

**Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto**

**Toronto, Canada**

**Student Exchange Summary – Fall Term 2016**

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This exchange summary offers general information about Rotman and the city of Toronto. Also, I hope to show you why Rotman is the best choice you can make in the exchange program.

First, if you are considering whether to join the students' exchange program or not – submit the application. This experience will expose you to other cultures, to different academic methods of teaching and learning and will make you a much better employee. It will also expand your social and professional network immensely, will give you a chance to travel and ultimately meet talented people from all over the world. You can have my word that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity offered by TAU, an experience you will never forget.

**Why Rotman**



(<http://www.educationpost.com.hk>)

Rotman School of Management is a part of University of Toronto (UofT). The university was founded in 1827 and is considered to be one of the best universities in Canada and North America. The campus is in the heart of the city and is beautiful with old and picturesque buildings. It offers 3 different gyms plus swimming pools, sport or travelling activities, subway stations plus many fashion, food or convenient stores within walking distance.

Rotman itself is often referred as the "Ivey league" school in Canada, ranked #1 business school in the country and is well known in North America. The school offers only private graduate programs and the average age of the students is 27-28 years old. You will be joining the second-year students' elective classes.

The school is mostly known for its finance and strategy programs. The graduates are highly sought after in Canadian banks, accounting firms, CPG and consulting companies. Many of them already hold job offers even before graduating.

Having the school highly connected to Toronto's financial district - the third financial center in North America - helps its reputation as one of the best places to study at if you wish to work in the financial services industry. The city's financial district is home to the headquarters of all Canada's big banks and all the international consulting companies have offices in the city. If you're like me and finance is not your forte, the school offers classes in marketing, real estate, organizational behavior and many more. The building of Rotman is brand new with state of the art facilities and is perfectly located in the campus (on the main campus street, walking distance to the subway, restaurants and many more).

In Rotman, the professors and other instructors are very much engaged in their students' lives. They will have conversations with the students and will genuinely care for you and your staying. For example, one professor invited the exchange students in his class for a dinner gala in which he paid a \$1,000 for the table.

### **About the city of Toronto**



By far, the biggest advantage of Rotman is its location in the heart of a big city and in an English-speaking country. You have everything you need 24/7. It is not a rural town built only for students. You don't only get the campus experience, you "experience the city" as well. Toronto was probably the best surprise during the exchange.

Toronto is home to 2.6 million people; however, you will hardly feel it's crowded. The city has an urban landscape with many skyscrapers but you can still find neighborhoods with small town-houses or red bricks buildings. It is very calm, no one pushes you to hurry up and

the Canadian mentality of being polite and smiley still exists. the city is very diverse as it welcomes different cultures and religions. It has a very large and active Jewish and Israeli communities.

Toronto has a great night life and entertainment activities for every person – all kinds of music, every artist performs there, restaurants, coffee shops, retail stores and sport games. During the summer, there are nice beaches and the famous Toronto international film festival (TIFF) while during the winter, you will find free skating rinks, Christmas markets and many more activities. Most important - The city is super safe (even for very cautious girl like me).

The Canadian winter – yes, it's colder than Israel but the city is well prepared for it and the snow is less intimidating than I imagined. At least until January, you should be fine with winter and thermal clothing from Israel. I recommend to join Rotman on the first term as you will experience three seasons - summer, fall and winter. During my stay, I got lucky so I didn't have rainy days but I still experienced 20 cm of snow and (-16<sup>c</sup>) degrees.

As for the cost of living – be prepared to pay more or less as in Tel-Aviv. The prices in restaurants, clubs and bars are lower but the grocery prices are ultimately the same as in Israel. The currency is 1CAD=2.8 NIS (January 2017). How much you will spend in a month depends on you – whether you eat out a lot, go to sports events or theatre shows, travel to other cities etc.

Other costs –

- a. University Health insurance (UHIP): around \$240 for the semester. You will need to purchase it before your arrival.
- b. University books and case packages: \$5-\$120 per class. You can buy them new, used or on e-version. It is possible to get most of the material through “other sources”. Wait until the classes begin so you can split the costs with your peers or copy.

### **Visa issues**

As of 2016, Israelis have to issue an ETA (electronic travel authorization) before entering Canada. You can apply online on [this website](#) and it costs 7\$. The ETA is valid for a number of years or until you reissue a new passport.

As for a student permit, students who come to Canada for less than six months don't need one so I didn't issue it and stayed on a tourist visa. Keep in mind that a student permit might grants you the option to work for up to 20 hours a week inside the campus. I would recommend to check out for more information at your point of contact in Rotman or online.

### **Accommodation**

I stayed with relatives the entire time so the information is based on friends and not on my experience. Rooms in shared apartments can be found for CAD \$680 a month. A studio will cost you around \$1,000 and a one bedroom apartment is no less than \$1,500. I don't think

you have to live within a walking distance to the campus but do try to live close to the subway lines as they are the easiest way to commute.

