

**Exchange Report**  
**School of Business, University of Alberta, Canada**  
**Winter Semester, 2008**

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**Introduction**

The University of Alberta (U of A) is a public research university located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. It was founded in 1908 by Alexander Cameron Rutherford and Henry Marshall Tory. U of A is widely recognized as one of the top universities in Canada. The university's current enrollment is over 36,000, placing it among the five largest universities in the country. The main campus covers 50 city blocks with over 90 buildings directly across the North Saskatchewan River from downtown Edmonton. Edmonton is the capital of the Alberta. Given the rosy economic conditions in Alberta, it has been suggested that as the University of Alberta enters its second century, it should aim to be one of the top twenty universities in the world by the year 2020.

**Visa Requirement**

If you hold a HKSAR or BNO visa, you are not required to apply for a visa for any studying less than 6 months in Canada. For a study period longer than 6 months, a visa is a must. If you plan to travel to USA, you also need to apply for a USA visa.

To ease the process of entry (for both USA and Canada entry), you are advised to prepare your acceptance letter from the exchange university, your student card and returning flight tickets. One useful tip, polite manner and smiling face are important for easy entry.

**Semester Period**

Fall term, September to December; winter term January to April. U of A also provides summer courses for students. You can check the exact dates on its website. The 2008 winter term was from 7<sup>th</sup> January to 26<sup>th</sup> April. There was a study break in February. The examinations period started on 7<sup>th</sup> April.

**Local Weather**

Winter is very cold and long in Canada. The average weather is around 0 to negative 10 degree Celsius. It snows a lot during winter. The temperature starts to increase to around 8 degree Celsius in April. The summer weather is very good in Edmonton. The whole Edmonton turns to green in summer. Sometimes, the temperature can be as high as 30 degree Celsius.

To prepare for the cold weather, you are advised to bring some good quality coats. Scarf, gloves, thick socks, warm underwear and a pair of thick shoe are very useful for resisting the cold weather. You'd better wear in layers, which enables you to take off some clothes to adjust to the warm in-house temperature (around 18 degree Celsius).

To be frank, it is not as hard as you think to get used to the cold weather. The heating system is very good in Edmonton. You will not feel the cold if you do not stay outside for a long time.

## **Accommodation**

The University of Alberta offers a wide range of residences on its campus. U of A guarantees on-campus residence for exchange students coming in Fall semester. For exchange students, you can choose to live in Lister Center, Hub international and International house.

Lister Center is the main undergraduate residence. It is divided into 4 halls. Around 30 students (male and female) live in the same flat. You can choose to live individually or share with a roommate. Sometimes, there are activities provided for residents. You are required to join the meal plan. Frankly speaking, the food provided in Lister Center is not good. You are advised to choose the minimum amount.

Hub international is an unfurnished residence, which means you need to buy your own furniture. It locates near to the ETS station (main transport in Edmonton) and the main university buildings. You are not advised to choose Hub international as your residence because you may encounter difficulties in buying your furniture though you can buy used furniture from other students.

International house is specially designated for international students. The rental is higher than the other two residences because they only provide individual room with private bathroom. There are lots of activities organized for international students.

The rental depends on the residence and room type that you chosen. You can check the exact rental on its website.

You can also choose to live in off-campus. The rental ranges from CAD 300 to CAN 700. You are not advised to live off-campus because the housing demand is keen in Edmonton. Also, you may miss the opportunity to interact with the local students if you live in off-campus.

If you arrive in Canada earlier than the residence check-in day, you can temporarily live in the Campus Tower or the local hostel (the latter is much cheaper).

## **Orientation and Activities**

The International Center organizes two orientation programs for international students, one in late August and one in early January. Both are free of charge. You can register for the orientation program online before you go to Canada. It is a good chance to meet other international students. They will introduce the coming activities for international students during the orientation. During my stay, they organized skiing tour, movie night, outdoor gathering, hockey-watching, traveling tour and so on.

You are highly recommended to join the English Conversation Group, the Bridge and the peer program organized by the international center.

Also, there is a group called International Students Friendship Group organized by a local Canadian family. You can go to their house for free supper every Friday night and have fun with other international students.

There are lots of interesting clubs for you to join. You can also participate in the activities organized by your residence hall.

Two must-do things in Canada are skiing and watching hockey game.

## **Courses**

Nearly all of the courses are open to exchange students. Sometimes, the department may require you to provide transcript for evidence of courses requirements. For the courses that had been approved by CUHK, please refer to the appendix. The appendix is only for reference, the final approval rests on the relevant department.

You can take up to five courses. You can choose courses from various department as you can meet the course requirement. U of A will send email to inform you of the course registration procedures. The registration period usually starts in late July or August. You can finish your registration through the Beartrack (the system for course registration).

For credit transfer, you can request official transcript through Beartrack after the semester. It is free of charge no matter how many copies you request because it has been included in your tuition fee.

## **Expenditure**

I have not kept track of my expenditure. The estimated total expenditure amount is 100,000, including tuition fee, accommodation fee, travelling fee, meal, textbooks and daily spending. I think my expenditure is a bit too high because I did lots of traveling in Canada and the USA. Some of my friends going to the same university spent about 60,000.

## **Things to Bring**

Laptop

Socket Adapters

Digital Camera

Jackets, Scarf, gloves, thick socks

Textbooks

Formal dressing

Medicine

Stationery

Cell phone

Credit card

## **Final Thought and Reminder**

Canadians are very nice and friendly.

Don't hesitate to contact the staff of U of A if you need help before your departure or during your exchange. They are very helpful and nice.

There are lots of beautiful scenery in Canada and USA. Don't miss the chance.

You are advised to spend more time preparing your exchange and traveling.

Exchange is fun and unforgettable. Don't worry too much. Just pack your luggage and have fun.