



Simon Fraser University Vancouver

2023-2024

PREPARATION
exchange application process
I wanted to study in Canada and quickly landed at SFU, since it's the university on the West Coast, so the weather and nature are nicer there. I looked at their study programme to find what I could apply for there. In my application letter I specifically mentioned which courses seemed interesting to me. I also argued why studying in Vancouver and SFU specifically appealed to me. When I got accepted I had to start applying for courses, which took a while to process after I heard that I got accepted. I also started looking into housing and tried to be as quick as possible with that. It all went pretty smoothly.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The IEO was very helpful with my questions and mailed the university on my behalf when necessary.
academic preparation
I did political science there, which is pretty within my field of study, so I didn't really have to prepare.
language preparation
Vancouver is an English speaking part of Canada. I already had my English Certificate, so I didn't have to do any test beforehand.
finances
The Vancouver area is very expensive. The euro is worth a little more than the Canadian dollar right now, so that helped. But I would advise to save up quite a bit of money if you want to live here for four months and do trips and such. Rent for the student accommodation is roughly the same as in Utrecht. Specifically food, so groceries and going for coffee or dinner are more expensive than in the Netherlands.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Political Science. I did three Political Science courses at SFU. You have to do a minimum of 12 credits per semester, so depending on the courses you could have to do four or even five. I did Identity Politics, Politics of language and Sex, Love & Politics. All courses were 3 rd year courses, so a base understanding of important political concepts was necessary.
academic quality of education activities
This varies per programme at SFU. From what I know, science programmes are pretty on par with the UU. Arts and culture can vary per course, but are good quality past the 1 st year. For political science I found that it was challenging enough that I didn't get bored, but not so hard that I didn't have time to do fun things.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
SFU can be very involved if you want. Professors and TA's are generally very friendly, so you can always e-mail them if you need to. SFU also has mental health support if you need it, so if you need a counsellor that's also possible.
transfer of credits
The transfer of my credits went very smoothly. After I had all my grades after winter break, I got an e-mail that my grades were uploaded and I could send them to the IEO to put in OSIRIS.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

SFU doesn't have that many welcoming activities when you first arrive. In the first week of classes there is a little meet-up with all the exchange students, which was nicely organized, but it was the only activity hosted for exchange students by the university. There is an introduction day for new students, but it's mainly aimed at first-year students new to SFU and university in general.

accommodation

I was in the townhouses on the Burnaby campus. These are spacious accommodations where you live with three roommates. We each had our own room and shared bathrooms in pairs. Downstairs we had a full kitchen and living room. There is a newly renovated dining hall which makes dinner easy if you don't want to cook. Campus is very walkable and it's easy to meet up with people.

leisure & culture

Since most exchange students live on campus, it's easy to meet people. You have to be pro-active, but when you've met a couple people it becomes very easy to do activities together, since you're always close to each other. On the Vancouver Area: British Columbia is a beautiful part of Canada and it doesn't get too cold even in winter! There is gorgeous nature so there are many day-trips and hikes to do. Vancouver and Burnaby are easy-enough to discover and after a while the cities become very familiar. Vancouver has a couple of beaches, so if you don't want to hike up a mountain, you can park up on the shore. There are lots and lots of restaurants and cafés if you like finding new food spots! If you like nightlife Vancouver isn't really the place to be though, clubbing is very expensive and it ends pretty early according to European standards.

suggestions/tips

Apply to housing ASAP: it's first come, first serve, so if you want to live in the townhouses, you have to be early. Try to meet as many people as you can in the first weeks, on campus there is a bar which is the best place to start! Do lots of day trips to the north or to one of the islands of the coast (Banff, Squamish, Bowen Island and Vancouver Island are all gorgeous!)

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes! This part of Canada is very beautiful, so there is always somewhere new to explore. Living on campus also really helps making friends and saves you the stress of trying to find housing in a foreign country. The classes are not too hard, so you don't sacrifice any of the exchange experience for studying inside.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Book flight tickets sooner than later, you can always stay on campus a couple of days before the year starts!

