

Dear Sir/Madam,

By means of this letter I would like to apply for an exchange to Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. Currently, I am in my second year of International Business Administration and would like to study abroad in the fall semester of year three.

A few years ago, when I decided I wanted to study International Business Administration, I was already enthusiastic about the opportunity to study abroad during the third year. It is something that I am looking forward to for quite some time now. There are multiple reasons why I would like to study abroad. Most important is to experience things from another perspective. During previous travelling experiences, and while studying IBA, I already came in contact with many different cultures and discovered more and more how important culture is. Every culture has its own characteristics and people are highly influenced by their background. I think it is a great opportunity to experience this first hand by studying in another culture for a few months.

Another important feature is the challenge to leave the safe environment in The Netherlands and to go abroad all by yourself. My boyfriend and I went to Australia and New Zealand in 2008/2009 for ten months, thus I have some experience in being away from home for quite a long time. However, going abroad all alone is another challenge. You get the opportunity to increase your personal confidence and independence, improve your intercultural/social skills and make many new friends from all over the world. Improving my language skills is an important aspect for me as well. By living in an English-speaking country for a few months, I think I can increase my level of English. It is very important for me to have a good knowledge of English, because I would like to work in an international environment later in life. My goal is to be able to fluently express myself in English and to become a near-native speaker. On top of that, studying abroad will broaden my academic perspective and enhance my CV, which could give an advantage in my later career.

As mentioned, I prefer to go to an English-speaking country to improve my language skills, which made the decision for a particular country/city a little bit easier. As I already have been to Australia and New Zealand, and I wanted to experience a different culture, my preference is for Canada and England. Although, these are both Western cultures, I think there are differences between the Dutch culture and the Canadian/English culture. For instance, a Dutch student, who already had been on exchange to Canada, told me that Canadian students are more active/competitive in class in comparison with the Dutch students. Or a girl from England, who is currently on exchange in The Netherlands, told me she was really surprised to see girls "dressed up" in jeans when they go out during the evening. In England, girls find it more important to put a lot of effort in their appearance when they go out. These differences are of course not significant, however, I think it is already interesting to see that these differences exist and I am curious what I will encounter on my exchange.

The reason why the universities in Canada are on the first and second place, is because the courses that were offered by both universities in Canada seemed more interesting than that are offered by other universities that I was interested in. I already had in mind what kind of subjects I would like to study and the Canadian universities seemed to meet those requirements the best. I think the courses are quite different from the courses we are used to in The Netherlands and the way of teaching seems more intensive than in Tilburg. This gives me the opportunity to challenge myself academically. The travelling opportunities in Canada are more interesting to me as well. If I am going to be accepted I will plan a period of travelling through the United States and Canada together with my boyfriend during summer.

Queen's University is my first choice. I think both Queen's University and York University offer very interesting courses, which can add value to my degree. Currently, I have a preference for Accounting and would like to explore this field of expertise more intensively. Queen's University offers quite a number of courses in Accounting, even ones that I did not expect to be open for exchange students, for example Environmental Accounting. Another pro for Queen's University is the fact that it offers some courses in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management, one of the things Tilburg University does not offer to IBA students to that extent.

I also looked at other criteria, such as the size of the university city and the location of the university. In this respect Queen's University is very different from York University. I prefer a smaller city and a university that is close to the city centre. Therefore, I think I will feel more 'at home' in Kingston than in Toronto, but this is more or less based on intuition. I have put the University of Exeter on the third place. This is mainly because of the more limited choice of courses in my field of interest (especially in Human Resources) are offered by the University of Exeter in comparison with the Canadian universities.

By now it is probably clear that I really would like to spend my exchange period at Queen's University, but why am I the right person to be going on exchange at that destination? To answer that question I will have to give some insights in who I am and what I do. First of all, I think I will 'fit' quite well in the Canadian culture. Of course, that is based on the things I have read and heard about the country, so I still have to experience if I am right. However, I am ambitious, open-minded and resilient, which I think are advantages in the individualistic culture Canada has. Once I have something in mind I will try my best to achieve this goal. For example, when I was planning my trip to Australia and New Zealand together with a friend, she told me only a few months before departure that she changed her mind about going abroad. Even though this meant that I had to go by myself, I decided to go through with it (in the end things changed again, because my boyfriend accompanied me).

Secondly, I have great interest in other cultures and I am rather flexible in coping with changes/difficulties. I think it is not in my nature to be flexible, but I developed it during my previous travelling experiences, in teamwork and with my work for Asset | FIRST International. I hope to develop the trait of being able to cope with changes/difficulties even further, because I think it is really important in this dynamic world. Probably, not everything will go as planned during my period abroad, but I have learned (and I am eager to learn) to take this as a positive experience.

Lastly, I think I will be a good ambassador for Tilburg University. I am really enthusiastic about my studies in Tilburg and can recommend it to everyone who is interested in International Business. I also think that as a highly motivated student I will be a good representative for Tilburg University.

I hope I have been able to convince you that I am the right student to be sent on exchange to Queen's University.

Kind regards,

---