

University of Brighton Exchange

Program of Study

At the University of Brighton, I am studying business within the Business and Law Faculty located in the Moulsecoomb campus. I am only taking three courses which are very manageable. The courses that I am taking are Game Theory, Marketing and Distribution and Happiness in Work and Society. Each course requires two 2-hour classes throughout the week. For the Game Theory and Happiness courses, one class is allocated to a lecture and the other is a seminar where the professor either goes over practice questions or leads interactive class activities. My Marketing class consists of two workshops which are lectures with encouraged contribution from the class. I enjoy this format because it is a light schedule since I have Wednesdays off, and two days of one class and two other days of two classes. This gives me time to explore and enjoy the city while attending field trips or going on small trips.

Game theory is an economic-based course which incorporates simple algebra with some theory and understanding of real-world conflicts. I enjoy the class, and find it easy to follow as long as I review the class notes and do the practice problems. This course requires one exam and one assignment that is due before the Easter break. The professor provides assignment help sessions and gives the class internal due dates which helps students manage their time better.

My marketing course goes over basic marketing theory such as branding, trends, international expansion and supply chains. There are lots of concepts and suggested reading involved in the course which can feel intimidating at times. The marked work consists of an individual paper specific to the marketing industry in a specific country and a group poster for a retail trend. This course is also manageable, but can feel very content-heavy at times.

Lastly, my happiness course is a psychology-based course which goes over the four different levels of happiness with different professors with different research backgrounds which contributes to the subject of happiness. I personally found this course the most interesting since I have taken a similar class and enjoy psychology books. The work was not too demanding as the only marked aspect of the course is an individual paper where there is a lot of freedom in terms of the topics you can explore.

The Timetable

My residence contract ranges from February 1st to June 22nd. I booked a flight to Brighton for February 2nd which most of the exchange students did. Before moving to Brighton, I received an email from the exchange offices to inform me about the orientation details which I recall being February 2nd in the morning, and was asked to confirm the date and general time I would arrive. I replied to tell the offices that I would miss the orientation due to my flight and travel time conflicting with the orientation. Later I received another email rescheduling the orientation for February 5th, the Monday when classes start, because most exchange people were also

traveling that day. So, it is no issue to arrive after the first day of the residence contract, and the exchange offices are very accommodating with individual travel plans. Since the day I arrived was a Friday, I had the weekend to settle in before my classes started on Monday.

The University of Brighton has an Easter break for three weeks. My break started Saturday, March 23rd to Sunday, April 19th. Then classes continue for another four weeks, and after this, end-of-year assignments are due. The exam period ranges from May 27th to June 9th. I only have one exam on the 3rd.

Procedures to Follow Upon Arrival

Upon arrival, I needed to go to a reception desk to retrieve my university card. Prior to leaving for my exchange, I uploaded a photo for the university card, so it was then ready for me when I arrived. At the same time, I gave my passport to the office, so that they could record my information. I did this procedure the day of arrival on a Friday. On Monday, a couple days later, my exchange orientation was scheduled with the other exchange students in my faculty. The orientation consisted of our course leader taking us through a slideshow about the format of courses, marking, and the online system where we receive our course information. She added us to a Microsoft Teams chat just in case we had any questions or concerns. Unfortunately, there were no planned socials from the international offices. Although, during our orientation, our course leader encouraged us to communicate with one another. The other exchange students and I created a group chat to message one another about classes and meeting up. We also ended up having classes together. It is easy to make friends that are in the same exchange program since all of us moved to the same school without knowing one another. In addition, we all live close to each other, and are invited to field trips, so there are lots of opportunities to interact with the other exchange students.

The international office encouraged us to contact them if we had any questions or concerns with settling in. I recall that the offices had support services for us with our studies if we needed help with our academics. After our orientation, I was never sent any emails about any other meetings with our course leader, or any questions with how my exchange was going. So, there is little communication on their part which was not necessary for me as I never had any pressing issues.

To help with meeting new people, myself and some of the exchange students went to a club fair where we found an international students association. We added ourselves to the group chat that the club had to get notified of any socials. Within the first two weeks we attended a social at a pub, and got to meet other international students who were studying at the university full time. This is a good way of expanding your social circle since it can be difficult to make new friends joining the school later in your studies.

Budgeting

When I traveled to Brighton, I took a plane from Montreal since this was the best option to get to the Gatwick airport which is the closest airport to Brighton. I recall this costing under \$500 for only a one-way trip. The train ticket to get from the airport to the train station at the campus where my residence is was around \$10. My residence, in total, cost about \$5 500 which is fairly reasonable. My bus plan for 90 days as a student, for traveling to school and the city costs a little under \$300. I find my grocery bills inexpensive since I chose to mostly shop at cheaper stores. Usually my grocery total is around \$30-\$40 for a week of food. Eating out at restaurants or takeout food can be considered expensive which is not different from Ottawa, in my opinion. Meals can range from \$15-\$30 when eating at a restaurant.

Application Procedures

Fortunately, I did not need to acquire a visa for my stay since I am residing in the UK for less than 6 months without working. This is one of the reasons why I chose to study in the UK as it is easier to prepare in terms of paperwork as well as the adjustment of living with no language barriers. I did need to acquire a standard visitor letter that was sent via email from the university for proof of stay in case the airport requested it or for other reasons such as student discounts only applicable to students studying in the UK. I made sure to print out this copy, along with my proof of residence before I left for the airport customs. I was never asked to present this documentation as I arrived by scanning my passport using the eGates. I would recommend having a copy when traveling to move in if it is requested. Furthermore, I needed to complete a housing induction which was fairly easy to complete as it was online and easy to follow with lots of information presented in documents and videos. I also needed to make a deposit on housing and choose whether to make two separate payments with two due dates for rent or make the payment in full. The deadline was quite tight to pay the deposit, so during this time I recommend being attentive for emails and due dates.