**2022-2023**

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
The exchange application process was not that much! You need to fill in different kind of forms, which are very clear, and most important, you need a certificate of an English test like the TOEFL test. The contact with the Simon Fraser University is very good so if you have any questions, I could easily send them an email and their response was quickly. If you want to live on campus then you also need to apply for this individually on their website, this takes some time as well but is totally worth it!	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
The support at Utrecht University was good. Didn't use them a lot but it was very clear who I had to contact when I had a particular question.	
academic preparation	
I would advise that you make clear for yourself which kind of courses you like in your own study/bachelor. In this way it is easier to make decisions about the courses you want to follow during your exchange program.	
language preparation	
Vancouver is located in the English-speaking part of Canada. You can do some preparations when your English is not that good but to be honest, you learn it very quick when the Exchange is beginning because you must speak the language.	
finances	
Canada is a very expensive country so that is maybe something you need to consider when you want to do your exchange over here. The groceries are more expensive than in the Netherlands and you also pay a lot for drinks in the city itself and other activities. I would advise to stay in residence, which is also quite expensive, but less expensive than when you are living out of residence.	

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
I followed four courses and that was enough and is also the amount I would advise. The study pressure is very high, a lot of assignments and mid-terms in every course, a lot of moments of grading. You will be in contact with one person at SFU, very fast with responding and is willing to help you in every situation which is very nice. They are very helpful in general as well, so if something is not clear you can ask it easily. A tip: you really need to look at your mail regularly when they accepted you at SFU. They send a lot of mails with a lot of important information and to dos.	
academic quality of education activities	
The academic quality of the university is lower than in my own bachelor. I participated in different kind of courses and the general level was easier. Although, the number of assignments and readings made it quite intense so the amount of time spending on your study is the same. SFU makes a lot of time for education activities, you can meet a lot of people here and they truly care about you.	
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	



The support at SFU is amazing! They help you wherever they can, and they are trying their best to make everything work for you. Very approachable, through email but also in person when you are at SFU.

transfer of credits

SFU will send the credits your home university. It is your own responsibility to make sure that your credits will transfer good. You can double the credits of the Canadian system, so 3 credits is 6 credits in the Netherlands.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

SFU had a lot of events in the beginning of the semester. A lot of welcome activities, study-wise but also leisure activities. I met a lot of people during these gatherings, so it is very helpful. It is also nice because you can see what the culture is of the University. In the first weeks there are a lot of people present to help you with your way to the university and other questions.

accommodation

I lived in residence on the Burnaby Mountain, this is where the university is. Living in residence was the best decision! When you apply for housing, you can give your preferences about where you want to live, in what kind of building. SFU is a small community so it is very nice to be in residence because you will meet a lot of people and other exchange students. Don't expect too much of the room haha, it is very basic, and you need to make it cozy yourself if you want that.

leisure & culture

There is so much to do in and around Vancouver, it is amazing! When you are an outdoor person, it is perfect. The nature is incredible and when you go in the fall semester you will experience the summer and the winter. In the summer, September, and October, you can do beautiful hikes and trips to Vancouver Island or other nice places and swim in the nature. At the end of November, the ski-season in Whistler will start which is also amazing. There was not one weekend during my exchange where I didn't do anything. The clubs in Vancouver are not that good but it didn't make it less fun. When you go with a big group you can always make it fun but it is not the most shiny party of the city haha.

suggestions/tips

It is a destination where you can do a lot but if you are not really an outdoor person, I would suggest considering this destination. Also the prices can be a consider point.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

YES! I had the most amazing time, and I would do it again if I could. In general, going on an exchange is unique and you will learn so many things, it is so valuable. I found it amazing that I was living on the other side of the world, with another time zone so I really lived in my world over there. I have seen the most beautiful nature and did so many outdoor activities where I learned a lot of new people. Living in residence gave me also the possibility to build a group with very close friends.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

You will have the time of your life!



2019-2020

PREPARATION
exchange application process
<p>I applied for Simon Fraser University in Vancouver because I loved the idea of studying and living in a country that I for sure would not live in after finishing my studies. As Vancouver is a city, but is surrounded by nature I thought it would be a great option to apply.</p> <p>I was really worried to apply for a university where only one person would be allowed, however, the idea of me being the only person representing USE was more appealing than the fear of not being selected.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I think the counselling in Utrecht was quite well. The study advisors can give you great advise in how to apply and what courses would and would not be the right courses for your study progress.
academic preparation
It was really hard to find the right courses at SFU, because no overlap is allowed. That is why I turned to some business courses, as the business school is well-known. Besides, the courses were really appealing to me.
language preparation
For language I did not have to prepare a lot. As English comes quite natural to me. Also, because our program is taught in English, no proof of English proficiency is needed.
finances
Housing at SFU is quite cheap. Food, however, is really expensive. You are obliged to take the U-pass, which is essentially the same as an OV. You travel for "free" quite far around the city. I did a lot of weekend trips, but i feel like this differs per person. (I would recommend going on every trip possible though, nature is amazing.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>I feel like studies in Canada and The Netherlands differ in the sense that here you have classes for an entire semester. Workload was quite high compared to what I have to do in Utrecht, but it is fully compatible with going on trips during the weekends. My friends and I used to work hard during the week, and then have time off during the weekends.</p> <p>As said before, I found it quite difficult to find econ courses and so I took two business courses. I way preferred those over the econ courses.</p> <p>The courses I took were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BUS 238: a course in which you have to go out in the world. You have to interview people, observe and just look at the world around you. Besides, you had to present quite a lot, which helped me because I did not feel comfortable presenting before. - BUS 272: organizational behavior. You learn everything there is to know how to communicate with others within a company. We had to make a movie which was quite fun. - ECON 362: a course about economics of the natural resources. It was taught a bit vaguely, the exam did not have any overlap with the material covered in the lectures.
academic quality of education activities



