



IT University Travel Report

Host University: *University of British Columbia*

Study Programme at IT University: *Global Business Informatics*

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: *Study Abroad*

Courses studied abroad:

1. *Business Programming and Analytics*
2. *CIO Strategies*
3. *The Art of the Possible: An Introduction to Engineering for Non-Engineers*

Exchange Period: *Spring, 2022*

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: Annasofie Maria Jørgensen (find me on Facebook), or write to my mail: annjo@itu.dk

The stay abroad



What was it like to study at University of British Columbia (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

University of British Columbia (UBC) is a huge campus. There are 46,322 undergraduate students, whereas 18,232 are international students. UBC is the most international university in North America, and there are students represented from 166 different countries. It means the campus is like a huge city: there is a hospital, fire department, shops, restaurants, student housing, public swimming pool, soccer fields, volley, badminton, basketball, and tennis courts. UBC is ranked among the top public universities in the world (see the different subjects in figure 1), which means it is pretty prestigious to study at UBC. The workload is crazy at times, and you will see students studying to very late at the libraries throughout the term. As an exchange student, you only need to pass the courses, and you should remember this when you are studying there, since a large part of your stay is also about meeting new people and exploring Canada (Canada is huge, so you will not have time to explore all of it).

Agriculture & Forestry	Anatomy & Physiology	Arts & Humanities	Education	Earth & Marine Sciences
Psychology				Engineering – Mineral & Mining
Linguistics				English Language & Literature
Library & Information Management				Environmental Sciences
Social Sciences & Management				Sports-related subjects
	Geographics	Geology	Geography	

Figure 1: Introduction webinar with UBC coordinator

Application process

I applied for UBC through EDU, a Danish agent helping students with applications for studying abroad (so I was a free-mover). They helped me through the whole application process and answered all my questions. I applied together with Caroline Estrup, a fellow GBI student. EDU invited us to an introduction to UBC, where we met an exchange coordinator from UBC who could help us with specific questions.

Applying for courses was not easy and it was very time-consuming. Many courses were already fully booked since we applied in the term 2 (Jan - April). Most of the other students apply for all their courses for both term 1 and 2 before term 1 (Sep-Dec), which means almost all spots were taken, when we applied in October. Therefore, we needed to find around 20-30 courses. It takes a lot of time when you need to check how relevant it is for your studies back home in DK and how it will fit the time schedule. In the end, we managed, and we were offered four courses. I took 37,5 ECTS in the 5th semester at ITU (while writing my bachelor) to avoid being too busy at my exchange stay. It meant that I only needed to take three courses. Caroline and I got the same three courses. One regular course is 3 credits and equals 7,5 ECTS.

Below is the outcome of the pre-approval of credit transfer:

Your application has been **partly approved** by The Credit Transfer and Exemption Committee of the ITU Board of Studies (22,5 ECTS).

The following courses are **approved** to cover Electives (7,5 ECTS each):

- COMM 336: Introduction to Digital Business
- APSC The art of the possible: An introduction to Engineering for Non-engineering
- ENVR 440 Analytical Methods in Sustainability Science
- COGS 200 Introduction to Cognitive Systems
- CPSC 322 Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
- COMM 312 Business Ethics Leadership
- COMM Strategies for responsible Business
- COMM 498 International Business Management
- COMM 337 Business Programming and Analytics
- COMM 388 Design Methods for business Innovations

You must choose 2 of the 10 courses to cover 15 ECTS for Electives.

The following courses are **approved** to cover IT Governance and Quality Management (7,5 ECTS each):

- APSC 440 Management Fundamentals for technology-Based Product Marketing and Development
- COMM 435 CIO strategies
- COMM 438 Management of Information Systems
- COMM 321: Organizational Behavior

The following courses are **not approved** to cover Electives, because they are not relevant for the BSc GBI degree.

