

The Education Abroad Program office wants to hear about your experience abroad! Tell us about your experience by filling out the *Return Student Report for Exchanges/Summer Programs*. Your feedback will be used to help improve programs and services for future students and be a valuable resource for future students who are interested in studying abroad.

The Return Student Report consists of two parts:

- Part A: Participant Information
- Part B: Internship Information

Part A will not be made public. Part B will be made public and available online to future students interested in learning more about the education abroad process and program. Education Abroad Program will preserve your anonymity by not revealing your name or any personal details.

## Part A

### Participant Information

Please provide the following information.

Name:			
Student Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Domestic <input type="checkbox"/> International	Home Institution:	University of Alberta
Faculty:	Faculté Saint-Jean	Degree Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate
Major/Minor:	Major: Psychology Minor: Anthropology/Sociology		
Current Year of Study	<input type="checkbox"/> 1st <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4th <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		

## Part B

### Exchange/Summer Program Information

Please provide the following details related to your Education Abroad Program.

Host Institution:	Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara		
City/Town:	Guadalajara	Country:	Mexico
Exchange/Summer Program Period:	From: 07/13/2014 (mm/dd/yyyy)	To: 08/09/20114 (mm/dd/yyyy)	
Did you participate on an internship during your exchange/summer program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
What immigration documents (e.g. study visa, residence permits etc.) are required to study at your host institution?	None.		
What issues (if any) did you encounter while obtaining these immigration documents?	N/A		
What tips would you give to future students regarding their student visa and other required immigration documents?	N/A		

### Languages

What was the language(s) of instruction at your host institution? <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Were there any adequate course offerings taught in English for your field of study?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Prior to your departure, did you take any language courses at your home institution? If yes, what courses (e.g. FREN 111) did you take?	Yes, SPAN 111, 112, 212
How did taking a class in another language (that was not your first language) impact your learning experience? Did you instructor make any accommodations?	The classes I took were Spanish language courses so there was not more added difficulty and the instructor did not make any accomodations

## Academia

What arrangements regarding pre-approval of credit transfer were you able to arrange with your faculty before leaving on your program?

My faculty would not guarantee me the credits, or give me a course equivalency, but they did assess the program and courses I would take and gave me an initial evaluation that I would receive full credit (6 credits).

Please describe the course registration process at your host institution.

- Were you able to pre-register in Canada?
- Did you receive any assistance from your host institution?
- Did your course registration change upon arrival? If so, why?

I could not pre-register, I had to complete a placement test upon my arrival. Based on those results they put me directly into the appropriate classes.

Please describe your academic plan (e.g. number of courses per term, course name etc.).

I took 2 intensive Spanish classes over the 4week term: Level 4 grammar and Level 4 conversation

Please describe the credit and grading system at your host institution.

At the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara one class is 40 hrs of course and is equal to 2 credits. Their gradings system for the intensive Spanish courses is purely percentage based.

How was your overall academic experience (e.g. teaching style, class structure and sizes, amount of coursework, assessment) in comparison to your home institution?

Seeing as it was a summer program, I do not find it comparable to my studies at my host institution. The class sizes varied but I had only 5 people in each of my classes which allowed for lots of interaction and one-on-one time. The teaching styles were pretty typical for second-language classes. The assessments were fair and generally objective and the amount of coursework was extremely manageable. As a summer course abroad it gave ample time to explore the new culture and environment. There was 3.5 hours of class per day and I would say there was approximately 40 minutes of homework each day to go along with that.

How did you obtain a transcript for coursework completed at your host institution?

I have yet to receive a paper copy of my transcript from UAG, but it is apparently in the mail. I was required to do nothing to have a transcript sent directly to my goabroad coordinator here at the UofA from the Intercambio office at UAG. That system is already in place. So I walked away from the host institution with nothing and it was dealt with after the fact (once my grades were finalized).

## Student Services

Please describe the type of facilities (e.g. library, internet/Wi-Fi access, computer labs, bookstore, health clinic, counseling services) available at your host institution.

Lots of facilities were available at UAG. They had campus wide Wi-Fi and computers for student use in the library. The library also has lots of study space although the summer students do not have the ability to check out books. They have an excellent bookstore with course books as well as Spanish novels. They apparently have a free medical center for the students but I never visited it. They also have a comprehensive gym facility and offer free dance classes to students.

To the best of your knowledge, what support and services are available at your host institution for:

- Students with disabilities or special needs
- Students identifying as LGBTQ
- Students of visible minorities

I am unaware of any of these services at UAG.

Please describe where you could find exchange student advising or receive academic counseling at your host institution.

Advising is done through the Intercambio (exchange office). Questions regarding course placement and student trips is done through the Spanish department office.