In my opinion the quality of education in the Netherlands is better. However, I feel like some of the things I had to do here was something we would never do at home.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

To reach the international office of SFU is a ball-ache, if you are in the Netherlands. I would suggest to make the clearest mail possible, because when I got a reply it was often not what I wanted to know, or only one out of many questions was answered.

However, when I came here I could easily change courses and the office was always open for questions etc.

transfer of credits

It is quite vague how much credits you get per course. At SFU you have 3 and 4 credit courses. These scores are doubled for ECTS at Utrecht. So, quick maths, for a full semester (30 credits) you either need five 3 credit courses, or three 4 credit and one 3 credit course.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome program of SFU is really extensive and fun. I met most my friends in the first few days I was here.

accommodation

I lived in the townhouses, and would highly recommend this. You live in a house with 3 others. The townhouses have a community of their own. You can get to your friends within seconds, and parties were often open to anyone that was around. I had an amazing birthday party at mine.

leisure & culture

The sportsteams are open to anyone, however, most international students choose to go to the gym. The gym is on campus, and open every day. Besides, I took a lot of weekend trips to explore the amazing nature here. We often hired a car so that we could go further than just with public transport.

suggestions/tips

Go on every trip you can, nature is amazing and there are a lot of cool cities around. Think Victoria or Seattle.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes I would for sure recommend this university to others. If you are fully into partying, this may be a bit boring. If you like parties in the livingroom, nature and a sense of community this is the place for you.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

As I said before, apply for a townhouse. That is the way into a nice group of people, all the people I have met live in the townhouses.



2018-2019

PREPARATION
exchange application process
For the exchange application process I had to write a motivation letter and make financial plan. I think that this was helpful to give you an understanding about the costs. There was, at least in my case, no need for an interview with anyone from UU/USE to decide if I could go to SFU.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I would say that the support from UU was good. I had a couple of meeting with a study advisor to discuss the courses that I wanted to take abroad and there was a pre-departure meeting with all other exchange students from USE. Especially this meeting was useful because they told a lot of important things that you need to do before going on exchange.
academic preparation
I do not think that you need to do academic preparation before you will leave to SFU because you will study courses that are economics and business economics courses as well.
language preparation
I did not have any language preparation because my studies at USE are in English as well.
finances
I recommend making the financial plan because it can be quite expense going on exchange. You need to take into account that living expense (such as housing, food, etc) is expensive in Canada. In general, you can make it as expensive as you want with extra trips to neighbouring cities / countries.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
The study programme at SFU can be similar as the courses at USE. However, you need to take into account that you most likely cannot take any business courses at SFU. There needs to be an extra exchange agreement between UU and SFU before any business courses can be taken. I could only take "normal" economics courses. Another point is that there are a limited number of places for every course given at SFU. It can thus be the case that you want to take a course but that it is already full before you can enter.
academic quality of education activities
The quality, especially if you take "300 or 400-level" courses at SFU is similar to USE level.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The support from the international office at SFU is great. There are always willing to help and if you send an email to them you will get a response very quickly.
transfer of credits
For every Canadian credit you obtain you will receive 2 ECTS.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
There was a welcome day and an orientation programme organised by the university but I would say that you meet the most people yourself and not on this a day. For example, if you live in the same house as other exchange students you get to know them better.



accommodation

I would strongly recommend living on campus, especially in Townhouses. Because the main campus of SFU is located in Burnaby on a mountain you have to take the bus to get off campus and it can take some time if you are not located on campus to actually get to the campus.

