maude Hunter's Pub. It's located on Shelbourne street. On Wednesdays they are on discount and they are just the best wings you can find. On Mondays Maude Hunter's Pub also has Music Bingo, which is really fun to go to, but I would recommend to have at least one Canadian person with you, as the hit songs are not exactly the same as in the Netherlands.
 - o If you cannot live with some dutch products, like 'hagelslag', 'pepernoten' or real cheese, you should visit 'the Wooden Shoe', it is located on Quadra Street.
 - o You can do a lot of different interesting things in Victoria, this also depends on what you think is interesting. I went on a whale watching tour, I did the 12 bars of Christmas pub crawl, I went up mount Douglas, Ogden point, Sooke potholes and Goldstream are a few things I did/saw.
 - o One of the big differences compared to Tilburg is that almost everyone uses the bus in Victoria, no one bikes. Part of this is because Victoria has a lot of hills and because biking just isn't that normal in Victoria. And People are really kind. Everyone holds the door open for you, you say thank you to the bus driver, if you look lost, people will always help you.
 - o The University of Victoria has 21,500 students, Tilburg University has 13,100 students.

II Practical information

- Information before you left
 - o The application for the University started in April for me, and I got my student number and other information in May. Everything is organized well and you can always mail Uvic with all your questions.
- Visa Procedure and arrival
 - o If you stay longer than 6 months in Canada you need a student visa, if you just stay for the semester, you can just get your ETA and you're fine. It costs maybe 5 euros.

- When I arrived in Canada I just went to the house where I rented my room, nothing special.
- The administration and faculty was well prepared for the arrival of all exchange students. The incoming business exchange students have their own orientation program, which is very well organized.
- Orientation/introduction activities
 - The Gustavson School of Business, the faculty where you belong to if you go to Uvic, organizes its own orientation for all the incoming business exchange students. During this orientation, which takes two days at university, is the change to meet your fellow students and possible friends. During this orientation you get to know everything you need to know about studying at Uvic.
- Housing
 - You have to arrange your own housing, Uvic has its own campus residence, but it's difficult to get a room on campus. Victoria also has private housing, the same as in Tilburg. So you have a Facebook group where people post their rooms. I used the Facebook group and got a room in a house with three very kind Canadian girls, who really became my friends. As Victoria has kind of a housing crisis, it's in general hard to find a room and it's quite pricey. But all the exchange people I met found a room, so in the end it always works out.
 - You should definitely look for a room beforehand. If you start looking once you arrive, it might be too late, as a lot of people are looking for a room.
 - My house was really close to the crossing McKenzie avenue/Shelbourne street, which was a very good area. It has good bus connections and grocery stores where close by.
- Living costs
 - Canada is more expensive than the Netherlands, at the beginning you have to get used to it, but you cannot really help it.
 - I did not receive a grant from Tilburg University or an Erasmus grant. I worked all summer and used my savings.
 - My room costed me €450 a month (680 CAD). This is on the lower side for Victoria. People sometimes pay around 900 CAD. So this is definitely more expensive than in Tilburg.
 - The biggest part of your money will go to housing, food and trips.
 - Housing: €450 per month
 - Food: €200-€300 per month
 - Transport: €100 per semester (I bought the bus pass and basic gym membership together, so I don't know the exact price)
 - Books: €100 (via via I got pdf's of my books, for some other courses, former students advised not to get the book, really depends on your classmates and if you want to buy the books)
 - Miscellaneous: €300
- Academic Calendar
 - The semester starts the first week of September, the Monday will be a holiday because of Labor Day. Your orientation will start before the first week of school, mine was the last Friday and Saturday of August. I arrived a week before, but that was because I wanted to explore the city. I would recommend to arrive at least 2-3 before the orientation to get rid of your jetlag and to arrange last minute household stuff etc.

