

# IT University Travel Report



**Host University:** University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

**Study Programme at ITU:** Software Development

**Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:** Study Abroad

**Courses studies abroad:**

- COMM 280: Entrepreneurship
- COMM 328: Principles of Organizational Behaviour
- COMM 498: Applied Project Management

**Exchange Period:** 5<sup>th</sup> semester, Autumn 2019

**Contact Information:** [im.christensen@protonmail.com](mailto:im.christensen@protonmail.com)

## My stay abroad

### What was it like to study at UBC?

UBC is a really cool university. It has an incredibly beautiful and huge campus (actually has two, I was in Vancouver, not in Okanagan), which is kind of the opposite of ITU. UBC has a vivid student organization environment with clubs for everyone and every taste. It would be a shame not to take advantage of it while being there, by trying something you have never done before, like joining a dance club, trying kick boxing, poetry slam, you name it.

Studying at UBC is very different from studying at ITU. For me it felt a bit more like a gymnasium than a university. This was due to a couple of different things. First of all, the term "ansvar for egen læring" is not really present at UBC in my opinion. You are told very precisely what to do and have very clear guidelines for everything. Second of all, you are not just graded at your final exam, you are graded throughout the semester. It varies from course to course, but in all my courses, this included a participation grade, which we are not used to from ITU. Third of all, in North America they enter university at least a year earlier than we do in Scandinavia. This combined with the fact that it is not common to take a gap year in Canada, the age average is a couple of years younger than at a Danish university.

With this said, UBC is enormous, and I only had my courses in the business faculty. Other exchange students in other faculties may have had a very different experience.



## **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?**

My expectations to the outcomes I would get from a semester abroad, were centered around personal development, building new friendships and getting a lot of new experiences. All of these were definitely fulfilled.

Academically it was, as mentioned, a very different experience than I am used to. I think this was primarily because I studied business courses instead of computer science courses. Even though I still had very interesting subjects and gained useful knowledge, it is without a doubt the personal outcomes that has been of most value. For me it was giving to challenge myself by moving to another country, where I did not know anybody. It forced me out of my comfort zone, and I have learned a lot about myself and my abilities by doing so.

## **Arranging a semester abroad**

Because UBC is not one of ITU's partner universities, the rest of this travel report will focus on general tips and tricks on how to arrange a study abroad. If you are planning to go to UBC, feel free to contact me with more specific questions.

### **Finding courses**

Finding the right courses is a jungle and it takes a lot of time. Considering that UBC's Vancouver Campus has about 55,000 students, I imagined it would be easy to find the right courses. The fact is it takes a lot of research, and you need to remember to check if the course is offered in the same term you are visiting.

A good idea is to think about a plan B (and maybe even a plan C). For example, get pre-approval on an elective, even though you do not have an elective in the term you are going abroad. This will allow you to move courses around, if you for some reason cannot take one of the subjects you are planning to. Remember when going abroad that ITU will go a long way for you to succeed in getting enough ECTS, so a lot is possible.

### **Applying for scholarships**

It is expensive to go on exchange. I went to a university, where I had to pay tuition, but even if you are on exchange, it is always more expensive than you think it will be. Therefore, it is a good idea to apply for a lot of scholarships. This is also a tedious process and it takes even more time than finding your courses, but every (even small) scholarship is helpful in the end.

When finding scholarships, try to find very specific scholarships to increase your chances. E.g. see if your gymnasium or hometown has one.

## **Finding accommodation**

If you do not get accommodation through your exchange agreement, it can be difficult to find something. This is of course dependant on where you are going. Vancouver was a difficult city to find something affordable in.

I chose to order an AirBnB for the first week or so, and then search for something permanent once I was in Vancouver. It is much easier to find something once you are in the city. Try to find out which platforms are used the most in the city you are going to. In Vancouver it was Craigslist. Be aware of scams though!

## **Recommendations for Other Students**

Go on exchange! It is an experience of a lifetime.