



CONCORDIA CONTACTS

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Tel.: 514-848-3717 (to report after-hour emergencies while abroad)

Directory of Faculty and Staff

concordia.ca/directories.html



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Concordia Student Exchange Program!

Now that you have secured a place in the exchange program, you will need to take care of a few things in order to make your international experience a rewarding one. In order for your program to be successful, you must begin preparing for it well before your departure date! This guide covers academic and practical information related to pre-departure preparations, your time abroad, and your return to Canada. It is also a great traveling companion, and you are encouraged to keep it handy for consultation throughout your exchange. You can also find an electronic copy of this guide on our website: concordia.ca/cu-international.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The information provided in this guide is by no means a complete checklist of things to do prior to departure. It is the responsibility of the student to familiarize themselves with the particularities of the country of destination, the host institution, and academic requirements.

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A. ACADEMIC MATTERS

General Information

- You are responsible for ensuring that you meet all requirements for participation in the exchange program and for submitting all required documents to Concordia International, your Faculty and your host institution.
- All communication with potential host universities, including the submission of your exchange application, must be done through your Concordia International Liaison Officer (ILO).
- Each Faculty requires its students to complete a specified number of courses, have a minimum GPA and remain in good academic standing to be eligible for the exchange program.
- Grades obtained during your semester(s) abroad will not appear
 on your Concordia transcript and will not be used in the
 calculation of your Concordia GPA. However, host universities
 do provide an official transcript to Concordia, which is attached
 to your Concordia file. You should also be aware that should
 you ever apply to another university or to a new program,
 grades from your exchange will more than likely be taken
 into account.
- You should be prepared to accept differences in teaching philosophies, academic assessment, attitude of professors, and other matters that may affect your studies.
- Upon arrival at your host institution, you should consult your host institution's exchange office for assistance with any academic or cultural adjustment problems.

Admission Letter

- After Concordia International forwards your complete application (including any host institution forms required), it can take several months before you receive an official admission letter from the host institution. Please do not contact your host institution until after you have received an admission letter from them.
- Your host university will make the final decision on your application, not Concordia International. Therefore, we do not recommend making any travel arrangements for your exchange until after you have received your admission letter from your host institution.
- Your admission letter is generally sent to Concordia International. If you receive your admission letter directly, please submit a copy to your Concordia International ILO.
- You are responsible for meeting all requirements and deadlines indicated by your host institution.
- Once you receive your host institution admission letter, you should apply for a visa (if required) and submit the letter to Concordia International for your Quebec Mobility Bursary or Graduate Student Mobility Award application.
- Keep copies of all correspondence between you, your academic advisor, Concordia International, your host institution and your host country's consulate concerning your exchange (i.e. course evaluations and approvals, applications, accommodation applications, acceptance letters, visa applications etc.).



Quebec Mobility Bursary

- The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (MEES) offers financial assistance to those who qualify.
- To qualify, you must have your Faculty's permission to study on exchange and be a full-time student while receiving the bursary; undergraduates must have completed at least 24 credits towards their Concordia degree requirements.
- You must complete your Quebec Mobility Bursary application (available on Concordia International's website) by the deadline(s) indicated. To be approved for the Bursary, you must provide a copy of your admission letter from your host institution.
- Before you can receive your Quebec Mobility Bursary, you
 must return a Confirmation of Enrolment to Concordia
 International. This should be done as soon as your course
 registration at your host institution is finalized.
- Keep in mind that the amount offered by the Quebec Mobility Bursary is not substantial enough to be counted as your primary or only source of income.
- Please note that the Quebec Mobility Bursary must be declared when filing your income taxes.

Graduate Student Mobility Award

- The Graduate Student Mobility Award aims to provide Concordia graduate students with financial assistance for studying or conducting research projects / field work abroad as part of their degree programs. A limited number of Awards are available each semester on a competitive basis.
- To qualify, you must have your Graduate Program Director's and the School of Graduate Studies' permission to study on exchange; you must have completed 1/3 of your courses towards your current degree; you must have a minimum GPA of 3.30 and you must be registered full-time while receiving the Award.
- You must complete your Graduate Student Mobility Award application (available on Concordia International's website) by the deadline(s) indicated. To be approved for the Award, you must provide a copy of your admission letter from your host institution.
- Before you can receive your Award, you must return a Confirmation of Enrolment to Concordia International. This should be done as soon as your course registration at your host institution is finalized.
- The minimum period of support for the Graduate Student Mobility Award is two months and the maximum period of support is four months.
- Keep in mind that the amount offered by the Graduate Student Mobility Award is not substantial enough to be counted as your primary or only source of income.

