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## Final Report

Semester Abroad at York University

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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YORK  
UNIVERSITÉ  
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## York University

The York University is Canada's third-largest University with about 51,000 students. Regarding to the area it is Canada's largest University. The "Keele Campus" is York's primary campus located in the district North York. The "Glendon Campus" is with about 2,500 students much smaller.



There is a sizeable population of students from across Canada and abroad, making York one of the most international universities in Canada. And Toronto is one of the most international cities of the world. About 49% of Toronto's population were born outside of Canada. Although the Keele campus is situated on the north-west edge of the city there is a very good infrastructure. There are over 1,000 busses departing from York University every weekday. To get from Keele Campus

downtown it takes you about 40 minutes. You just have to take the bus towards the next Subway station.



### *Living on Campus*

Toronto is not only the largest, but also the most expensive city of Canada. So are also the housing rates not cheap. Since I wanted to experience living on campus, I decided not to take a room off-campus although this would have been be slightly cheaper. York University Housing Office offers all students over 21 years a bachelor apartment. Students under 21 have to share a room. My one-room apartment with bathroom was located in a nineteen-storied apartment building. There are four of these buildings at the south edge of the campus. The rent for the furnished apartment was \$ 720 per month. The apartment was okay but in my mind it was a bit expensive because the furniture was quite old fashioned. The internet is not included at the rent and has to be ordered extra at a fee of \$ 28.25 per month. On the first floor all tenants have the opportunity to do their laundry. The fee is \$ 1.75 to wash your apparel and \$ 1.50 to dry it. So I spent about \$ 80 for laundry during my stay.

I had the possibility to prepare my own meal. Otherwise you could buy your meals or snacks at over 40 restaurants, coffee shops and cafeterias on campus.

Unsurprisingly these fast-food restaurants are also a bit more expensive than downtown. You have the opportunity to use your YorkU student card as a debit card. Then you are able to pay in almost all stores on campus by just swiping your card. That's really useful!

There are a lot of activities you can undertake on campus. From cultural clubs to sports organizations. I joined the York International Buddy program. It's a program for international students. As a new student you are a "Buddy" and you will get a personal "Mentor" who helps you in every department. You meet up every 2 to 3 weeks in your leisure time and undertake various events like snowtubing. At the end of the semester there is a final dinner ceremony.

### *Classes*

I attended 4 classes: Retailing Management, Product Management, Marketing Strategy and E-Marketing. All those classes are for the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Administrative Studies. Although the class type was a lecture, the workload was much heavier than at the AAU. In almost all classes attendance and participation is mandatory. Group projects and individual assignments are also usual components of lectures at York University. The grade consists of at least 5 parts: mid-term and final exam, group projects, group presentations and participation. You could compare it to normal high school in Austria where you have assignments and group projects almost every week.

#### **ADMS4225 Retailing Management (3h/3credits):**

At the beginning this class seemed to be not easy. First I had to get used to the North American retail chain names which were used as examples in the lecture. But at the end I got a pretty good grade for this course. Our group project was to analyze one shopping mall in Toronto as well as one retailer. The report was very comprehensive and comprised about 50 pages. Areas studied in this class included area analysis, design and layout, merchandising and inventory control, retail math,

trends and technology in retailing. There were 2 multiple choice exams with 100 questions each.

**ADMS4235 Product Management: (3h/3credits)**

This class was all about managing new products. In order to pass the exam we had to read the book “Winning at new products” from Robert G. Cooper. This is by the way not a textbook but rather a business book. Our team project was very creative. We had to choose one product which has not been invented yet. Then we had to use the “Stage Gate Model” to run the product through the various stages and gates from idea to launch. The exam was partially multiple choice and partially open answer questions.

**ADMS4250 Marketing Strategy (3h/3credits):**

This was my favourite class although the workload was the heaviest. Before the class started we had to register for the “MarkStrat” software, a Marketing simulation software which offers a practical experience in strategic decision making in marketing and contains all diverse areas of marketing. Our team had to meet up every week after class to decide which actions to undertake for the next round of the game. Our virtual firm was direct competing with the other 4 groups in class. Every week one memo was due which contained a comprehensive listing of all actions. The grade consisted of 19 parts. Both exams were case studies. At the last class we conducted a presentation for our final project: a detailed strategic advertising comparison of two competing products.

**ADMS4245 E-Marketing (3h/3credits):**

We learned how electronic marketing is changing the dynamics of commerce. A huge part of the class was about social media and how firms can use it for their marketing activities. Our group project was to develop an e-marketing plan for a real start-up enterprise. Every group also conducted a presentation of one social media portal. The exam was half multiple choice and half open answer questions.

## *Costs*

To get to Toronto I would suggest departing from Munich. There is a direct flight with Air Canada to Toronto. The flight price depends on the season but should be about 580 Euro for a round-trip ticket. Unfortunately there is no direct bus connection between the Keele campus and Toronto Pearson International Airport. The taxi from Airport to Keele Camps will cost you about \$ 40.

If you want to study at a Canadian University for only one semester you don't need a visa. But you have to pay a mandatory fee amounting \$ 252 for the University Health Insurance Plan.

Toronto's supermarkets seem to have higher prices than Austria's. Especially grocery stores near the campus are quite expensive. There are a few supermarkets which offer food and miscellaneous for slightly cheaper prices (Price Chopper, No Frills). But you have to take into consideration a 5 kilometre walk in order to save a few bucks (I did this once a week). So for groceries you have to calculate approximately \$ 300 to \$ 400 per month depending on your lifestyle.

Regarding costs of studying, I had to buy 3 books and pay one registration fee for the "MarkStrat" software. The books are much more expensive than in Austria. For several classes there are e-books available where you can save up to 50%. So for study material I spent about \$ 380 altogether.

One single ride with the subway will cost you \$ 3. If you buy 5 or 10 TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) tokens at once the price is \$ 2.50 for a single ride. There is no discount for University students (only for high school students). Otherwise you can spend \$ 121 per month for unlimited transportation.

Unfortunately I had no luck with the exchange rate. Since December the Euro dropped over 10% and is currently under 1.30. So at the end of the semester everything got quite expensive. But if you have an exchange rate over 1.60 Canada could indeed be a favourable country.

## *Conclusion*

My semester abroad in Toronto was a valuable experience. I got a great insight into the Canadian culture. Through the proximity to the US border I could also experience the American culture, which is slightly different.

Studying at a Canadian University is somewhat different than in Austria. I would say it's like studying in an Austrian College.

The teamwork in class was great. I met many international students from all over the world and learned about their mindset. Also the quality of the classes was outstanding. It was a mixture of theory and practice. Sometimes a guest speaker came to visit us in class.

Although the York University has over 50,000 students the class sizes are very convenient. (My average class size was 35 students).

In my opinion also the shopping experience is different than in Austria or Germany. Customer service has the highest priority. You were almost ever asked after your wellbeing when you enter a store or you go to the checkout counter. I am still delighted about the friendliness and helpfulness of Canadians.

Concluding I would like to say that I am very grateful for the opportunity studying abroad in Canada. I really enjoyed it!

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.