

## Mobility Exchange Questionnaire

### **A) Your program of study (courses, assignments, course format). Add the exact number of class hours per course.**

My exchange program was the Master's in Management (Master 2) Program, which is the English track version of the Programme Grande École. You get to choose your program on exchange, pay close attention to the course sequence and whether you can choose your courses. For any fourth-year students, there are many overlaps for all of GEM's Bachelor programs and the Telfer course sequences, so you will most likely have to do the master's program track. I had five courses throughout my four-month exchange, with the following number of hours associated to the class and studying:

1. Energy Management and Strategy (6 ECTS):
  - a) Class hours = 24 hours
  - b) Total Study hours = 72 hours
2. Social Marketing (6 ECTS):
  - a) Class hours = 24 hours
  - b) Total Study hours = 24 hours
3. Digital Marketing (6 ECTS):
  - a) Class hours = 24
  - b) Total Study hours = 149 (it was not nearly this much in actuality)
4. New Management in Healthcare (6 ECTS):
  - a) Class hours = 24 hours
  - b) Total Study hours = 24 hours
5. Systems thinking for business for society (6 ECTS):
  - a) Class hours = 24 hours
  - b) Total Study hours = 48 hours

Each class that I took was worth 6 ECTS and I had to complete a total of 30 ECTS throughout the four months.

The associated study hours are the ones predicted by GEM; however, this was not the realistic workload that was assigned, it was less. Most of the time your professor gives you time to do your work in class so that you don't have much work to do outside of class hours. This made it much more manageable to travel and enjoy yourself outside of class. My suggestion would be to not worry so much about the class and study hours and focus on your interests in the class topics. Overall, most of my classes required the same amount of studying, regardless of the prediction from the school.

**Program difficulty and workload:** Based on my experience, the difficulty level of GEM was easier than Telfer. The professors are very easy going and most of them give you time to complete assignments or group projects during class. This is nice because then you have more time to ask the professor questions regarding assignments and more free time to travel rather than doing schoolwork all the time.

**B) The timetable (academic calendar, registration dates, orientation, beginning and end of classes, exams, holidays, number of semesters, etc.) Please submit the precise dates so students will know when to book their flights next year.**

- a) Academic calendar: Fall 2023 semester
  - i. **Welcome Sessions**: August 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. **Mandatory integration and orientation meeting**: September 1<sup>st</sup>
  - iii. **Start date**: September 4<sup>th</sup>
  - iv. **Reading week**: October 29<sup>th</sup> – November 4<sup>th</sup>
  - v. **Exam**: I did not have any exams because my courses were all “continuous assessments”

GEM contacts you at the beginning of April (once they receive Telfer's nomination) and request you to apply for one of their programs. The program you choose to study will differ depending on the year you are currently studying at Telfer and your major. For instance, since I am in co-op, I had already completed four years of my degree when I was participating in exchange, which meant I had already done most of the courses in the Bachelor streams, and Telfer doesn't let you take the same course at home and abroad. Therefore, I needed to take the MIM program since the fall semester allows you to choose all electives. I needed to provide GEM a validation letter that I met all the requirements to be a master's student in France (their Bachelor programs are only three years, so if you're fourth year then you're all good). In this case, you send an email to uOttawa and ask them to right an attestation that validates your eligibility for master's.

**C) Procedures to follow upon arrival. List and description of services offered by the International Exchange Office of the host institution. Registration and course selection. Social activities.**

When I arrived in France the first thing is finding the bus from the airport to Grenoble, this is very simple, the bus station is on the right when you walk outside. There are also many helpful people you can ask. When you get to Grenoble it's best if you already have screenshots of what direction to take to get to your apartment, since your data will most likely not be working (unless you get an E-SIM beforehand). I suggest exploring the city in your first few days, as it's nice to have an understanding of your neighbourhood. Although the Welcome Sessions hosted by GEM are not mandatory, I suggest going because they will be very helpful for making friends. Aloha, a student run club, hosts many parties and activities throughout your exchange, they are lots of fun, and I strongly suggest attending them so that you can meet other students (French and international ones).

You register for your classes before arriving in France, so make sure to monitor your emails often. The Student International Integration Group also sends out many valuable newsletters to help you prepare for your exchange.

Within the first month that you are in France make sure to validate your visa and then also submit all the necessary documents to GEM (i.e., insurances, visa, passport copy, and visa validation).

**D) Budget outlining the cost of studying abroad (i.e., airplane tickets, housing, vacation and daily travel costs, textbooks, meals, etc.).**

Before going to France, I really wasn't sure how much I needed, so budgeting is very dependent on your apartment, where you travel, and how much you go out. However, please see some of the estimated expenses that I incurred in the first 2 months (in CAD):

- Plane ticket from Montreal to Lyon (both ways – bought in advance): \$1500
- Bus ticket from Lyon to Grenoble: \$30 (expensive because I bought at the airport, I suggest you buy it beforehand so that it's cheaper)
- Rent per month:  $\$1000 \times 2 + \text{extra fees} = \$2500$  (approx.)
- Visa & France formalities: \$300
- Weekly Groceries:  $\$50 \times 6 = \$300$
- 1-overnight trip to Chamonix: \$250
- 1-day trip to Annecy: \$50
- 1-day trip to Aix-les-bains: \$30
- 2-day trip to Geneva: \$250
- 4-day trip to Lisbon: \$400
- 1-day trip to Lyon: \$30
- Day trip to Château de Vizille: free
- Trips around Grenoble: free
- 1-day trip to Marseille: \$300

I didn't have any costs for my textbooks since none of my classes required them. In terms of meals, I didn't track the amounts I spent on eating out in Grenoble; however, I would predict that on an average night you'd spend about 20-30 euros at a restaurant, or if it's just drinks then about 10 euros.

