

York University, Canada

Although the 8 months of the academic year have gone very quickly I am viewing the exchange experience from applying almost 18 months ago and the whole process from then because it has all contributed to my time here and what I have learnt. Overall I know that I can push myself outside of my comfort zone and the accomplishment of my goals only motivates me to take the next step. For example, I am now travelling for a month across Canada and have extended my stay to work over the summer as I am convinced that I can continue to be independent and I would not have found an equivalent job (summer camp for disabled children) at home.



I have become a lot calmer and proactive when issues arise as I can find solutions quickly on my own or reach out for support from others if needed. I was not expecting to interact so much with other international exchanges but those conversations about politics and culture, and the adventures we have had together, have been one of the highlights for me.

The regular assessments in all courses throughout the semester are definitely an adjustment but it encourages you to consistently stay on top of the workload. I feel that I have gained so many more transferable skills in the last year by travelling here, fulfilling documents for both my sending and receiving institutions, and arranging accommodation than I would have if I had not pursued this exchange. The academic content may differ but the variety of assessment styles and module format seem to have been good tests of my adaptability and I am sure I will put that into practise in the future. I have become a lot more independent in my studies too as I lived away from campus and did not share my timetable with a cohort unlike my program at home so I think I will be more prepared for returning into third year studies and beyond in work.

As I am away on a replacement year I am aware that I am missing my cohort's careers and 3rd year discussions so I have been more proactive about research myself and taking up opportunities like work experience in one of the labs on campus here. That placement also made it necessary to juggle my commitments each week with a full course load and commuting. That was particularly challenging at times during the winter but I will have more confidence that I can manage different priorities without compromising in the future. One takeaway from the year abroad is that it has made me aware that I could take up further study or work opportunities and not be limited by their location which is exciting.



I have not come across anyone who has not found their study abroad experience to be worthwhile - whether it is because they have found a country that they want to return to, friends for life, or even just explored other aspects of their subject. For me 'missing' whatever was happening at home and some of the logistical hurdles are completely worth it in return for the adventure and learning curve that it has provided me.