- ARBC 101 Beginning Classical and Quranic Arabic
- ENVR 200 Introduction to Environmental Science

The following course is **not approved**, because of overlap with Business Foundations

- COMM 491: Strategic Management

The following course is **not approved**, because of overlap with Enterprise Systems and Information Management

- COMM 335: Information Systems Technology and Development

The academic level and courses

The academic level was almost similar to the level in Denmark in the programming course and in CIO strategies. The engineering course was a bit lower compared to the other courses. The biggest difference between courses at ITU and UBC is the number of hand-ins, tasks, and homework from class to class.

Business programming and Analytics was almost similar to “Introduction to Programming” in the first semester of GBI, we just covered double the amount of content at UBC. The first part of the course was covered in the programming course at ITU, but the last part about machine learning and analytics was new for me. It was challenging, but I learned a lot. There were three individual assignments, two group projects, a midterm, and the final exam. Figure 2 shows how we were assessed throughout the course, and figure 3 shows how we were graded.

ASSESSMENTS	
<i>Summary</i>	
<u>Component</u>	<u>Weight</u>
3 Assignments	15 % (5% each)
2 Group projects	20% (10% each)
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	30%
Class participation	10%
Total	<u>100%</u>

Figure 2: This is how we were graded in Business Programming and Analytics

Percentage (%)	Letter Grade
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
76-79	B+
72-75	B
68-71	B-
64-67	C+
60-63	C
55-59	C-
50-54	D
0-49	F (Fail)

Figure 3: This table indicates the grade you will get regarding the percentage of assessments

CIO strategies was the best course Caroline and I had together. The course aimed to teach us how to be an CIO (Chief Information Officer) – from coping with daily support and crisis to long term relationships with vendors. We had two amazing instructors, who both had many years of experience as an CIO, and they were still working as CIOs. In preparation for each class, we should read two chapters in “The Adventures of an IT leader”, and hand in our own answers to 4-6 questions that was written in the end of each chapter. The book is written in cooperation with business professors, a director and dramaturg and is created with an extended narrative approach. In other words, we learned how to be an CIO through story-telling. It was really fun.

In class, a CIO presented the topic that was related to the chapter we had read for the specific

class and shared the experiences the CIO had. There was a new CIO each class, which meant we got insights into many different industries from a CIO perspective. The last class we had, we should present a cybersecurity case for our two instructors, a CIO from PWC and one from KPMG.



Figure 4: My study group – A student from China, Canada, Kazakhstan, Dubai, and Caroline and I from Denmark

The course was graded as follows:

ASSESSMENTS	
<i>Summary</i>	
<u>Component</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Assignments	40%
Individual contribution to group learning	20%
Project	40%
Total	<u>100%</u>

The Art of the Possible: An Introduction to Engineering for Non-Engineers was very different from the courses I have had on ITU. This course was an introduction course to the engineering field, where we explored the engineering technologies, engineering practices, trade-offs and decision-making, and the impacts on society. The course was split up into five modules:

- Module 1: Introduction to engineering
- Module 2: Energy
- Module 3: Medical diagnostics
- Module 4: Smartphones (consumer products)
- Module 5: Sustainability

After each module we should take a test and write a short essay. Throughout the whole course we should do a project in a group, where we should hand in a Gantt chart, a technical principle, a trade-off, and a 5-minute video as our final product. The final exam was online. At the final exam, we should show the 5-minute video and then we should answer questions from our classmates and our instructors. As part of our grading, we should assess the group members' participation in the group project. The grade was calculated as follows:

	Per module	Total
Tests (4 technical modules)	5%	20%
Assignments (4 technical modules) 8% essay, 2% peer feedback	10%	40%
Final project* (see project doc for breakdown - adjusted by <i>iPeer</i> *)		40%
Total		100%

Social life

Caroline and I lived in Student Housing - Walter Gage at campus, where we had four roomies (two from Canada, one from UK and one from Malaysia). We cooked and hung out a lot with two of the girls. The two others were not that social in the dorm. It was actually common not to talk that much with your roomies. At UBC, they did not have the same culture as you can find in some dorms in Denmark, where you are doing a lot of activities together with your roomies. Walter Gage was trying to improve the culture by setting up different activities in the common areas. It was also challenged by Covid-19 since they still had restrictions in form of wearing masks and the teaching was online in the beginning of the semester.

