

OUTGOING STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM 2008-2009

Programme IMABS

University Attended HEC Montreal

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

The introduction week was great, at HEC they have an international exchange group called HEChange and they organised a 10 day programme for the 200 exchange students which included activities such as a tour of the city, jetboating, a day at the beach, zip wires and climbing through the forests, bar crawls, meals to meet your buddy and all the exchange people. There was something to do everyday and it was such a nice way to meet all the people and this is where we made the majority of our friends. They also offer as part of the package to pick you up from the airport and a stay in a hotel with all the exchange students for the first 2 days, however I did not do this due to arriving a week earlier, however I heard it was also a good way to get to know people right from the beginning.

In the second semester we also had an introduction week in January to meet all the people coming on exchange for one semester. This was over a few weekends and it was a totally different experience as the weather was much colder so we were able to do snow activities which was a really great experience.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The classes at HEC are really different from Manchester, they are much smaller - around 20-30 people and are really interactive as you get to know the lecturers and all the people in the class. I found there wasn't really a large variety of choice of classes as I was only taking English ones. Most of the courses comprise of mini-tests, group works, mid-terms and final exams which is a lot more work compared to the courses at Manchester, however some of the work is not as difficult. You can definitely travel a lot and still do well in the exams :-)

The Business School is a really social place, it is based in two buildings and one is really modern and new - where most of the classes are held and there are always people to talk to and you end up seeing all your friends everyday and in your classes.

I was also able to take one course learning French which was really useful and helped me when I was around the city.

MBS INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

Everyone in the MBS office were extremely helpful in preparing us for the exchange, many meetings and it was good that we could meet the people who previously attended our universities.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that could have been useful

I would have liked some more information about finding accommodation in Montreal. But the meetings otherwise were so helpful in being able to plan the year and to know what was expected from us.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

The International Office as well as the HEChange committee are really welcoming, we asked them both for advice on finding accommodation and for help with course choices. They also helped in showing us around the business school and gave information sessions about "how to survive the winter".

ACCOMMODATION

Finding accommodation was a bit stressful at first, I was a bit unaware that HEC did not offer halls of residents but they did offer a service called GIA Gestion that place exchange students in apartments around the city. I decided not to go with the company due to the fact that you cannot choose where you live and who you live with as some people were placed in apartments that they were not happy with e.g. with a family or with older working people. But some of my friends who did go with the company found themselves in really nice apartments full of exchange students so they had an awesome time as it was like halls of residents.

On the other hand, my experience was different. I decided to arrive early with another girl from Manchester and we searched for our own place to live for the first few days. We were actually very lucky and found a great private student apartment residents that was in the centre of downtown. The place was brand new and it was only for students so we met a lot of people here when arriving. it also had its own gym, study rooms, and even a cinema. Although it was a great place to live, if I was to search for a place to live again I would have chosen somewhere nearer to HEC as this is where I found most of my friends from exchange to be living, but it wasn't a problem for us as there is a good metro system and busses that leave from the apartment and it takes around 20 minutes to arrive at the school.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Montreal is such an amazing city, it totally exceeded my expectations as I was a little hesitant to begin with. I loved living in the centre of downtown, my apartment was right on the main street with many bars, restaurants and right by the underground city where all the many shopping malls are.

When we first arrived the weather was great, it was summer for about 6 weeks and we were able to make the most of all the activities Montreal had to offer, everything definitely comes to life in the summer and there was always something to do. The winter arrived properly around the beginning of December and the snow was a lot of fun, but this did mean we had to dress for it, I would recommend buying a good coat and snow boots when you arrive here as it is cheaper than the UK and more suited to the Canadian winter. Even though it got very cold at times (some days reached -30 degrees), the city was still great in winter and there were many new experience like being able to skate on the frozen rivers and skiing just outside Montréal in some of the resorts. The university also has its own sports facilities which is free for students and you can participate in many of the activities.

I found that everyone here was really social, although most of my friends were only exchange students but from this I managed to meet and make some of my best friends from all over the world which is a real good opportunity and it widened my cultural experience. Everyone from exchange were really social and we found that we were always organising to go out and take many trips. Montreal is really well located with its own international airport so it's easy to take flights around Canada and the US. We did this and spent time of during the break traveling to Las Vegas, California, Miami, Mexico and there are also busses that can take you for around US\$120 return to New York or Boston which are about 8hours away. There was also time for trips on weekends, so I would recommend taking classes from Mondays to Wednesday if possible so it gives you time for long weekend. I went on trips to places such as Mt Tremblant to ski and to Toronto and Kingston.

The HEChange team also organised an incredible amounts of trips and activities during the whole year. We went on a weekend trip to Quebec city, all travelling together and staying in a big hotel, we also did this with Boston and they arranged the activities in the city too such as to see a Celtics basketball game and a trip to Harvard. The team also took us to many hockey games, to the capital city Ottawa, on numerous nights out to lots of the clubs in Montreal. At the end of each semester they also arranged a final Gala for all exchange students that took place in HEC, these two nights were definitely some of my favourites and it was really nice way to end the exchange.

Overall I found myself really in love with Montreal the more time I spent here, I loved the fact that it is a bilingual city with European and American influences. There are parts of the city that are really French with lots of small bars, restaurants and clubs that are openly inviting and great fun. There is a really tasty Quebecois dish called Poutine that we became great fans of...a definite recommendation. So if you want a city life, with great people and a chance to travel I would say Montreal is a great place to be!

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

An incredible once in a lifetime experience, the best year of my life!