Please note that applications for research work to be done in areas deemed by Global Affairs Canada as being high risk may or may not receive approval. Applications for these will be evaluated on a case by case basis. To know what the current GAC advisory is for your application's region, please visit:

https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories





Registration at Concordia University

- Concordia International will register you for a STOQ code (Studies Outside Quebec) for the semester(s) you are on exchange counting for either 15 undergraduate credits or full-time graduate registration. The STOQ registration means that you are still a Concordia student and have permission to study outside of the province at another institution for that semester.
- Please remember to register for courses at Concordia, even
 if you are planning an exchange. You may be charged late fees
 if the STOQ code is not added in time, and the courses will act
 as a backup in case the exchange program gets cancelled or
 you are forced to withdraw for any reason. You can drop these
 courses once the STOQ code is added to your record.
- Concordia will charge you for full-time tuition fees while you are on exchange, perhaps even before you register for your classes at your host university.
- It is very important that you set up payment plans before you leave to avoid problems such as holds or delays while away. Fees must be paid in full by the Concordia payment deadline for the semester(s) you are on exchange.
- Undergraduates who transfer only 12 credits to Concordia
 after their exchange will be refunded for 3 credits. However,
 you cannot be refunded for these credits due to failed courses
 and refunds are processed only after your credits have been
 transferred. The maximum refund per semester is 3 credits.
- In case you have to withdraw from your exchange or fear not being admitted to your host institution, you should register for Concordia courses during the semester(s) you plan to be away and then drop them as soon as your participation is confirmed/ by the Concordia DNE deadline at the very latest. You are responsible for dropping your backup courses before the DNE deadline. If you do not, then you will be charged for tuition fees for them (in addition to full-time tuition fees for your exchange program) and could result in failing grades for not attending those courses.

Registration at Your Host Institution

- Host institutions cannot guarantee that you will be able to register for the courses you indicated in your preliminary selection. Therefore, you must be flexible; you should have more courses approved than the minimum you will need to be full-time; and you should not count on being able to enroll in any course for any reason.
- Each host institution has its own system for course registration.
 Some have online registration systems; some will register you on your behalf; and others might require you to ask the course instructor at the host institution to register for the course at the start of the semester. If registration instructions are not included in your host institution admission letter, then please consult their website.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the courses you take at your host university comply with your faculty's regulations concerning acceptability and duplication of courses taken previously at Concordia University or at any other institution.
- When making a final decision about your courses, you need to communicate with your Concordia department and/or Faculty.
 It is important to do this, especially if you are making changes to your original course selection.
- If you enroll in courses that you have not already had approved at Concordia, then you must notify your department and/or Faculty immediately.
- As soon as your registration at your host institution is finalized, you must return a Confirmation of Enrolment form to Concordia International.



WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EXCHANGE

If you have to withdraw from your exchange for any reason, then you must notify your Concordia International ILO by e-mail immediately. Depending on when you withdraw, you may have to take other actions/notify other parties as well. Please be advised that your withdrawal could have financial and academic consequences depending on when you make the decision to cancel your exchange.



B.THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Passport and Visa

- Apply for/renew your passport as soon as possible (if needed). Your passport must be valid for 6 months beyond the end of program. For more information on Canadian passports, visit http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/apply/new/apply-how.asp
- If you do need a student visa, then you should be ready to apply for it as soon as you receive your host institution's admission letter.
- While waiting on your host institution's admission letter to arrive, consult the website for your host country's embassy in Canada for student visa information/requirements. Some may require for you to have a visa, and others may not. Some countries require that you have a medical examination or a criminal record check completed as part of the application process. Requirements can also differ depending on your nationality.
- Browse the Global Affairs Canada website for important information for Canadians traveling and living abroad:
 http://www.international.gc.ca/international/index.aspx?lang=eng.
 On it, you will find useful information related to travel warnings and updates; country profiles; links to embassies and instructions on how to register with the local Canadian diplomatic mission in your host country.
- Students who hold dual citizenships should inform themselves of any special requirements.



