

General Information			
Host Country	Colombia		
Host School	Pontificia Universidad Javeriana		
Program start & end dates	July 22, 2022- November 18, 2022		
Program of Study	Business (Psychology at KPU)		
Type of Study Abroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
General Evaluation			
In a couple of sentences, summarize and explain your general evaluation of your experience.	This was a very enlightening experience. I was thrown out of my comfort zone in the best way. I met the most amazing people and experienced such a rich culture.		
Arrival			
How easy or challenging was it to obtain your travel documents (visa, permits, etc.)?	Obtaining my visa was easy. However once in Colombia the language barrier made it a bit difficult to navigate getting my student permit.		
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you alter any part of those arrangements?	I flew in by plane. I came to Colombia from Morocco so this was the only feasible way I could arrive. My luggage was misplaced once I arrived in Colombia but in a few days, it was located and delivered to my accommodation. I would recommend keeping your most valuable items in your carryon.		
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	Know your Spanish! Colombia is not Mexico, it does not experience as many English-speaking tourist. So do not assume there will be anyone to speak to you in English. As well the line at customs was slow and long. They are very strict and thorough at the airport.		
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	I was actually Picked up by a family friend in Colombia, so I did not pay. However, I did go to and from the airport 4x during my stay, and I would recommend travelling through uber. It is the safest option for a foreigner and the price is preset. A 20-minute drive from the airport will cost you 5-7\$ CAD.		
Orientation and Assistance			
How satisfied were you with the orientation and student assistance available to at your host school?	I must admit the student assistance was not great at my host school for welcoming new students. I had sent 5 or more emails that never received a response concerning accommodation. I would not depend on the school to get back to you quickly.		
What help did you receive from the international staff or office?	I would say close to none. They gave me a "swag bag" and a printout of my schedule.. I would not depend on them. I suggest approaching this as if they were not there at all.		
Orientation and Assistance (cont'd)			
How was new student orientation at the host university? How did it suit your needs?	Unfortunately, I was able to attend the orientation because my flight came in a day later.		

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site? Were there people and resources available for you to talk to about what you were experiencing?	Being in a big city like Bogota the surroundings were similar to the city life we have here in Surrey. Obviously, there were differences but the biggest culture shock for me was the language. I made friends and was able to talk to them about how I was feeling but I wasn't made aware of any other outside resources.
<b>Housing &amp; Daily Life</b>	
Describe your accommodation in your host country.	I lived across campus in a student dorm like accommodation called "Esstudia". It was great. Private room, bathroom and mini kitchen. Breakfast and dinner included. There was a gym, movie theater and study room. As well, the building hosted parties and sports screenings.
When could you move into housing and how long were you allowed to stay?	I moved into Esstudia 4 days after arriving. There were options to pay bi-annually, annually, and monthly.
What kinds of services and facilities were nearby where you lived (shop, cafe, gym, parks, pharmacy, stations...)?	Esstudia was located in the epicenter of student life. There was a gym next door, a mall 20 minutes walk, a ton of restaurants and cafes, parks, museums etc. All you could ask for was in a 15min walking radius.
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	The food was okay. Breakfast was better than dinner. For breakfast it was typical of what we have back home, eggs, cereal, sausages, toast, fruit, tea, coffee. Dinner was a hit or miss usually offering 3-5 options, one of them being vegetarian. However, most students I talked to in the building invested in an air fryer, kettle, and a camping stove to prepare meals for themselves as well. Also, there were so many restaurants nearby you can always just grab a bite out, which would run you 5-12\$ CAD.
How close was your accommodation to where you studied?	2 min walk.
<b>Academics &amp; Course Registration</b>	
Please describe the registration process at your host institution. What assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?	The registration was overall simple if you understand Spanish well as the website and course information is in Spanish. There was not much help as the advisor at PUE did not reply to her email.
What advice would you offer to another exchange student about registration at your host institution?	Be honest about your fluency in Spanish. Taking 4 all Spanish courses can be overwhelming as the Spanish professor will be speaking and will not be slowed down. I would recommend taking one or two out of the 4 classes in English to give yourself a break.
What tips do you have for finding the courses and course syllabuses/outlines?	Prior to picking the class you can always search up the listed teacher on the syllabus on the PUE website and send them an email about inquiries of the course. For example, one class I registered said it was in English but all the required reading was in Spanish. When I emailed the teacher he said it was a Spanish course but the T.A. that

	came to teach the class once a week spoke some English. So please clarify with your teachers.
<b>Academics &amp; Course Registration (cont'd)</b>	
How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?	I would say. 5/10. If you asked them they would tell you I suppose but wouldn't really walk you through it, often times leaving you more confused
How did the style of teaching, and workload compare to Canada? Was it more independent or group learning?	There was a surprising amount of group work. Almost all the presentations I did were in pairs or in groups of 4. As well it was more laid back. It was common for teachers to start class 15-30 min late. And teachers had Whatsapp groups with the class and most announcements and communication was done on Whatsapp rather than email.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad? Are there particular courses would you recommend?	I took 4 courses. Many courses I took were in business as most of the English courses were in the business program. I did not enjoy business as a program, just simply not for me. However, I did enjoy a course called "Reading Bogota's Popular Material Culture".
If applicable, what impact did the language barrier have on your learning?	At times I still had to do 15page readings in Academic language in Spanish which was quite difficult but I did have a good understanding of Spanish going into PUJ so it was not fatal, but it was difficult.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	The equipment was modern and new they were doing major renovations at the school when I arrived.
<b>Cost</b>	
Books and Supplies/per term:	I only needed a textbook for one course and I was able to find it online and all readings were given by the professor for free. All I bought was some pencils and note books which I would say total cost me 25\$ CAD
Flight:	2000\$ CAD (However I Flew from Morocco the other side of the world)
Accommodation/per month:	804\$/month (PS you can find something MUCH cheaper)
Meals/per month:	Meals included in accommodation but probably spent 60\$ on groceries a month outside of that.
Local transportation/per month:	120\$/month this is only using uber because while I was there, there were safety issues with public transport.
Health insurance/per term:	289\$/sem
Communication (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	20\$/month or 80\$/sem
Travel documents (Passport, Study permit, visa, etc.)	150-200\$
Vaccinations:	No vaccinations needed
Personal spending (entertainment and extra travel) – per term	1000\$

