



# Student Exchange Program

International Student Services

## Exchange Final Report

### Student Information

Faculty at UVic	Science
Major/Minor	Microbiology
Host University	University of Iceland
Host Country	Iceland
Dates of Exchange	Aug 23-Dec 16

### Overall Exchange Experience

Please Rate your Overall Exchange Experience

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

What was the most rewarding part of your exchange experience? Please outline any highlights.

Having the opportunity to meet and live with people from different cultures, countries, and backgrounds. This was my first time living with other people besides my family, and I was extremely lucky with the people I got to live with. I've had the chance to talk and chat with many people, and I treasure each shared moment we've had.

What was the greatest challenge during your exchange?

The process for student permits with the Directorate of Immigration. I would have liked some additional information that I didn't know but was getting mixed information from different sources as well as delayed responses from the immigration office. As well, I couldn't access my student accounts and school systems/information until I was issued my Icelandic social security number, which is issued by the Directorate of Immigration.

### Travel

Cost of air travel ~\$1550CDN roundtrip (YVR-YYZ-KEF)

Cost of ground transportation (ex. monthly bus pass) 490ISK (~5CDN) for a 75-minute bus ticket

Did host university representatives meet you at the airport? No

Is there easy transportation between the airport and university? Yes

## Orientation

Is there an organized orientation session upon arrival?

Yes

How easy was it to find the info you needed to know upon arrival?

Very easy

What assistance did you receive from your host institution upon arrival?

Orientations, assistance from the Service Desk, assistance from the International Office

## Accommodation

Is on-campus accommodation available? Yes

If yes, did you live on campus? Yes

Would you recommend this to future students? Yes

If you lived off-campus, how did you find housing?

Approximately how much money would you budget per month for living, including accommodation and meals?

\$1200 CDN

## Language Programs

Is there a language program available either before or during the semester?

Yes there are Icelandic courses, as well as an Icelandic Language Diploma program available

Is there an additional cost for the language training?

No, they are credit-based courses

## Academics

Was it possible for you to get all the courses that you wanted?

No, as some classes were overlapping but it's an issue that happens anywhere and everywhere

Please describe the course registration process

I had to review the courses I was interested in and submit my choices to the University of Iceland. They needed to approve my choices and ensure that I have the correct pre-requisites/knowledge to take the course, meet the 30 ECTS exchange requirement, and ensure that 60% of the courses are within my faculty. If they didn't agree with a course or you want to change your course selection after the first few classes, then you would choose a new one but must get approved again.

Describe the manner and quality of instruction at your host university

I thought the teaching quality was great and I really enjoyed learning the material from my instructors but found the expectations on student work very lax and low. This is due to a cultural and societal differences though, which I have talked about with my Icelandic friends and other exchange students. I was also very pleasantly surprised about going on field trips as part of the course material, which I've never gotten at UVic.

What do you feel is the greatest academic benefit you have gained personally from your exchange?

Learning about new study habits and new knowledge from courses I wouldn't be able to take at UVic, such as Icelandic Culture.

## Personal and Cultural Connections

How easy was it to adjust to the local culture? What (if any) cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

I found it very easy to adjust to local culture, but it was a bit difficult to adjust to the cost of living in Iceland, especially groceries. The two cultural differences I found challenging were the bluntness of Icelandic people, and some of their attitudes to meeting new people. This is just the way Icelandic people are, but most of the other students I've met at the university are very welcoming. The parts of Icelandic culture I appreciated were how Icelanders are very proud of their heritage and their ancestry, and how influential their history is on everyday life.

What kinds of cultural, athletic and social activities were available for students at your host institution?

There are a few student clubs, student council, and activities in the gym available for students. However, most exchange students got the best social activities from interacting with each other and going on trips, doing activities together, or just getting together for the day.