

Don't Just Attend Bishop's: Live It! Be Purple! Be U!

Before I go into details, I want to share a personal anecdote with you. I can probably understand what you might be thinking right now: Going abroad, especially leaving Europe for eight months or longer, sounds like a big deal. Leaving family and friends, saying goodbye to the known environment and habits and diving into a different world can sometimes be as unsettling as exciting. BUT: You are not alone!



Take me as a recent example: When I considered going abroad in autumn of 2021, I was already close to graduation, and my plan was clear! I knew I would be writing my thesis the following summer and prepared to start with my master's degree in October 2022. However, some part of me always wanted to leave

Germany, at least for some time. My initial idea was to go abroad for my master's, which is why I attended the information session on the stays abroad from the department just for fun! Surprisingly, I discovered I could only make such a journey in my bachelor's! Suddenly thousands of thoughts came together in my mind: Should I really do this now or rather pursue my studies in Wuppertal first? Why does it have to be eight months, not just three, to test this whole thing? What about getting my classes credited later? What if I lose time? What if I don't like it over there or even fail classes? What if I don't go for it and regret this decision later on? In sum, it all boiled down to one big decision I had to make: Pursue my graduation without a stay abroad or leave the country next year and continue to graduate when I return!

Well, here I am a year later ... and what can I say: I do not, in any way, regret having gone for the second option! And openly said, while I'm writing this review: I would go for the entire eight months again if I got the chance! I probably would have stayed even longer if I didn't have to take care of some minor important things in Germany right now, such as graduation, haha! You see, my fascination breaks through, but if you like to hear more about this fabulous journey, feel free to drop me a line anytime:

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I am always eager to talk about my best time so far!

But more about Bishop's now:

Formalities – Becoming a Bishop's Student and Taking Care of Immigration

As mentioned above, I strongly encourage you to attend Bishop's for the entire year (8 months). Even if it sounds very long at first, I assure you time flies by quickly, and I think you will regret it if you already leave after three months. Bishop's will undoubtedly change your life!

The year at Bishop's usually covers two terms (fall & winter). It starts in early September and ends at the end of April. There will be a two-week winter break between each term at the end of December. If you like to go abroad for eight months, there are a couple of formalities to be taken care of in advance, but I promise, it sounds worse than it is. I encourage you to participate in the online meetings and workshops the international office at Bishop's regularly holds on admission to the university and immigration procedures. In these meetings, all of your questions

will be answered! The time and dates can be found on the websites regarding international affairs at Bishop's.

The first thing to be taken care of is your admission to Bishop's: As soon as Bishop's reaches out to you, they will tell you neatly what to do, and there is always somebody to call or write an e-mail to. Canadians are very helpful and courteous! The first big step, which resembles an official application at Bishop's for other students, is that you will have to select a program you want to study. Still, technically, I think you can choose any program you wish to since you are not bound to any class outline as an international exchange student. You will select your classes differently than other full-time students at Bishop's. More on that below.



After having successfully selected your program, you will get (temporary) access to Bishop's "Studilöwe", or internal service platform, which they call "myBU". You will find all the necessary information regarding residence, finances, exams, and admission there. The best point of orientation at that time might be your personalised checklist, where you can see the documents you must submit. Don't panic if you cannot submit your documents through this platform immediately since it usually requires your Bishop's e-mail address, which you obviously don't have yet! However, you can always send the documents to the admission office at Bishop's directly via e-mail. It will take them just 1-2 days to update your checklist!

Additionally, Bishop's might ask you to upload an official language proof and an English version of your transcript of records (ToR) next to some other personal documents. This was the first and only time the application process was a bit stressful since they only gave me 15 days for that, for example. For this reason, make sure to get a translated copy of your ToR and reach out to somebody from the English department in Wuppertal early enough who can confirm in writing that your language level in English is meeting the standards. It was enough for me to download a pdf from the DAAD for free online, which was

signed by Mr Hurford. After submitting all documents to Bishop's, the admission office will send an official admission letter to your e-mail address around the beginning of May. Make sure you have accepted their offer of admission before moving on and that you set up your Bishop's e-mail account as soon as you get your student ID, which you will find in myBU!

Congratulations, now that you have become a bit more purple, it's time to deal with your immigration documents, which I think was less stressful: You will need your Bishop's admission letter to apply for your CAQ and study visa if you want to stay for eight months. The CAQ is a document specifically for Quebec, which you will need before you apply for your visa. In my case, I was provided with a link to apply online for my CAQ around mid-May. It should take 1-2 weeks to be issued in an online file. After you get your CAQ, you must apply for your study visa through the Canadian government website. This is a crucial point because, in one of the final steps, the government will ask you to deposit your biometrics at one of the Canadian immigration centres. However, there is no such centre in Germany right now! The nearest ones are in London and Vienna, so make sure you are aware of that! You are mostly

done after you have given your biometrics to the Canadian government. It usually takes them less than a week to respond, and they will only tell you the result of your application. You will get your paper document visa at the airport when you enter Canada.

Costs – Important Topic ... I know

To make it short: Yes, this adventure will cost you, and it might be a lot, depending on what you plan to do, of course; but compared with what you get, I can say it is worth every penny you invest! Even though the Canadian Dollar (CAD) is generally weaker than the Euro in currency, Canadian living standards are usually more expensive than in Germany. I, for my part, can tell you now that my total costs for the entire stay over eight months will probably reach the five-digit range in Euro (including travelling around Canada/USA, flights, meals, payments for the visa and other formalities as well as things on campus, such as merch, books, ...). Therefore, in your position, I would ensure you get proper funding before you leave Germany (DAAD, scholarships, BaföG, etc.), if necessary.