**E) Application procedures before your arrival (visa deadlines, documents required for visa, course registration, housing deposit, etc.).**

France has a lot of formalities so starting the visa and document collection process early is important. There are quite a few things to prepare in advance and pay close attention to up-to-date deadlines. If you are a Canadian citizen, then you have to apply to the platform “Études en France” (EEF) before applying for your visa. The EEF office can take up to 2 weeks (depending on if it's busy season or not) to get back to you, so you should apply a minimum of two weeks before you want to submit your France visa application. The following dates and procedures are specific to my exchange (included links to website); however, the number of weeks and timelines should be similar for you.

- Program application/registration: April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>
- GEM acceptance letter received: May 30<sup>th</sup>
- Course registration: June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Secure accommodations: beginning-middle of June
  - You should start your search as soon as you know when you receive your school's nomination. If you are going for only one semester it can be difficult to find

housing; however, using platforms such as Studapart, Airbnb, Les Estudines, All Suites, and others will be helpful.

- Etudes en France [EEF](#): submit as soon as you get your GEM acceptance letter (beginning of June) (make sure to fill out the form for “**exchange student**” not the one for doing your entire studies in France)
- [France-Visas](#) application: submit after you get the EEF confirmation form (end of June)
- Book Visa appointment on [VFS Global](#) : after you submit your visa application (end of June)
  - Suggestion: make an account and check the availability for visits as soon as you get your GEM acceptances so that you can plan when to submit your visa application.

The following PRINTED copies of documents were needed for the VFS Global visit:

- VFS Global proof of appointment
- France-Visa application (pdf version given upon submission)
- Copy of passport & copies of all stamps in the passport
- uOttawa student card (front and back)
- Acceptance letter from GEM
- Attestation letter from uOttawa for exchange participation (you have to request this from Telfer)
- Proof of accommodations (not required but helps your application)
- Proof of medical, travel, and repatriation insurance (not required but helps your application)
- Copies of flight itinerary (not required but helps your application)

## **F) Address and description of housing. Cost of housing**

Address: 159 Cours Berriat, 38000, Grenoble, France

Description: this was a two-bedroom apartment within a 10-minute walk to GEM. This apartment was very large in comparison to other student apartments. My roommate and I found this apartment on Airbnb because most of the landlords on Studapart required a minimum 8-month stay. The apartment had two large bedrooms, large bathroom with separate WC for the toilet, a large living room, a dining room, a screened in porch, and a very large kitchen. The overall cost of the apartment was approximately \$4500/person throughout the four months, since it was Airbnb, they calculated the cost by number of days in the month, so overall it was more expensive than conventional apartments. This meant that some months were more expensive than others, and you have to pay for your first month before you arrive in France.

## **G) Other comments or recommendations**

Before departure:

- The earlier you find accommodations and complete the administrative aspects of your exchange, the more enjoyable the exchange will be. I had my visa by early July, which made the process a lot less stressful since I had everything I needed well in advance.

- Do research on the countries/cities you want to visit and the corresponding month you want to travel there – this will make it easier when you get to France. I wouldn't book any trips before going to France, but at least once you're there and you have free weekends, then you'll know where you want to go.
- The process is a lot easier than you'd think, it's just time consuming, as long as you have a place to live, have signed up for courses at GEM, and have your visa, you will be fine. Enjoy every part of the process as much as you can because you will miss it once it's over.
- If French is not your first language, practice a bit before leaving, as there isn't as much English in the Grenoble surrounding area. GEM is a very accessible school when it comes to French and English; however, the business' around GEM are not necessarily the same level of fluency as the school.

#### While on exchange:

- Go to the student events, whether they are at school or they are in the evenings. You will meet a lot of students here
- Be open to meeting people from all over the world, there are so many international students at GEM
- There is a Buddy Program where they pair international students to French students which is a great way to meet locals and other students.
- Practice your French as much as possible, it will be worth it to come back to Canada feeling more comfortable speaking French. Most of the people in Grenoble are very welcoming to non-native French speakers. Every once in a while, a local may make a remark about you not being a France French-speaker, but do not let this discourage you from speaking in French. Almost every time they appreciate you speaking their native language and welcome you. I've had way more positive experiences speaking French with locals than I had ever expected.
- Take the time to travel as much as you can. As an exchange student your schedule is a lot lighter than what we are used to at uOttawa, so you are given many opportunities to travel. If budget permitting, go to the places you've always wanted to visit.

#### **H) Add a description of about five to seven sentences summarizing your experience**

I have only been on exchange for two months (half-way), so I can't speak to my future experiences but to summarize the first two-months, I have had an incredible time. This exchange has not only allowed me to make international friends, experience French culture, but it has also allowed me to experience significant personal growth. You learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, you get used to not knowing people in the room, being spontaneous, discovering new places, and learning what it's like to enjoy being alone. GEM and the student associations (ex: Aloha) do a great job at making students feel welcome, meanwhile giving them the right opportunities to network. I have been waiting my entire undergraduate degree to go on exchange and it has not disappointed. Evidently there are some difficult parts of exchange, you miss your family, friends, normal life; however, this experience has been such a great way to learn more about myself, the future I want, and make connections with people from all around the world. I would recommend

going exchange to any student looking for new experiences, to meet new people, to discover more about themselves, and to travel.