

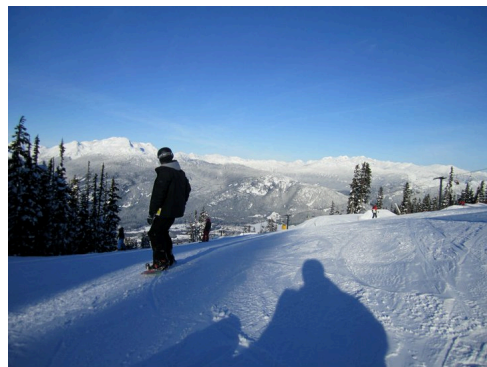
## **University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) – Term 1 (UQ Semester 2), 2010.**

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My decision to go on exchange to study law at the University of British Columbia (UBC) was a relatively easy one. I knew a number of law students, as well as a few family friends, who had either studied at UBC or lived in Vancouver and all had raved about how good it was. This advice didn't disappoint: studying at UBC was an amazing and unforgettable experience. I could write forever about my different experiences abroad during exchange, but I will try to limit it to points that will be useful should you choose to go on exchange to UBC (which you definitely should!). If you need any more convincing or have any questions at all then feel free to email me: [jarrod.jolly@uqconnect.edu.au](mailto:jarrod.jolly@uqconnect.edu.au)

### **Life in Vancouver**

Vancouver is consistently ranked as one of the most “liveable cities” in the world and it is easy to see why. It is a bustling city surrounded by some of the most beautiful natural scenery I've ever experienced. Vancouver is perfectly located for a quick bus trip across the U.S. border to Seattle and an even quicker bus trip to the famous Whistler ski resort (one of the highest rated ski resorts in Northern America and also one that appears to be entirely staffed by Australians). There is a great live music scene and so many unique areas to explore in the city itself. Canadians are also super-friendly people.



### **Student Life at UBC**

UBC has a very active student lifestyle with a large number of students living on campus. From sports matches to concerts and parties, there is always something to do and the students are very involved and proud of their school (university is called school). If you want to see their dedication to “school-spirit”, I recommend checking out the 2011 UBC LipDub (<http://www.ubclipdub.com/>). The UBC campus is also one of the most astounding campuses I have ever been to. There is a lot of emphasis on maintaining the natural beauty of the surrounding areas and the architecture is extraordinary, as are the facilities. The incoming-student exchange program is fantastic and most of the people I became friends with I met there. However, the program is significantly better during the first term (our second semester) intake as that is the start of the year and there is more going on then.

### **Studying Law at UBC**

The law school at UBC is highly respected in Canada and there are a number of incredibly talented and world-renowned professors. The workload was manageable but I did choose four law subjects that were assessed on the basis of one research paper (and sometimes a presentation) for the entirety of the term. The professors were really flexible with topic choices so it was great to spend the term researching and writing on discrete areas of law that were of interest to me. There was also a strong focus on participation as each of the seminars had only about 12 or so students. I found this to be really enjoyable as it actually forced me to engage with the course and I wasn't worried about taking notes for a final exam. It should also be noted that law is a post-graduate course so the number of people studying it is relatively small (at least compared to UQ) and most are a few years older (having completed an undergraduate degree). The course approval and credit process was fairly straightforward.

## Subjects Studied

- International Criminal Law; European Union Law; International Human Rights Law; Cyberspace Law.

## Advice

- Accommodation: Stay in one of the student residencies, you will meet so many people. Unfortunately I stayed in a first-year residence (Totem Park or Place Vanier) where you have your own room but shared bathrooms/showers, a meal plan and a level of supervision that made me feel like I was back in high school. The average age was about 18 and had a very “first-year” culture, which doesn’t work well when your first-year was five years ago. I’d recommend the apartment style housing (Gage or Fairview) – most of my friends stayed here and enjoyed it.
- Weather: It rains a lot in Vancouver. You get used to it but it pays to have a rain-jacket you don’t mind wearing all the time.
- Visas: Studying in Canada for less than six months doesn’t require a visa but if you plan on any travel to the U.S. be sure to thoroughly look at the visa requirements. Without a U.S. visa there is a three-month time limit which, as far the U.S. embassy advised me, starts upon entering anywhere in North America (inc. Canada). Experiences with this seemed to vary so look into it.
- Living Expenses: As a general rule, when the Australian and Canadian dollar was at parity, the essentials seemed to cost approximately the same, if not probably a bit more. Tipping (10%-15%) and the adding of the 12% sales tax is tricky and can cause a nasty surprise at the end of a bill.
- Bars/Cafes: Check out ‘Rogue Bar’ for every type of beer you can imagine and ‘Grounds For Coffee’ for the best cinnamon rolls you will ever taste (better than the ones UBC sells and claims to be best).
- Must Do’s
  - Whistler. Go in Winter *and* Summer (the outdoor activities, like downhill biking, are awesome). If you plan on skiing/boarding for more than four or five days it pays to buy the student season pass (approx. \$500). The campus travel shop also has cheap lift/bus/equipment tickets.
  - Wreck beach. UBC has it’s own clothes-optional hippy beach. It’s an experience to say the least.
  - The Grouse Grind. An exhausting uphill hike of 3KM with an elevation of 853M. It’s a Vancouver institution and the spectacular views make the burning muscles worth it. Be sure to do this before it closes in Winter.
  - A few others – bike ride around Stanley Park; celebrate Thanksgiving and Halloween; go to a frat party with red cups; see a Vancouver Canucks ice-hockey match; and do a weekend trip to Victoria (Vancouver Island).

