

Dalhousie University

Exchange start semester	Autumn semester 2023
Study level	Graduate (Master)
Home faculty at GU	School of Business, Economics and Law
Studies at GU	MSC Economics

Courses during exchange

- Development Microeconomics
- Economic Growth
- Poverty and Inequality
- From Disaster Relief to devel
- Market Design

Main difference compared to studying at GU

The biggest difference is that you take multiple classes at a time. What about the workload? Well that depends. Many of my peers (primarily undergrad students) were spending little to no time on their studies, and they had all the time in the world to travel around and do whatever their heart desired at the time, whereas others like me (graduate student) had about 16 assignments/essays + exams and presentations over a period of 15 weeks. Thus, for me the weekly workload was much more intense with at minimum of 1 assignment due every week. However, I found (like most people I spoke to) that the difficulty of each individual assignment/exam/presentation etc was substantially lower compared to GU and other universities across Europe. Because of this, as long as you are effective and plan your time accordingly, do not let sheer quantity of assignments to discourage you, there will be plenty of time to do fun stuff and you will rarely get "stuck" (my perspective), at least the frequency of getting stuck will be significantly lower compared to GU. Also, classes are GENERALLY much smaller compared to GU, much more interaction with the teacher (if you want) and since you are seeing the same people for 4 months, you develop a much closer relationship with your peers and professors. Also one final WARNING!! Do not address the professor by their first name, their title is professor or prof, nothing else :)

Arrival, orientation and housing

My itinerary was: Gothenburg -> Frankfurt, Frankfurt -> Halifax. During the summer period there are direct flights from Europe to Halifax. However, on your way back one layover in Canada (normally Montreal or Toronto) is required before flying back to Europe. Also, make sure to book a roundtrip ticket and do not buy 2 single trip ticket. I

was unaware of how massive the price difference is between 1 roundtrip ticket (back and forth in one ticket) and 2 single trip tickets so please do not repeat my mistake. "But what if I don't know when my exams will end", well you can access the exam schedule on the Dal website and even if you might be unable to access information about your specific exams, you will get information about the time period under which exams are taking place, so have a look at that!

Nevertheless, my arrival was smooth and without any problems. Halifax has a small airport so clearing customs did not take a lot of time (especially if you are staying for less than 6 months, i.e., no visa required). There are many different ways of getting to Halifax from the airport (bus/shuttle/uber/cab). My recommendation is to take bus 320 which will get you to the "Bridge Terminal" in Dartmouth, and from there you can take a connecting bus to wherever you are staying. The bus ride from the airport to the bridge terminal takes about 40 minutes. You can pay by cash onboard (exact amount required) or purchase a ticket from the app (HFXGO).

Settling in was relatively easy and did not take a lot of time. Halifax is relatively small with logical and easy to follow city clocks which made navigating and exploration very easy. Also, by NA standards Halifax is a very walkable city which I appreciated. If you are ever lost or confused about something, do not (and I repeat) do not hesitate to ask the locals. They are extremely friendly, outgoing and helpful. Dal is hosting multiple information sessions 1 week prior to the beginning of classes (orientation week) with a lot of useful information, I strongly encourage you to attend those sessions. It gives you a lot of valuable information but it is also a great opportunity to meet other exchange students that are just as lost as you are :).

Finances

During my stay (fall 2023), Canada was and had been going through a cost of living crisis. Thus, with price levels at the time and an exchange rate of (on average) 8 CAD/SEK, my expenditures were higher in Halifax compared to Gothenburg. The largest diff was probably rent, I paid about 7300 SEK a month (900 CAD) for my room (everyone I spoke to paid 900 CAD or more, Halifax has a massive shortage of housing, vacancy rate around 1% so make sure to start your search for accommodation ASAP). Groceries, eating out and alcohol was more expensive than back home (maybe about 15-20% more expensive).

Life in a new country/culture

Halifax is a lovely city and Nova Scotia is a beautiful region. There is a lot of pristine, but yet accessible nature in the HRM area (Halifax regional municipality, you will hear that term a lot) that is ready for you to explore! There are tons of bars, clubs, parks and restaurants. As a matter of fact, Halifax has the highest number of bars per capita in Canada so there is much variety and something for everyone. For the University, there is a myriad of different societies/sports and other activities that you can join if you want to. There is also a society for exchange students (albeit they did not organize that many events). If you want to go somewhere in Nova Scotia, I HIGHLY recommend Kejimikujik national park and Cape Breton (two places that you will most certainly hear about). If you want to leave the province, many major international metropolitan areas (New York,

Toronto, Boston, Montreal, Ottawa) etc are just a 2h flight away from Halifax, so go out there and explore if you want to!

Overall exchange experience

It's a net positive for sure! If you are like me and always wanted to experience a stereotypical North American life style (that we have seen so many times in popular culture), Halifax is the place to be! The city is amazing, the people are lovely and Dal is a good university with high academic standards. However, what I personally feel the most satisfied about is the fact that I successfully managed to spend 4 months away from home, across the Atlantic ocean, miles away from my comfort zone! It is a very satisfying feeling and a great source for personal development! Finally, I just want to say that if you are like me, and have/are suffering from anxiety or other mental health problems, please do not let that stop you from chasing your dreams and achieving your goals! While the thought of going abroad is scary, overcoming those scary thoughts is extremely satisfying and I know that you can do it, because I did it! However, if you would need help or want to talk to someone during your stay in Halifax, the University offers a wide range of support for anyone in need (for example there are same-day counseling services if you feel like talking to someone). You will have the time of your life and you will come back as a better version of your self so please go for it, do not hesitate, you can and will do it!!!