- My last day of classes was December 5th. The exam period was December 8th till December 22nd, it is possible you have exams on Saturday. But you can have multiple midterms during your semester.
 - You don't have a midterm break, but a 'reading break', which is Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday off. For me it was somewhere in November. In October you will have thanksgiving, which is a long weekend.
- Culture and Language
 - I did not have a big culture shock, but there is definitely a difference between the Netherlands and Canada. The people in Canada are really kind. If you look lost on campus, people will approach you and ask if they can help you, some even walk you to your building. If you're lost, you can also always ask people, they'll help you.
 - Canadians are a bit more indirect than Dutch people, they are always polite. They say thank you to the bus driver and hold the door open for you.
 - Victoria is in the English speaking part of Canada, so you won't have any trouble if you don't speak French.
 - In Canada (the US as well) there are a lot of homeless people on the street, the social security system is worse than in the Netherlands. A lot of those people have an opioid problem, these people are not dangerous or anything, I haven't felt unsafe one moment. It's just something different compared to the Netherlands.
 - In general most things are the same as in the Netherlands and everyone experiences this in a different way. But it's definitely an amazing country.
 - Personal development
 - During an exchange you live for one semester in another country, this is something different than reading about another country in a textbook. Now you really see how people in a different country think and how to work together with them. In the Netherlands, people are more direct, so team assignment discussions are in Canada different and less direct than in the Netherlands. You learn how to look at things from more perspectives, and how to improve this.
 - During your exchange you are on your own in a different country, sometimes when you want to call your parents for their help, they cannot answer because of the time difference. This helps with figuring it out on your own, or ask other people for help. As I lived on my own in Tilburg for two years before my exchange, I knew I could take care of myself, but living in Canada helped me grow up and take care of myself even more.

III Academic Information

- Academic level at host university
 - All courses are in English, the level of English is easy to follow, especially if you are used to your courses in English in Tilburg.
 - The courses are not that difficult, I would say that the academic level is higher in Tilburg. In Victoria the workload is higher, so you have more assignments and you have to attend almost every class. The final grades are divided in more components. For example in Tilburg we have at most, a final exam, a midterm and a team assignment. In Victoria, you can add at least one midterm and a assignment to this.
 - For most courses, participation is also important, so they expect you to be prepared for class and do your readings or homework.
 - In the end, most teachers know your name, so it is more personal than Tilburg.

- Description of courses

Course	Exam	ECTS	Comments
COM 362 - Business and Sustainability	Midterm, individual assignment, team assignment, final exam.	6	Interesting course, good and nice teacher, I would recommend this course.
COM 390 - Canadian Business Environment	4 in class team assignments, attendance, 2 midterms and a final exam.	6	The class was boring, you know already all the theory you get, with exception of specific Canadian examples. Wouldn't recommend this class.
COM 410 - Leadership Strategies	Weekly reading assignments, attendance, personal video and final presentation. No exams.	6	Really enthusiastic and nice teacher. It is an interesting course, which teaches you quite a bit about yourself. It is more work, but I liked the course and think it is worth it.
COM 446 – Investments	Midterm, attendance, two team assignments, final exam.	6	Overlaps partly with the finance courses in Tilburg, but explores stocks and investments in general more than in Tilburg. Okay course to follow, not too difficult not too easy.
ENT 402 – Entrepreneurship and Small Business for the Non-Specialist	Participation, individual assignment and two team assignments.	6	I had an amazing teacher who unfortunately was going to retire at the end of the semester. The course was interesting but the credits for all that go to him. Another group had a different teacher and liked it not at all.

Victoria is a very good place to do a whale watching tour. The best time is the end of august/September. →



← I went on a surfing trip to Tofino. This place is beautiful. This beach is at Cox bay.

→ This is Mystic beach. This is

a beautiful beach located 1,5 h drive out of Victoria. Normally you can sit on a swing, but when I was there, the water level was too high.



← This is a sunset from Waikiki Beach in Hawaii. We went to Hawaii during the reading break. And it is even more beautiful than people say, it's a paradise.

→ This is Waimea Valley on Oahu (Hawaii), where they partly filmed the Hunger games 2.