I was not that social with the exchange students and Canadians as I expected, but I tried as much as it made sense. When the term is only four months, the introduction period was online, and there were not that many official events held by UBC, it was a little bit challenging to meet new

people. I joined a running club, participated in “Storm the Wall”, joined the climbing club and the outdoor club, where I met some international students. I tried to join a football club, but they never called me back. We were a large group of Danes, who did a lot of things together, we were on trips almost every weekend and weekdays as well.





The “locals” were pretty busy studying, and it was more difficult for them to go on longer trips. But we invited the friends we met on our courses and other places to join our activities, and sometimes we were lucky that they had time to join.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

The initial motivation for studying abroad was to broaden my horizon, meet new people, get a new perspective on my degree, improve my English language skills, explore Canada, and enlarge my network. It met my expectations and above. In the beginning it was a little bit difficult because the courses were online, and it was difficult to get “real” friends. But as time was flying, spring was coming, I did not want to go home. I got a lot of friends - it was easier to meet people at campus when the weather was nice and there were more events going on.

It was also challenging to find out what the instructors expected from me in the beginning, but in the end, I found out, and realized that I have learned a lot.

Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

Personally, I have grown a lot. Living in another country so far away challenge you on so many parameters. When you can’t take care of all your relationships from back home, you have a lot of time for yourself, and you can rethink what you want to do in your life. All your daily routines are gone, and you need to make up some new ones. This has made me reflect on how I want to live my life. Working and studying is not everything in life. It has been really nice to try out so many different sport activities (kayaking, hiking, running, yoga, volley, badminton etc.), living on-campus and being close to all your friends, and exploring such a lovely city as Vancouver.

Academically, I have been challenged a bit. It was a very different way to study at UBC. As mentioned earlier the workload was heavier, but I think I learned a lot by making more exercises than I'm used to. Sometimes, there were too many exercises, and the quality of exercises was automatically lower, which is not intentional after my opinion.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:

I applied for a semester in Wellington, New Zealand through ITU, but it got cancelled due to Covid. Instead, I looked for another destination, and found that EDU could help me to Canada. Then the following steps were taken:

1. Contacted EDU and got the needed information to apply for UBC
2. Prepared the documentation that was needed to apply for UBC
3. I sent the application and waited for acceptance.
4. Applied for eTA
5. Paid Tuition (I got a Canadian Bank (Bank of Montreal) to avoid paying too many fees).
6. Called the Go Global Department to get help with housing. After many attempts it paid off.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?

Exchange coordinators and student counsellors were helpful in explaining the process of going abroad and helped me explain potential plan B, C, and D, if the plan did not work out. Furthermore, I talked with students who had been studying in Canada before. I got these connections through friends, and I also texted the person who had made a travel report from UBC at itustudent.itu.dk.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

It was difficult to arrange. We were told that UBC or ITU could not help, but we contacted the Go Global department at UBC, and in the end Caroline and I got offered a room in the same apartment at Walter Gage. We spent a lot of time on finding a place to live – we wanted to live together, which was much more challenging. We joined multiple groups on Facebook, asked our networks, and searched on different websites recommended by the UBC exchange coordinators.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

I have tried to list most of my expenses below. Depending on your spending habits you will either spend more than my total or less. Most likely more. Vancouver is expensive.