International Student Identification Card (ISIC)

The ISIC card, designed for student travelers, is valid overseas
and will allow you to receive discounts on airfare, transportation
tickets and passes, museum and restaurants, etc. Prior to
departure, Concordia students are encouraged to purchase an
ISIC card. For information on the application process, and to get
a copy of the application form please go to https://isiccanada.ca/.

Money and Banking Abroad

- While you may be able to use your Canadian bank card at some foreign banks, it may be a good idea to set up a local bank account and use the new bank card to avoid significant service charges. Obtain as much information as possible from your bank regarding banking operations in the country of your destination (i.e. transferring accounts, transferring funds, accessing your account, etc.), and make necessary arrangements before your departure.
- Complete and sign a Power of Attorney form to allow someone (i.e. a family member or a friend someone you fully trust) to take care of your banking matters during your absence. This will make your financial dealings easier while you are away.
- Plan on having access to extra finances for the first two months
 of your stay, in case of emergencies. This is critical as bursaries
 (i.e. Quebec Mobility Bursary) take time to process, and you will
 have to use your own resources to cover initial expenses.
- Exchange a small sum of money into the foreign currency of your destination prior to departure. This money will cover any expenses you may have to incur, such as lodging, food, and transportation, until you can get to a bank.
- Make sure you inform your Canadian bank of your travel plans in order to avoid having your account blocked while using your Canadian bank card abroad. You may also want to consider increasing your withdrawal limit.

Important Documents

- Authorization Letter to Release Personal Information: Certain situations (with your health insurance company, student loan issuer, Concordia University, etc.) may require your immediate attention here in Canada during your absence. This may be problematic due to differences in time zones, challenges of long distance correspondence, etc. Therefore, you should designate someone (i.e. a family member) to be responsible for taking care of such matters, by signing an authorization letter/ form to release information to that person.
- Complete and sign a Power of Attorney form to a family member or friend someone you fully trust.
- Will: Anything can happen; hence it is important to protect yourself and your loved ones from legal hassles by ensuring your will is in good order.
- Make copies of important documents, such as your admission letter, passport, visa, insurance papers, prescriptions, medical and dental records, etc. Keep one set of copies in Canada with your next of kin and another set with you while abroad. Keep copies of your passport and visa separate from the originals.



Health and Wellness

- Medical exams: Ensure you have taken the necessary medical, dental, and eye examinations prior to departure.
- Vaccinations: Concordia Health Services clinic provides medical exams and vaccinations to students traveling to other countries. Make sure to get all the necessary immunizations required by your host country, as well as any other destinations you plan to visit during your exchange.
 - http://www.concordia.ca/students/health/vaccination.html
- Prescriptions and medications: If you regularly take certain
 medications (including birth control) or have injections, make
 sure to bring enough to last for the duration of your stay.
 Prescription drugs are usually allowed in carry-on luggage, in the
 original container/ packaging, and clearly labeled. Bring a copy of
 your original prescription, as well as a letter from your doctor
 describing what your prescribed medication is and why you are
 traveling with high quantities of it. This will help with clearing
 customs. Make sure any drugs you are taking are legal in your
 host country.
- Contact your host institution to find out if there is an on-campus medical facility for students that can help you with getting your prescription re-filled, or if they can refer you to a local pharmacist prior to your departure in order to make suitable arrangements.
- Bring your medical ID alert card/ bracelet with you.
- Pack a First Aid Kit. You may want to bring the following items: sterile gauze, adhesive tape and/or bandages in several sizes, acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen, your prescription medications, antiseptic wipes, antibiotic ointment (i.e. Polysporin), sharp scissors, safety pins, and a thermometer.