## Housing Information

To the best of your knowledge, what housing options are available to students?	Host family arrangements
What type of housing did you stay in?	<input type="checkbox"/> On-campus residences <input type="checkbox"/> Off-campus housing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With a host family <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
How satisfied were you with your housing choice?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 = Not at all satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 = Very satisfied
What should future students be aware of when choosing on-campus residences? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application process for housing</li> <li>• Utilities and furniture</li> <li>• Meal plans, cooking facilities</li> <li>• Housing rules (e.g. curfew, how early can you move in, closure during major holidays etc.)</li> <li>• Assistance from host institution staff (e.g. airport pick-up, orientation)</li> </ul>	N/A
What should future students be aware of when choosing off-campus housing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lease agreements, deposits, tenant rights</li> <li>• Utilities and furniture</li> <li>• Location and neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Safety and security</li> <li>• Type of resources available to look for housing (eg: Craigslist)</li> </ul>	I really enjoyed my host family arrangement, however I know that other students had issues with cockroaches in their rooms and families not feeding them enough. That said, most of the experiences sounded positive. The school places you with the host family so it is not the student's choice. And I knew nothing about my host family before arriving in their home. This was slightly stressful, but choosing the airport pick-up option lessened that stress a bit because I didn't have to worry about finding the house.

## Student Life

What would you recommend to future students who are looking to meet other students at your host institution? (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as student groups, intramurals, residence events and activities, volunteering opportunities, etc.)

**I would definitely suggest taking the free dance classes to meet people. Seeing as the summer program is only a month long most of the opportunities to meet people are in your classes and the other exchange student classes. Besides that, I highly recommend going on the trips (to Mexico City and to Tequila)!**

What work or internship opportunities are available for students on and/or off campus?

N/A Only there for a month

## Health and Safety

Are there any specific health/safety issues that future students should be made aware of? What precautions can you recommend to mitigate or eliminate these issues?

-There were lots of mosquitos. Although it's not technically in a Malaria zone, good to be cautious and have bugspray.  
-Lots of sunburns. Use lots of sunscreen

Did your host institution require a mandatory travel/health insurance plan for exchange students? How did you arrange this?

Yes it was required. I used the university of alberta plan (I Have a Plan).

## Cultural Adaptation

What cultural differences (if any) did you find particularly challenging?

Mexico is a very catholic country. Most of the things that I had to get used to had to do with that. For example, proper dress. People dress much more conservatively there than here (even in the hot weather). What I found most annoying/challenging was the catcalls. They happen everywhere in Mexico no matter where you go or what you wear. Be prepared for that.

What parts of your host country's culture did you most appreciate?

I loved the food! Definitely got to try new things and found some new favourites.

## Costs and Budgeting

Please describe your basic costs in Canadian dollars. This will help future exchange/summer program students plan their own budgets.

Airfare to host country	\$ 770	Brief Description	One layover in each direction. Arrived at midnight.
Visa fees	\$ 0	Brief Description	
Books/term	\$ 12	Brief Description	There is one coursepack required per class found at their bookstore
Accommodation/month	\$ 450	Brief Description	USD paid directly to the host family
Meals/month	\$ ?	Brief Description	Breakfast and supper are included at host accomodation. Although meals on the weekends often are not.
Health insurance/month	\$ N/A	Brief Description	Covered through I Have a Plan
Local transportation/month	\$ 45	Brief Description	Bus to the university and back home each day
Personal spending/month	\$ 400	Brief Description	Including \$250 USD trip to Mexico City through UAG
Communications/month (e.g. phone)	\$ 0	Brief Description	Some students purchased a Mexican cell phone. I did not. I simply used wi-fi which is widely available
Other travel	\$	Brief Description	
What unexpected costs did you encounter?			

## Funding your International Experience

Please indicate how you financed your program. This will help future students plan their own budgets. <i>Check all that apply.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scholarships from UAlberta <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships from Host Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Student loans <input type="checkbox"/> Family contributions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal savings <input type="checkbox"/> Employment while in host country <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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## Final Thoughts

What were some highlights of your experience abroad?

I really loved meeting other students from all over the world. Sharing a study abroad experience with them made the trip that much more memorable. I definitely enjoyed comparing cultural differences between Mexico, Canada and the other students' home countries. I also really appreciated the opportunity to improve my Spanish skills in a Spanish environment and experience the culture that goes with that language (I love latin dance!).

Would you recommend your internship program to other students? Why or why not?

I would definitely recommend this summer program. It is an excellent way to improve/learn spanish! It is an excellent option for students not wanting/not able to be away from their UofA studies for a semester. The coursework is not strenuous

Please provide any final information/tips for students interested in studying abroad that you would like to share.

All of the communication with UAG is done through the UofA goabroad office. I had no direct contact with them before I left. This communication process was extremely frustrating because I knew absolutely nothing about the program/ courses/ my living situation etc. before I actually arrived in Guadalajara. Even once I got there I learned most of the day-to-day stuff and program information from other students who had been there for a month already. Being so in the dark was very frustrating for me. But in the end everything worked out fine and it was totally worth it! Just be prepared for that if you apply for this program.