- **Tuition Fee:** I took only three courses, corresponding to 22.5 ECTS, which made the term cheaper. As you can see in figure 5, there are a lot of funds and unnecessary things you maybe could avoid paying. I asked, but it was too late for me to avoid paying all the different fees.
- **Housing:** Caroline and I lived on campus in one of the cheapest dorms (17.341 DKK for four months).
- **Transport:** My Compass Card (like Rejsekortet) was included in the tuition fee, so I could use all the public transport for approximately 1000 DKK in four months.
- **Food:** Grocery shopping was expensive – more expensive than in DK. A little bit cheaper to go on restaurants compared to DKK.
- **Dorm, Airbnb, and hotel:** when going on weekend tours, we booked dorms. On Vancouver Island I stayed in Hotels and Airbnbs
- **Events and tours around in Canada** – Bear tour, surfing, snowshoeing, kayaking, fee to national parks, parking
- **Ski:** I went skiing in Whistler for 5 days. I stayed at a dorm, had dinner on restaurants, rented all my skiing gear.
- **Mobile phone:** Fido was my provider, pretty good but expensive compared to DK.

Type of expense	Approximately used
Tuition Fee (22.5 ECTS)	71.310 kr.
Housing	17.341 kr.
Insurance	5.000 kr.
Transport (flights, gas, buses)	12.000 kr.
Food (restaurant and grocery shopping)	18.000 kr.
Dorm, Airbnb, and hotel (Canada)	5.000 kr.
Events and tours around in Canada, Vancouver Island	10.000 kr.
Ski (5 days)	9.000 kr.
Mobile phone (340 kr. Om måneden, 12 GB data)	1.360 kr.
eTA (electronic travel authorization)	37 kr.
Other (laundry, travel gear, furnishing the apartment)	9.000 kr.
EXPENSES IN TOTAL	158.048 kr.
INCOME	
SU	34.398 kr.
Udlandsstipendium	37.000 kr.
Grants	25.000 kr.
Total expenses	96.398 kr.
BORROWING REQUIREMENT	
Expenses	158.048 kr.
Income	96.398 kr.
<u>BORROWING REQUIREMENT IN TOTAL</u>	<u>61.650 kr.</u>

Assessment Details	
Description	Amount
COMM 435 201	\$4,286.94
APSC 366 201	\$4,286.94
COMM 337 201	\$4,286.94
Athletics and Recreation Fee	\$117.72
AMS Membership Fee	\$43.50
AMS Athletics and Intramurals	\$21.00
Bike Kitchen	\$1.13
Student Clubs Benefit Fund	\$1.78
Childcare Bursary Fund	\$1.18
Campus Culture & Performance	\$2.75
CiTR Radio	\$5.91
Student Spaces Fund	\$8.43
IMED Direct Billing	\$10.14
Intl Student Medical Insurance	\$225.00
International Projects Fund	\$0.30
Indigenous Student Fund	\$0.98
Sustainability Projects Fund	\$2.66
AMS/GSS Health & Dental Fee	\$176.42
Ombudperson	\$1.14
Thrift Shop on campus fee	\$0.98
AMS Resource Groups	\$1.78
Sexual Assault Support Fund	\$9.58
Sustainable Food Access Fund	\$0.39
AMS Financial Assistance Fund	\$12.00
Student Legal Fund	\$1.00
SUB Renewal Fee	\$100.00
Ubysey Publication Fee	\$7.09
UPass	\$173.40
Student Refugee Fund	\$5.78
Total	\$13,792.86

Instalment Details		
Description	Amount to Pay	Amount Paid
January Instalment	\$13,792.86	\$13,792.86

Figure 5: Tuition fee, Compass Card + a lot of other stuff

Did you apply for scholarships, and would you recommend any ones in particular?

I applied for approximately 40 scholarships, but it was very difficult to get scholarships. Most of the scholarships for bachelor students are targeted KU students, CBS students or master students. But give it a try, I got two scholarships and they were very needed as you can see on the expenses above. To finance my stay in Canada, I have been working a lot and saving up the needed money. But it was totally worth it. Consider taking SU loans, or apply for exchange in Europe, which is much cheaper.

Recommendations for other students:

If you are considering going abroad – Do it! Money should not hinder you – when graduating it will not be a lot of money, if you get a well-paid job. But be prepared, Canada is very expensive. Think the exchange as an investment of your future and career.