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# HEC Montreal

## Winter Semester 2014

## Bonjour! Bienvenue a Montreal!

Montreal will definitely give you once-in-a-lifetime experience that you could ever have. Montreal is one of the cities in Canada where most people speak French. However, the Canadians are more than happy to help when you ask questions and they are able to speak English fluently. Although Montreal is situated in North America, you would feel like you are living in France because most buildings have European architectural style

HEC Montreal is one of the top business schools in the world and they are well-known in Finance courses. We agreed that studying in HEC Montreal has given us opportunities to meet and get to know people from diverse cultures, experience the Canadians' way of life and learn from highly educated international professors and lecturers. We would say that what

we have learned from this exchange semester in HEC Montreal cannot be explained only by this testimonial but you have to go there and experience yourself!

### How to Survive in the First Week

When you arrive in Montreal in winter, everything is white. The roads, the pavements, trees and the roofs are covered with snow. For those people who have never seen snows, this is the place where you can feel the snow and enjoy playing with them. We suggest you to bring down jacket, a pair of gloves, thick socks, a pair of water resistant winter boots, sweaters, earmuffs and tons of turtlenecks from Thailand because such cold weather. The weather in Montreal is not predictable; it can change from clear sky to clouds and rain within an hour. Thus, you should download weather forecast

application on your smartphone, it will keep you updated with the weather. We



would not recommend you to trust the big digits of the temperature that appears on the screen but rather trust the digits indicated what you would actually feel.

You might also want to rest after long flight from Bangkok. Thus, you should get some sleep and get ready for the upcoming activities arranged by HEChange which will be discussed later in activities you can do while living in Canada.





## Transportation

In general, there are two main transportation methods available in Montreal – a metro and a bus.

Of course, you have to get the ticket allowed you to conveniently go around the city which is so-called “OPUS card”. Moreover, this card can be used for both the metro and the bus

However, in a case that you arrived at Montreal a few earlier than the usual period, i.e. before the official session (August in the 1st semester or January in the 2nd semester), there is many options for tickets you can choose. For example, a one-trip ticket and a ten-trip ticket which costs 3 CAD and 25 CAD, respectively. Normally, HEC always provide you with the sufficient information regarding OPUS card registration during the orientation week.

How to get the OPUS card? Of course, you need to have one required document from HEC in addition to your passport, called attestation of OPUS card, provided through HEC en ligne in the Academics section. So, once you have all necessary documents, you just go straight to BERRI UQAM station, STM staffs will process the registration just for proving that your age is below 24.

Talking about fares, there are two main fares. First, the initial one for the card registration costs 15 CAD. Another one is flexible depending on your option that suits for you. That is, if you want one-month unlimited trip or a monthly pass, 47.5 CAD will be cost. To be honest, most exchange students generally purchase a four-month unlimited trip or a four-month pass, so it

means that you have to pay a prepaid charge of 180 CAD but it is so worth to do so. To be cleared on the OPUS card fares, you can explore further in <http://www.stm.info/en>. When you have money in your card, you can use it right away. Noted that the expired date is not related to how long your card can be used. If you want to re-charge your card, it can be done through a ticket machine at every metro station.

A bus schedule is very systematic and shown in every bus stop. In addition, if you would like to check the bus and metro schedule and line, there are three ways you can look for:

- 1) STM application available on iTunes and Google play
- 2) <http://www.stm.info/en>
- 3) at bus and metro station. There are four main metro line – orange, blue, green, and yellow. The main HEC building is located on the blue line at Université-de-Montréal station.



## Accommodation

The group called “Get your place” is responsible for accommodation arrangement for exchange students. It is an Exclusive Offer for Exchange Students, lasted for 5 months.

Anyone who prefers to enter into this contract for staying can access the website to see rooms, offers and to get more information about the reservation process. You can decide which apartment features that are suit for you. Once you reserve it, they will send you an email to confirm your reservation and provide you with all necessary information you need to know before your arrival, approximately two or three months before the semester begins.

- **Apartment features:** It is mostly a kind of houses, followed by rooms as well as studios ; all are fully furnished. Internet Wi-fi is included.
- **Number of people:** Depends on each place ( from 1 up to 8 – all are exchange students)
- **Rental fee:** Prices depend on size and services offered as well as on the neighborhood ( 620 CAD on average). Get your place will directly contact you via email to inform the payment information.
- **Location:** In different neighborhoods of Montreal - mostly near HEC.
- **Initial reservation and payment method:** Via the get your place’s website. Credit card is acceptable, and paypal account is needed. Noted that this is just for the first-time deposits, not the first-month rental fee. However, the website will provide you with the payment process. Don’t worry; it is not that complicated.

**\*\* Note that there is a limited amount of rooms available and it is based on a first come, first serve basis (as soon as the reservation system opens).**

In case that you look for alternative options of residences, you can also access HEC Montreal website, for following up more information on housing.



