

General Information			
Host Country	United Kingdom		
Host School	University for the Creative Arts, Epsom		
Program start & end dates	January 29 – May 24		
Program of Study	Fashion Design		
Type of Study Abroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> UMAP exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
General Evaluation			
In a couple of sentences, summarize and explain your general evaluation of your experience.	A very good overall experience. I was able to learn how to approach fashion design in a new way and immerse myself in a lot of culture. The proximity to other countries also helped to broaden my horizons and learn about the world at large.		
Arrival			
How easy or challenging was it to obtain your travel documents (visa, permits, etc.)?	Easy as I have a Canadian passport and did not apply for a visa.		
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you alter any part of those arrangements?	As I was visiting relatives in Hong Kong prior to my exchange opportunity, I flew from Hong Kong to London Heathrow, which took around 15 hours. A direct flight from Vancouver would be around 9-10 hours. Transportation to central London is easy as there are trains.		
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	As a Canadian passport holder, it was easy as I used the e-gates to enter the UK. Because of this, I did not have to talk to an immigration officer, nor did I have to provide any supporting documentation regarding my stay.		
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	A relative drove me from their residence to the university and dorm. From central London, taking the train is around £10 and is easy, with two direct train lines running from central London to Epsom.		
Orientation and Assistance			
How satisfied were you with the assistance available to at your host school? Were there people and resources available for you for support?	Very satisfied. The staff were friendly and helpful. There was some trouble surrounding questions with placements and visas as different people gave different answers, but there was a visa team that was able to give a final answer.		
What help did you receive from the international staff or office?	The international staff were very helpful as they were my point of contact with the other teams at UCA prior to my arrival. They helped me with my application as well as solving issues with my contract for my accommodation.		
How was new student orientation at the host university? What did they do?	The student orientation itself was ok, but the staff and professors in my course were especially helpful with connecting me to my peers in my class and the other exchange student.		
Housing & Daily Life			
Describe your accommodation in your host country. Were you pleased with this choice or what would you have done differently?	My accommodation was a single room with an ensuite bathroom in a flat shared with 6 other people with a shared kitchen. I was pleased with my choice because I had my own space and bathroom. This room cost a bit more, but was well worth the privacy.		

When could you move into housing and how long were you allowed to stay?	I moved in the week of my orientation and registration, and my contract finished on the last day of class.
What kinds of services and facilities were nearby where you lived (shop, cafe gym, parks, pharmacy, stations...)	Shops, restaurants, cafes, fast food, bus stations, train stations, gyms, parks, beauty services, horse racecourse, pharmacy, shopping malls, theatres
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	I don't usually eat breakfast but I would buy a coffee when I got to school (£3). A hot lunch with no extra sides was £2. The food was worth what I paid for. Otherwise, I would cook food and eat in.
How close was your accommodation to where you studied?	10-15 minute walk.
Academics & Course Registration	
Describe the registration process at your host institution. What assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?	The registration process was straightforward as the courses were preselected for my program. A link was emailed to me for the program I wanted, and registration happened there. A different link was provided for the portfolio. An official transcript from KPU and my high school was required, as proof of English proficiency was required.
What advice would you offer to another exchange student about registration at your host institution?	For the portfolio, show the entire project instead of a few pages. Have as many creative projects as possible. Include fashion illustrations and process sketchbook pages.
What tips do you have for finding the courses and course syllabuses/outlines?	The courses and syllabuses can be found directly on the UCA website.
Academics & Course Registration (cont'd)	
How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?	I am satisfied with what I have learned. I could have learned more technical skills depending on the direction of my individual project, but I am satisfied with what I learned given the direction of my work.
How did the style of teaching, and workload compare to Canada? Was it more independent or group learning?	The style of teaching was very independent. In terms of workload, it was about the same, but applied in a different way.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad? Are there particular courses you would recommend?	I completed 2 courses (equivalent to 4 KPU courses), and dropped one course. The two courses are mandatory, and I would recommend the placement if you have a visa. The alternative option is interesting, but very similar to work done at KPU which may seem unfulfilling.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	The computer facilities, library, and technological services were good. The supplies were outstanding with the different art supplies and fabric store/selection. Specialized equipment was hit or miss, as there were laser cutters and photo studios, but no available specialized sewing machines. The amount of machines were also limited.