Insurance

- Health insurance: you are responsible for making sure that you have health insurance that covers you while you are on exchange. Some countries require international students to purchase a local policy through your host institution. Others may only require for you to produce proof that you have coverage. And, certain countries have agreements with the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal and Sweden at the date of publication of this guide) which allow Quebec residents to transfer health insurance. You must check the requirements of your host country, host institution and insurance provider in Canada to determine what coverage you must have/if you are covered.
- Emergency, medical evacuation and repatriation insurance: if your health insurance policy does cover you abroad, ask if it covers the cost for your return to Canada due to a medical emergency. You should also consider emergency evacuation insurance in the event of a disaster, and repatriation insurance for your remains in case of death.
- Travel cancellation insurance: arrange for insurance in case you should not be able to go on exchange for unforeseeable circumstances.
- Property insurance: insure valuable items you are taking with you abroad, such as camera, laptop, etc.
- Liability insurance: it is suggested that you purchase liability insurance for your time abroad in order to cover you in incidents where you may be sued. Check with your host institution if liability insurance is mandatory for your exchange program.



Housing

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for accommodations abroad. Make sure to do it well before your departure. You may opt for either student housing or independent housing. Check with your host university whether you can arrange student housing through the institution. When seeking independent housing, be aware that it can be extremely difficult and risky to make accommodation arrangements long distance. Try to ensure that your housing arrangements can be cancelled in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Please note that providing housing for exchange students is NOT Concordia International's responsibility.

Flight Arrangements

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements to and from your host institution. When doing so, you must take semester, orientation, final examination and housing dates into consideration. In general, you should make your travel arrangements as soon as you know your dates, for the best fares. You should wait to receive your official admission letter from your host university before reserving your flight. You may also want to use your ISIC card for possible student airfare discounts. Consider flight changes and cancellation insurance.

Transportation

Check with your host university or the student union to see if they provide transportation from the local airport to the campus. If yes, make sure you arrange for pick-up beforehand.

Packing Wisely

When packing, consider only bringing what is most necessary. Keep in mind your length of stay, the local climate and the potential to purchase once at your destination. Check beforehand your airlines' restrictions on luggage weight and size. Consider bringing along a few useful things, such as:

- First Aid Kit (see details above)
- · Sewing kit
- Bilingual dictionary and/or phrase book
- Electric outlet adapter (check if you can use it for battery re-chargers for camera, laptop, etc.)
- Travel guide
- Concordia International Pre-Departure Guide
- Global Affairs Canada guide "Bon Voyage, But..." https://travel.gc.ca/docs/publications/bvbrev-eng.pdf

Register Your Belongings with Customs Canada

You should register any expensive items wish to take with you (i.e. laptop, camera, etc.) with Canadian Customs before you leave. Find out how by visiting:

https://travel.gc.ca/returning/customs/declare

Concordia's Travel Registry

All students on exchange are required to register and provide up-to-date contact information while abroad on Concordia University's Travel Registry. You can access the Registry through the MyConcordia Portal. Please complete the Travel Registry once you know your flight details and contact information abroad.



II. WHILE ON EXCHANGE

A. ACADEMIC MATTERS AWAY FROM HOME

Course Registration at the Host Institution

- Even though you are asked to make preliminary course selections, the host institution cannot guarantee that you will be able to register for those courses. You must remain flexible in your selection as course selection can only be finalized upon registration at the host university.
- If you change your course selection, you need to get these new choices re- approved by both your departmental advisor and Faculty.
- · Keep copies of all registration documents.
- Once registered, complete and return your Confirmation of Enrolment to Concordia International.

Withdrawal from the Program after Arrival

If you withdraw from the program while you are away, the procedures are the same as if withdrawing from regular courses at Concordia; however, the host institution's deadlines apply, as well. The consequences are identical: if the DNE deadline has passed, you will not receive a tuition refund.

B. THINGS TO DO WHILE ABROAD

Keep in Touch

Upon your arrival at your destination, be sure to notify your family as well as Concordia International of your new address and contact information. Make sure to check your e-mail regularly. Document your experience!

Register with the local Canadian Consulate

Persons residing abroad should register with Global Affairs Canada. This is a free service that allows the Government of Canada to notify Canadians in case of an emergency abroad or a personal emergency at home. The service also enables you to receive important information before or during a natural disaster or civil unrest. https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration

International students should verify with their home governments for similar programs.