# How to Prepare for Studying

HEC'S classes can prove to be not as intensive as BBA classes. However, it is not somewhat easy. Courses are offered in three language – English, French, and Spanish. Most accounting courses are generally conducted in French. For course registration, you may take both business courses and language courses. You may check course registration dates through HEC Montreal website.



**\*\* Noted that it is strongly recommend that you register early as possible since registrations are taken on a first come, first served basis!**

The workload requirement for HEC students in a regular program is 15 credits (5 courses) per term for the B.B.A. program. However, exchange students can take a minimum of 12 credits (4 courses). Moreover, you should acknowledge that if you register for a course not written on this list, HEC Montreal will not validate it. You will not be able to attend the course nor be credited for it at Thammasat University. The official course list is available about one month prior to the registration period. here are a few guidelines for you to keep in mind:

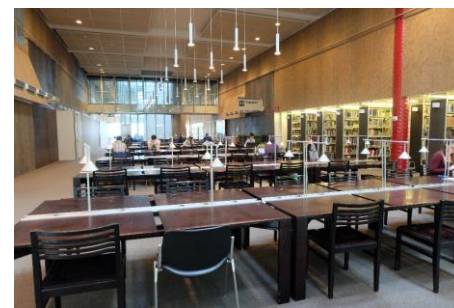
- **Textbooks:** Textbooks here are very expensive. They can be cost you as much as 5 times more expensive than the ones in

Thailand. Noticed that, though, sometimes required textbooks are not really required, so you might buy them without really using them at all. Thus, checking course outlines and asking professor first can be the good way to see whether or not they are mandatory.

- **Handouts:** Handouts are provided in the system, called Zone cours. Sometimes, the professors may send via HEC email system, called SOGO Inbox.
- **Homework / Projects:** Unlike BBA, some courses are endless of tiny, little homework that can be due as frequently as every week. However, projects are far more important as most courses are graded in accordance with percentage of the projects. Also, the projects often require a lot of energetic teamwork. As a result, it is better to find someone reliable as being one of your teammates.
- **Participation:** Participation is crucial along with the projects. Students in classes are always encouraged to express their opinion on every lesson's topic. Students are expected to have interaction in the class. Some courses may have a small case discussion with respect to the today's lessons at the end of each session to see whether students understand, and of course, to check if you participate in that session.
- **Exams:** Degree of hardness depends upon the courses. Normally, the professor will inform you the exam focus areas and what it should be contained in the exam.

**Where to study?** HEC Montreal has two buildings. The main one is called *CSC Building*. Inside this building, there is a one big library located on the second floor. Many students always spend their time to study in

the library. Thus, it is considered as one of the greatest place to concentrate on your study. For us. we always studied in the library for a whole semester. Nonetheless, it is quite so crowded when entering an exam period, so coming to library ASAP is a solution. The closing time is 10 pm and 5 pm in the weekdays and the weekend, respectively.



## Activities

Hechange is a group of HEC Montreal students who volunteer to help the foreign exchange students in school and arrange activities for them. These people are very nice and they always arrange party for exchange students at least once a week. Before we arrived in Montreal, we received an email from Hechange asked if we would like to buy a welcoming activities package. This package includes the ride from airport, a tour to Olympics park, snow tubing, ice-skating and spa. It is up to you whether you would like to join or not. But this would help you to get to know other foreign exchange students and Hechange staff.

**Igloo Fest** is an electro music festival around January in Montreal where people enjoy and dance with the music in extreme cold weather. This event takes place at the Old Port. This is a must-go place, we did enjoy it and we are sure that you will too!



## Explore Canada and USA

There are many attractions in Montreal that you need to cover while living there. We would recommend you to go to Notre-dame Basilica, St. Joseph's Oratory, Old Port, Montreal Biosphere, Olympics Park, Cathédrale Marie-Reine-du-Monde, Biodome, McGill University, Place des Arts and Parc du Mont Royal where you can see the whole city.

Nearby interesting cities would be Quebec City, Ottawa and Toronto. The most important thing to do before leaving Canada is to see the Niagara Falls from Canada. It is said to be more beautiful than looking from USA. We both book the tour, "Vacances Sinorama" in order to travel to these cities. It is cheap and convenient for us.

Moreover, you can travel to the United States of America easily from Montreal. You can choose to travel by plane, train (Amtrak) or bus (Greyhound). You should cover the major cities on the East Coast such as New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC and Florida (for Disney World and Universal Studios).

**So far, our exchange semester has been one of the best life-changing experiences. We gained precious memories, got to know foreign exchange friends and learn a lot from this experience. Thank you BBA Thammasat for this opportunity.**



For more information, please feel free to ask us. We would be more than happy to answer your questions. – Mine & Nae BBA#20