Cost	
Books and Supplies/per term:	Depends on your project. For me, maybe around £200-250.
Flight:	Depends on time of booking, but around \$800-900.
Accommodation/per month:	Around £860
Meals/per month:	Around £75
Local transportation/per month:	Depends how often you travel to London. Could be £0.
Health insurance/per term:	Around \$100 a month (travel insurance)
Communication (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	£10 for phone plan, 10gb + 20gb data
Travel documents (Passport, Study permit, visa, etc.)	Only the fee for the Canadian passport was necessary.
Vaccinations:	None required
Personal spending (entertainment and extra travel) – per term	Depends on the activity. Traveling can be cheap depending on your needs and destination.
Were there unexpected costs you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than expected?	Transit to and from central London was more expensive than I expected.
Extra-Curricular & Social Activities	
What type of organized activities were available to you? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students?	The school itself didn't organize any events except for student project displays, but there are student-led clubs. Drinking culture is big though, so if you make friends who like drinking, go out on a Thursday for cheaper drinks.
Did you travel outside the host location? If so, where do you recommend?	Travel anywhere. There is always somewhere interesting to visit, and there is always some form of culture to learn/experience. Italy was nice. Portugal and Spain were great for summer vibes.
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer? Did you require special permits to do this?	Volunteering for London Fashion Week is possible as it may be held during spring semester. Probably needs a visa, but they don't check.
Health and Safety	
Describe any health/safety concerns or issues you had during your experience.	Nothing more serious than petty crime which is expected in large European cities.
What helped you keep safe and healthy? Did you access any health care supports and if so how was the experience?	Eating well kept me healthy. I did not access health care supports, but UCA encourages you to enroll with a general practitioner and offers resources for that. There is also a general hospital in Epsom, which is accessible by bus.
What wellness supports did they offer at the University? Were there counselling or medical services?	There were wellness supports at the school It was also helpful that the staff were generally pretty understanding. The school offers counselling, wellness, financial, legal (visa), and career services.
Personal and Cultural Connections	
Were there any cultural differences you had to adjust to?	As a person more used to the city, Epsom was a bit of a change as there weren't many large buildings. There is a big night life though,

Were there language barrier issues?	which was very exciting. The change in accent took a little bit of adjusting to, but otherwise there was no major cultural difference.
What part(s) of the country and culture did you most appreciate?	Museums were free. There were also student discounts for exhibits, and the school offered an art pass which gave larger discounts to museum exhibitions.
How was it traveling alone and making friends?	Travelling alone was alright. Making friends was also alright but a little difficult due to the independent nature of the school. There was little mandatory class time, so it was a little harder to meet up regularly with some people.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	I was treated normally by the locals, staff, and students. Everyone was friendly.
How accommodating are they to students with a disability? Were there any accommodations offered?	The school is wheelchair accessible. The dorms are also wheelchair accessible as there are elevators.
How is the situation for students who are visible minorities in your host country?	UCA is extremely international and cross-cultural. Visible minorities were treated like everyone else.
How welcoming are they to for those who identity as LGBTQIA+?	Very, it's very normalized.
Overall	
What are 5-10 important things other students should know before going to your host country/region?	
1. If you want to do a placement, get a study visa	
2. Get a railcard for 16–25-year-olds. Gives a 33% discount for national rail services.	
3. Museums are generally free but exhibits cost money.	
4. Bring a bag that closes.	
5. Always keep personal items with you, and preferably securely out of sight.	
6. Wear a rain jacket. London is also windy, which makes an umbrella unwieldy.	
7. Try and travel if you can. Make the most of the UK's proximity to other European countries.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?	Immersing myself in different cultures and learning about my industry and career from a different focus.
What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?	The work is very different to KPU, which can make the work confusing or hard. I struggled to like my work, but stuck through with it until the end, and it got better.
How has your perspective changed as a result of your study abroad experience?	I have a better understanding of the different parts of the fashion industry and how creatives fit in each part. My view of how I interact with culture and who I am has also changed.
What else do you want to add about your study abroad?	It was a good opportunity to discover who I am by myself, and gave me space to realize what is important to me.

Below is a space to share any photos