Enjoy Your Stay, but Be Responsible

Make the most of your exchange by being a responsible citizen and taking care of yourself. Take cultural differences into consideration and avoid behavior that could be offensive in your host country: consider appropriate clothing, gestures, vocabulary, etc. Remember that your host country's laws apply to you while abroad and that you will likely have to assume the country's consequences in case of non-compliance.



Managing Stress

Living in a foreign country can be both exciting and emotionally difficult. To make the adjustment process a little less stressful, research your host country as much as you can, learn the laws and customs, and try to keep an open mind during your stay. It is also a good idea to make contacts and form relationships with local citizens, as well as to immerse yourself in the culture by participating in various cultural activities. Learn to accept and appreciate your host culture: it is essential if you are to enjoy and make the most of your unique experiences abroad.

Clearing Debts

Before your return to Canada, make sure you settle all bills at your host institution or you may not receive a transcript for your credit transfer at Concordia.

Receipts on Purchases

Save receipts for all major purchases you make while abroad, as you will have to declare all new items upon your return to Canada.

Exit or Departure Fees

Some countries and/or airports require so-called exit fees paid by visitors upon their departure. Make sure you know whether your host country requires visitors to pay exit fees, what they are, and plan for this expense accordingly (that is, make sure you have this sum in the currency of your host country when you get to the airport to leave for Canada).





III. HOME SWEET HOME

THINGS TO DO UPON YOUR RETURN

General Information

Upon your return, you must submit an exchange report to your Concordia International ILO describing your experience and the quality of academic and student services received at the host institution. Please be advised that you will not receive credit for your exchange courses until your report is received. Concordia International often hosts video contests for which you can submit a video in lieu of an exchange report. Please be sure to inform your Concordia International ILO if you will be participating in the video contest.

Grades, Credits, and Transcripts

- Although your host institution should automatically send your
 official transcript to Concordia, it may not always be the case.
 Therefore, you should request for a copy (or two) to be mailed
 to your home address too. Once received, please deliver
 the transcript(s) in the original, sealed envelope to
 Concordia International.
- You will not receive credit for your exchange courses until Concordia has received an official copy of your transcript and you have submitted your exchange report to your ILO.
- You should expect for it to take 3 to 6 month before Concordia receives your transcripts and transfers your credit.
- Transfer credits are granted provided a grade of C- or better has been achieved.

Graduation

- In order to graduate students must complete the graduation application which can be found on the MyConcordia portal. There are two graduation periods at Concordia: the fall, for which the application deadline is generally mid-July; and the spring, for which the application deadline is generally mid-January.
- Keep in mind that if you are abroad during the last term of your program at Concordia and will complete your credit requirements while on exchange, you will likely not be eligible to graduate immediately upon return, due to the processing time for transcripts. For example, if you are returning from exchange in the winter semester, you would not be able to graduate in the spring and would have to wait to attend the fall convocation.
- It is possible however, to request a proof of completion from the Registrar's Office at Concordia that is recognized as an official substitute by both academic institutions and employers.

Health Insurance

Make sure you inform your health insurance provider of your return from exchange as soon as possible, in order to avoid not having coverage for several months after your return to Canada.

Re-entry Adaptation

It is important to realize that you will go through an adjustment period upon your return to Canada, and may even experience re-entry shock, usually expressed as a feeling of angst, due to the change in surroundings or the natural changes that you experienced while away. Speak with your International Liaison Officer or Concordia's Counseling and Psychological Services about the steps you can take to make your transition back home easier. https://www.concordia.ca/students/counselling.html



IV. USEFUL LINKS

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA

international.gc.ca/international/index.aspx?lang=eng

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

cra-arc.gc.ca/

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

cic.gc.ca/english/index-can.asp

BANK OF CANADA DAILY CURRENCY CONVERTER

bankofcanada.ca/rates/exchange/daily-converter/

HEALTH CANADA

hc-sc.gc.ca/

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO TRAVELERS

iamat.org/

INTERNET GUIDE TO HOSTELLING

hostels.com

LONELY PLANET TRAVEL GUIDES

lonelyplanet.com

MEDICALERT

medicalert.ca

PASSPORT CANADA

cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp

TRAVEL CUTS

travelcuts.com

Western Union Money Transfers westernunion.com

World Health Organization who.int

PERSONAL CHECKLIST/NOTES



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