Were there unexpected costs you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than expected?	Transportation and food was quite cheap. Clothing specifically name brand was expensive.. I saw a plain champion hoodie for 160\$. Rule of thumb, if its western or "American" the prices will be more expensive than back home even.
<b>Extra-Curricular &amp; Social Activities</b>	
What type of organized activities were available to you? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students?	Bogota is a huge city with 10million people so you have to enjoy the people! Going to the "G-zone" (the food entertainment zone) on the weekend is always fun. There's beautiful cathedrals to look at, and flights around Colombia can go for 70-100\$ sometimes so always keep a good look on flights.
Did you travel outside the host location? If so, where do you recommend?	I'd recommend Cartagena (costal city rich in history), Medellin (known for its eternal spring and hometown of Pablo Escobar), San Andres (an island with turquoise water.) and Cali (where salsa originated).
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer? Did you require special permits to do this?	There were no opportunities to work as you cannot work on a student visa. You can volunteer at local churches or food banks. I recommend what I did when I left I donated all my things to a nearby church who gives them to families in need, instead of tossing it in the garbage.
<b>Health and Safety</b>	
Describe any health/safety concerns or issues you had during your experience.	Colombia can be dangerous at times if you are not being careful. They tend to target foreigners as they assume that is where the money is, so I would not recommend being overly flashy. As well phone theft is very high hardly anyone has their phone out on the street so grab some Bluetooth headphones so you can keep your phone in your front waist band or in your hand in your pocket.
What helped you keep safe and healthy? Did you access any health care supports and if so how was the experience?	Always tell someone where your going. Most of the apartments in Bogota have a security guard so I would suggest befriending them. As well if you can share your location with a friend.
<b>Personal and Cultural Connections</b>	
How successful were you at making friends with local (not international) people and students?	I was not extremely successful but I did make a handful of friends. It was hard because since I was still learning Spanish I basically had no personality in spanish because I was just focused on getting out my thoughts and opinions. However at my gym I was better at making friends, not sure why.
How did you find it adjusting to the culture of your host site?	I adjusted decently well. I was raised in Caribbean culture which is very similar to LATAM culture.
What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging?	Sometimes the unprofessionalism. I understood it to a degree with Carribean upbringing but living in BC the outside world was still professional. Tardiness was hard at time in Colombia because I never knew what time something would truly end because something was always starting late.
What part(s) of the culture did you most appreciate?	The People! Everyone was happy to help and applaud you for trying to speak Spanish no one ever laughed. As well everyone was interested in Canadian Culture. A place like Canada is so out of reach for many

	Colombians so everyone was so curious about what Canada was like which made me feel proud to be Canadian.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	Everyone I interacted with treated me fairly and with kindness. The professors were patient with me and the students as well. Most locals thought I was Colombian so I was treated just the same!
As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?	The university and Bogota itself is located on a hill/mountain so someone with a walking disability might face some struggles I must admit.
As far as you could tell, for students who are visible minorities in your host country?	Colombia is a very diverse country. I don't feel any minorities will face concerning discrimination.
For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?	Colombia is safe for the LGBTQ+ community. Colombia has a huge active LGBTQ+ community, having one of the biggest gay club in all of LATAM (Theatron).
<b>Overall</b>	
What are <b>five</b> important things other students should know before going to your host country/region?	
1. Know your spanish	
2. Take safety precautions	
3. Bogota is a little cold. Bring sweaters and pants.	
4. Carry cash always.	
5. Don't be afraid to ask locals for help.	
What are <b>ten</b> important things you would tell another student who is going to your host facility/agency?	
1. Check to see what language the course is taught in.	
2. Join clubs.	
3. Find accommodation close to school.	
4. Traffic is horrendous.	
5. Walk if you can.	
6. Have a game plan of the first week of your arrival to plan for errand you'll have to do.	
7. Ask other students and professors for help.	
8. Have a good work/life balance.	
9. Get ready to work in groups.	
10. Be open to adjust to the differences in school expectations .	
What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?	The people I met and the freedom to travel throughout the country.
What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?	Language and seeing the poverty around me at times.



How has your perspective changed as a result of your study abroad experience?	My perspective of fun and comfort has changed. Before I thought I enjoyed staying in my comfort zone. However, I quickly realized life is 100% better when you're outside your comfort zone. You may slip up and embarrass yourself, but I would rather that than live in regret and a continuous cycle of the same thing ,different day. The best way to get out of your comfort zone is to travel.
What else do you want to add about your study abroad experience?	Live in the moment. My motto is if someone asks you to do something or try something just say “yes” and you’ll see how different you experience will be if you say yes 90% of the time.

**Below is a space to share any photos (this is optional and may be shared on our website).**









