

Exchange – McGill Sem 1&2 2009/2010
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My exchange at McGill has been a fantastic experience. I arrived in September 2009 with two days to get settled and get over the epic jet lag until my first day of classes at McGill. The first few weeks were a blur of new classes, meeting new people and exploring my beautiful city.

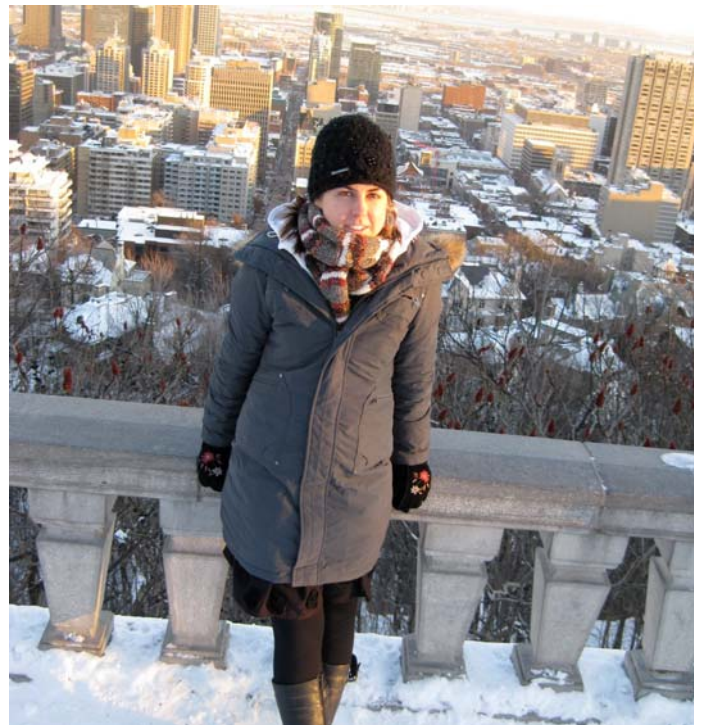
Montreal is an amazing city for an exchange – the McGill campus is downtown and students live everywhere – in the ‘Ghetto’ (the main student neighbourhood, just east of campus), on every downtown street and in the beautiful neighborhoods around town. The French was a little intimidating after the mono-lingualness of Australia - if you want to try to integrate into the city of Montreal, watch for a bit of culture shock! The McGill campus is a little anglo island in the middle of a French city and as a consequence the student life is very active and the community pretty tight knit.



Pumpkin carving for halloween



Fall Leaves



Winter on top of Mont Royal, Montreal

I lived in a little private residence downtown, I had a cool but tiny room and shared my kitchen and bathroom with other students from around Canada and the world. It was in a really great spot, but accommodation situations are varied in Montreal – I had friends who lived with five people in triplexes, others in studio apartments and some in awesome developments with amazing views! I would recommend at least having some options for accommodation before you get here – try Craig’s List, it looks sketchy but everyone uses it!

Studying engineering was great - I became really close friends with my classmates as we had lots of courses together. Most of my friends had a similar experience of moving to Montreal in first year and it was great to hear their stories and advice on all sorts of things – like where to go grocery shopping, the cheapest bars and the best way to fill in weekends without your family!

My classes were generally really good – in my first semester I took two ‘design’ courses which apparently have a heavier workload than I had expected but I didn’t have too much difficulty. In my second semester I took courses without approval from UQ (the semester started in January and I couldn’t reach anyone at UQ), which is causing a few problem now, but I really enjoyed the courses I took as they are not offered at UQ.

I extended my trip four times – I love Montreal and I got a job at a research lab for summer so I decided to stay on as long as I could. Staying for almost 12 months meant I made some really great friends who took me to visit their homes with them. It also allowed me to see a lot of North America – during the year I went to the east coast of Canada (Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) in fall and summer, visiting my other friends on exchange in Chicago, skiing in Banff in winter, travelling to Boston, New York and Washington with my sister in spring, visiting a snowy Quebec City, cross country skiing in the Laurentians, a couple of sunny weekends in Ottawa and Toronto and finally a roadtrip from Calgary to Vancouver and back in summer.



Skiing in Banff



Swimming in the Atlantic in Nova Scotia