My application to send to the university was simple to complete. I submitted basic information about myself as well as proof of study in English. For enrolling into courses, I was sent a list of courses to choose from then returned a form detailing which ones I was interested in. The University of Ottawa needed to approve my courses which was an easy process of writing a description of the courses. I recall submitting the form to get my courses approved somewhat late as I was only sent the course options later within the preparation processes. I did not encounter any problems with approving or selecting my courses.

Housing

The process of finding housing was quite simple as the University selected the residence I stayed in. I was given a room within the Paddock Fields residence, with my full address being Flat 30A, Room 6 Paddock Fields Halls of Residence, University of Brighton, Village Way, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 9SF. The one concern I did have during the time of situating my living situation before moving in was the time that I received my offer. I expected to be contacted by the mobility offices a couple months before moving in, yet I only got confirmation about a month before. Prior to my confirmation, I messaged the mobility office via email, and I was told not to worry about getting a place to stay as they already have the

residence chosen. This exchange of emails was during the holidays in December, so within their email they mentioned that their offices were closed and that they would get back to me after the break which can be seen as significantly close to the time I moved in for the beginning of February. Although it was not ideal to only get confirmation of my place to stay later on in the process of planning for my semester, the school mobility office was very reassuring with their communication.

I was put in a flat with students who have lived there since the first semester studying a range of subjects and in different levels of education. I was expecting to be put in a flat with other exchange students, but we are dispersed in other flats within the same residence which at the very least, is ideal. I have limited communication with my roommates, but I know that other exchange people have grown close with theirs, which is an easy way of meeting people. I still see my roommates in the kitchen and occasionally talk to them while spending time there. We all have individual rooms with a bathroom composed of a toilet, shower and sink. The aspect of having my own bathroom is very ideal and appreciated. My room also has a desk with lots of counter space, a chair, drawers, a shelf above the desk, a wooden wardrobe closet and a twin bed. Overall, the room is very fitting for my lifestyle.

When moving into my flat, I needed to obtain lots of necessities which is good to plan for the day of moving in. I needed to buy toilet paper, cleaning products, a bed duvet and cover, towels, soap and cooking equipment. From home I brought some wooden cutlery, plates and bed sheets which are other items that are not provided when moving in.

The reception that provides residence services are very friendly and helpful. When I blew a fuse the issue was resolved fairly quickly, about an hour or two in total. They are open to any questions and concerns with living. I personally have not had many issues with my room or flat in general, so I have limited contact with the reception office, but from the interactions I have had, they were all positive.

The cost of living in my residence is what I feel is reasonable and what would be expected in the UK. The total rent is £3,225.43 or \$5538.48 CAD, which I had the option of paying for in increments or accumulative with a mandatory payment required of about \$546.09 CAD.

Other Comments or Recommendations

An important factor to consider within the first week of arriving in Brighton is to figure out a plan for transportation. Since I was put in a residence that is not in the same campus as my classes, and somewhat farther away from the city center, I needed to purchase a bus plan. The bus app is called "Brighton and Hove" and I bought a student citysaver plan. I first purchased the plan for one month, then I purchased the 90 day option, so I would be covered for the rest of my stay. This plan incorporates using the buses in the region of Brighton by scanning your phone when entering the bus. It is important to establish a transportation plan to save money by not purchasing a bus ticket upon entry for every bus ride. The citysaver plan does not include night buses which start at midnight, so if I was ever out at this time, I would just purchase the ticket by scanning my card when I entered the bus. To get the student option, which is cheaper than the

adult one, I submitted proof of attending the University of Brighton for the semester by using the letter I received from the Brighton overseas offices before I arrived in Brighton. There is also a train that goes from my campus to the one where I have classes, but the train services do not provide an efficient plan for students simply wanting to go to classes and to the city occasionally. Bus transportation is more efficient in my opinion.

I also recommend going to the city center where the pier is because it is a unique downtown with lots of cafes, pubs, and lively shops. I have enjoyed exploring with the other exchange students the different places to eat as well as the vintage shops. The beach is also beautiful and has a lively pier which has been getting more crowded with the warmer weather. When I first moved to Brighton in February, the beach and the city were never that populated with people, only on the occasional sunny day. Be prepared for the rainy and windy weather especially in the early months of the winter semester. It is good to have a warm jacket and gloves for the windy days. The climate never gets unbearably cold, but during the evenings when it is windy it can be quite cold.

Description of Experience

My experience of studying abroad has allowed me to gain independence with navigating living alone and figuring out a schedule of exploring, studies, and other daily activities surrounded by new sights and people from all over the world. I have enjoyed learning about the difference of the lifestyle abroad compared to home while meeting exchange people from different places, and enjoying new experiences with them by attending field trips and planning our individual trips. I have also had the opportunity to learn about the different education system in England which heavily relies on fewer marked work, and individualized assignments that seem less structured. I get to broaden my knowledge about the different subjects provided at a new school within different buildings with unique classrooms, and socialize with people in my classes from the country. I have felt welcomed within the school from the friendly staff and have shared conversations about my home as well. I am happy I decided to participate in this unique experience that has helped me grow as a person by becoming independent and enriching myself into a new culture.