These are the accommodation options:

- a. On campus - The graduate house is the only option. You'll have a room in a shared 4 bedrooms' apartment but it's one corner from the school, semi-furnished and in a great location in the city. I recommend to apply as early as you can. The waiting list will run fast but only if you're on the first 100 or so. For applying you will pay a \$100 deposit that you can get back if you cancel the application before receiving an offer. Check out all the information here: <http://gradhouse.utoronto.ca/>
- b. Off campus – UofT has a housing department and a portal that connects between landlords and students looking for an accommodation. All the details are here: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hs>  
<https://offcampushousing.utoronto.ca/>
- c. Exchange students- I recommend to email the Canadian outgoing exchange students for a sublet. It's a perfect match. You can also connect with your peers who come for the exchange with you to look for a place together.
- d. Other sources – Airbnb, <http://toronto.en.craigslist.ca>, [www.kijiji.ca](http://www.kijiji.ca) (canada's yad2 for everything, not only apartments), Facebook groups (i.e <https://www.facebook.com/groups/693796237391219/> )

## **Transportation**

Toronto has 4 subway lines, buses, street cars (all part of the same provider – TTC) and train that goes to the suburbs (Go). You can bike in the city as well. The local people of Toronto love to complain about the TTC and its delays, however for me, a public transportation that works 7 days a week around the clock (with night buses) is very efficient. I took a cab/uber only for matters of laziness but not for an actual need. With one ticket (3.25\$ or 3\$ if you buy more than 3 tickets) you can transfer for free between buses, street cars and subway. Students monthly pass costs \$116. For your convenience, rent a place within the borders of the 2 main subway lines (1-yellow and 2-green). As mentioned before, Uber is also a popular way of transportation in the city.

## **Classes**

Elective classes contain between 30-60 students and usually run for 2 hours. In most classes, you will be required to participate, to present and/or to submit written assignments. For flexibility, the same classes are offered in different hours of the day. I took four classes:

Top manager's perspective / prof. David Beaty

One of the most popular classes in Rotman. The goal of the class is to teach you how to think like a manager and how to present to the board. I am confident the concepts I learned in that class will go with me a long way. In addition to the two hours in class, you will meet every week with a senior persona in Canada – from BMO's chairman of the board to the

founder of "Four Seasons" hotels' chain. This is a great chance for networking and to hear about actual dilemmas and conflicts from the manager's point of view. Prof. Beaty is a very connected man to every big company or organization in Canada and holds a lot of experience as a board member.

#### Marketing strategy / Sam cukierman

The class teaches how to create a full strategy for a new product where no information exists and how is the marketing strategy a part of the organizational decision-making process. Sam is an experienced VP of marketing in big firms and banks.

I found the cases a bit old, however, Sam has a lot of experience and he is very into helping his students even after class in job searching. The class can be practical, fosters creativity and can teach you how to think strategically when you build a marketing plan.

#### Strategic networks / Bill McEvily

That class talks about how networks are formed, the social dynamics upon which they are based and the benefits and tradeoffs in networks. Also, you will learn the basic principles of networking. students will gain valuable insights into how to manage their own professional networks and how to leverage organizational networks to achieve strategic outcomes. It's an intensive class that runs for only 2 weekends. An easy and interesting class but sadly, I think the principles don't apply to the Israeli behavior.

#### Entrepreneurship/ Prof. Becky Reuber

The class imitates how to be an entrepreneur – from developing your venture idea, to form groups up to pitching and presenting your business plan in front of investors. You will research the market, prepare marketing and launch plans and develop financial projections. As Israelis who are very much familiar with startups and the high-tech industry, you will find that class a bit basic, not oriented toward innovation and mostly focuses on brick and mortar businesses. I didn't like the prof. as well. The only advantage I found in that class is that you learn how to develop a whole business plan before approaching an investor.

Rotman also offers clubs such as finance, risk management, negotiation and even wine tasting. You can join them by paying a fee, but ask for a discount as you are only there for one term. I was a member of the consulting and marketing clubs and have been in breakfast at the companies' offices and participated in case competitions.

UofT also offers for free off-academic classes such as improving your presentation or conversation skills or different cultural classes (dance etc.). find it in [ELWS](#) / [CIE](#). Rotman grants you access to the career center in which you can re-write your resume, learn how to write cover letters or apply for jobs.

I took the minimum of four classes without taking any of the off-academic classes. I preferred to focus on social activities and traveling however, I do recommend to take one of the off-academic courses.

### **Overall Experience**

Lastly, I have to say that Rotman will be the best choice for an exchange and I can assure you that this is a decision you will not regret – the school is considered to be very prestigious and its academic level is very high. The students and staff are all very welcoming and helpful. Unlike other schools, you will not find competition among the students. We, the exchange students, assimilated in the school - academically and socially – so that no one could tell we weren't regular registered students. The school offers a lot of social activities for you to participate in –

- Topsy Tuesday – a weekly get together at a bar
- O-camp – a three days' camp in the country side with the first-year students just before the year begins. The second-year students are the staff so you can mingle with them as well. This is a chance to make lots of new friends and to experience the Canadian culture (water sport, group games and parties). I had a lot of fun there.
- Holiday and miscellaneous parties – the school and the students' council offer many events during the term (a party for 2<sup>nd</sup> year only, semi-formal, Halloween dodgeball). You can also participate in the school sports' teams.

Go out, live the city – eventually the exchange period is mostly a chance to enjoy, so find the balance between life and school. The workload is heavier than in TAU, however, I guarantee you will mostly remember the friends you've made, the trips you've gone to and the city. Canada and the US offer so many travel destinations during the weekends so use it. You can also rent a cottage outside the city or in the state's parks.

be active and get to know your other exchange students (I, for example, opened a Whatsapp group and organized a picnic so we became friends very fast).

For more questions, information, recommendations or stories - don't hesitate to contact me

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