leisure & culture

The main campus is located in Burnaby and not in Vancouver itself. It takes around 45-50 minutes by bus to get to the city centre but the busses are going frequently. The campus itself is on walking distance from Burnaby mountain which is a nice place to go to. In Vancouver the main thing to see is Stanley Park, where you can rent a bike a cycle around the park. There is as well a lot of nature and mountains that are nice to go to in weekends/ on your day off.

suggestions/tips

I would certainly go see the nature (mountains, see, Stanley park) in Canada because it is quite different than we have here in Europe!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would recommend going to Vancouver/SFU because it is located beautifully. There are lots of things to see and there is a whole different vibe than at USE. If you mainly care about the study programme this might not be the best place to go to because some students I spoke to thought that the courses were less good than at their home university (not bad in any way, just a bit lower quality than they were used to)

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Take hiking shoes with you, I totally forgot them and missed them a lot!



2017-2018

preparation
exchange/placement application process
Easy and clear. Study plan, financial plan and motivation letter.
counselling/support at home university
Not so much. It was hard to choose courses which were accepted by both this University of Utrecht and Simon Fraser University
academic preparation
Not really necessary.
language preparation
My home program is taught in English so no preparation needed.
finances
It is an expensive country to live in (food and rent) so my advice is to save a lot of money before leaving because you will make lots of trips (skiing, surfing, city trips)
study/placement abroad period
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
Lots of programs to choose from
academic quality of education/placement activities
Comparable to Universiteit Utrecht.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
The host institution was really helpful and easy to reach.
transfer of credits
I do not have my grades back yet, so I don't know about this part.
student life
welcome/orientation programme
Really nice exchange welcome day, easy way to meet a lot of exchange students.
accommodation
I stayed in the townhouses on campus. Most exchange students live her so I would definitely recommend staying there.



leisure/culture

Lot of stuff to do. Beautiful nature around Vancouver and it's easy to make some trips to the USA.

suggestions/tips

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

Yes! Vancouver is a really cool city, there is a lot to do. Simon Fraser University is a nice university, lots of international students and lots of opportunities to join a club or sports team.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



2016-2017

preparation	
exchange/placement application process	
<p>The first preparation is obviously choosing which city/university. I would recommend future exchange students to pay attention to the available courses at the exchange university, because that can be a hassle. Also, ask the student desk to get into personal contact with previous exchange students who have been to your city of choice, since they might have relevant insights or recommendations. I personally chose Vancouver, because I talked to many friends/family/others who visited the city and called it one of the most “liveable” cities in the world. Also internet, of course.</p>	
counselling/support at home university	
<p>The support was really good. Andrea Naylor helped me thoroughly with the process of course enrolment, together with the exchange coordinator of Simon Fraser University. It’s important up front to discuss with the board of examiners whether the credits are transferrable etc., so ask Andrea for help if you don’t figure it out yourself.</p>	
academic preparation	
<p>I took an extra 3rd year course in the last period of my 2nd year, because I wasn’t sure I’d get enough credits in Vancouver. In the end I did, but the fact that I didn’t have to worry about that in Vancouver was amazing. I’d recommend that.</p>	
language preparation	
<p>None, English speaking country.</p>	
finances	
<p>Save up a little bit, because it’s going to be more expensive than staying in Utrecht. But I assume you know that.</p>	
study/placement abroad period	
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)	
<p>Again, check carefully if your eligible for certain courses and whether they are at the UU required level. Also, take into account that the country has a different credit system.</p>	
academic quality of education/placement activities	
<p>Different from USE, because there are a lot more contact hours. They really guide you a lot more than in Utrecht, which was surprising to me. That does mean less work outside classes of course. Quality was fine.</p>	
counselling/support at host institution/organisation	
<p>Really nice people in the support staff as well. Everything is aimed at making it as easy and enjoyable for you as possible.</p>	



transfer of credits
One credit in Vancouver is two ECTS.
student life
welcome/orientation programme
Amazing welcome and orientation. Many activities, events, parties, support, new people and trips. Highly recommend
accommodation
Campus accommodation is nice, especially townhouses. You get to know a lot of other exchange students, which is nice.
leisure/culture
Vancouver is amazing for many activities, especially outdoor. Hiking, skiing, camping trips, mountain biking, etc. Also beautiful city, which is very green. People are the nicest in the world (stereotypical Canadians)
suggestions/tips
Go there and find out for yourself. I highly recommend it.
conclusions
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
100%. It will be the best half-year of your studies. Everyone is super friendly and you will have some great experiences. I especially recommend going on weekend trips to national parks and close by cities.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Feel free to contact me, because I'd happily discuss details over coffee.