Location – The Mighty Massawippi Shore

As you might have noticed, Bishop's is a tiny university located east of Montreal in a city called Sherbrooke. You can find Bishop's at the Massawippi River in a little suburb named Lennoxville, which is south of Sherbrooke and mainly inhabited by other students and professors from Bishop's. Everything in Lennoxville can be reached by foot (10-15 minutes approx.).

Lennoxville is 10-12 minutes away from Sherbrooke by car, 15 minutes away by bus no. 2, but an hour away by foot! However, since you will get everything you need on campus or in Lennoxville, there is no need to go to Sherbrooke all the time unless you fancy Walmart or big shopping malls, haha. I managed to live on campus only for the entire second term and merely went to Lennoxville for partying or to do some minor shopping, so don't worry about the distance! You will also have enough time to get used to the environment around you and to travel a lot!

The campus is very green, as long as it isn't snowing, and you also have a golf course next to it. The buildings are not tall, and you don't see much concrete! Everywhere on campus, you can relax and chill out. All buildings on campus can be reached by foot. One thing you will notice: The university has money, lots of money! Be it the university's modern sportsplex with a pool, gym, ice rink or the university's theatre, observatory, or club (the Gait), you will find yourself in a different world. The library might be smaller than most other universities, but you will see that it has lots of technology to offer. And yes, as a student of Bishop's, you are allowed to use the gym and the pool without any extra costs! You are also encouraged to watch and support the university's football, basketball and ice hockey teams for free; it's all included!



Accommodation – Residence Life, Student Village or Something Else?

There are two ways to enjoy your time in Canada. You can go for off-campus housing in the student villages adjacent to the campus, or you go for on-campus housing. Even though the

latter is probably the most expensive, I strongly encourage you to go for the on-campus option in one of the residences. Most first and second-year students and 90% of the international (exchange) students live on campus, which means this situation is also new to them, so you won't feel excluded. The bubble you will be living in will be immense, i. e. you will meet more people and be more involved in all kinds of social activities if you live on campus, excluding that your way to class and the sportsplex will also be a lot shorter. Additionally, residence life organises many events, such as a talent show, which are only available for students living on campus, and there will be a banquet at the end of the second term, where they reward the residence with the most house points gained over the year!

However, if you go for on-campus housing, you should check which residence suits you best because, as an international exchange student, you must pay the total rent (and meal plan) for each term in advance via the payment portal [flywire](#). Furthermore, each residence varies in price and form of accommodation. If you prefer bog style, i. e. sharing your bathroom with only one/two people, you should go for Kuhner, Munster or Abbott. If you don't mind loud noises and sharing your bathroom with an entire floor, I can recommend MacKinnon. And if you prefer classic shared apartments, like in Germany, you will love Paterson. In Paterson's case, you will also get the option not to pay for the meal plan since each apartment in Paterson has its kitchen. However, this means you won't get as much access to Dewies (the university's dining hall) as many students living on campus. Consequently, you will lose one excellent opportunity to socialise with others. Be aware of that, and check out the Residence Life websites while you are planning!

Arrival – Where, When, How?

The next big question is: How and when to get to Bishop's? In my case, I arrived on the [move-in day for residence on-campus housing](#) before the beginning of the term in September. Still, I also met other exchange students who had already spent most of their summer vacation in Canada, so if you like to arrive earlier, feel free to go! However, you would have to take care of suitable accommodation on your own because there are precise dates when residences at Bishop's open their doors.

The other big question is how you get from the airport to the university. The airport you should head for is Montreal (YUL). From there, you will have two possibilities to go to Sherbrooke.

The first is to book a Limocar shuttle, something like Flixbus, which drives to Sherbrooke several times daily. Your departure station will be [Gare d'Autocars](#) in Montreal, and your destination will be [Terminus](#) in Sherbrooke. The ride will be approx. 2h 15 min. long on the fast lane and will cost you around 34 CAD (one big suitcase included). However, the departure station Gare d'Autocars is in Downtown Montreal, so you must take public transport from the airport – bus no. 747 is probably the easiest option. Once you arrive at Terminus in Sherbrooke, you must take public transport from the city down to Bishop's in Lennoxville – here, you should take bus no. 2!





However, the easier but more expensive option is to book an aeronavette shuttle. These shuttle buses work like big-room taxis and will take you from the airport directly to the university if you give them the university address in your booking request. There is also a great chance you will meet other students travelling to Bishop's on the same bus. Aeronavette also has a counter in the arrival section of the airport in Montreal, so you will have somebody to talk to if necessary.

Classes – Small, Atmospheric, Lovely

As mentioned above, you will be an international exchange student at Bishop's! Even though you won't stand out from the crowd with this side feature, you should still consider yourself extremely lucky. First, you do not have to pay Bishop's tuition fees, making your stay cheaper than most Canadian and full-degree international students. Second, unlike other Bishop's students who must register for classes online, you can choose any class you like, independent of the program you initially selected.

In my case, the international office at Bishop's sent out an e-mail with a Microsoft survey around June/July, in which I was told to select any class from any department I wanted. This means I technically would have been able to study film and chemics while being enrolled in a business program, to give you an idea. The only precondition is selecting a minimum of 4 classes to be correctly registered at the university. Be aware that each class is being held two times a week, i. e. you will meet more than just once!

The organisation of the classes resembles what you are used to in Germany, I'd say. They are primarily seminar-like, and you will probably study with 30 other students on average, depending on your program and subject. A rule of thumb: If you select the basic lvl. 100 classes (entry classes), there is a high chance that your class will be bigger than in a lvl. 300 (advanced classes), for example. However, a maximum of 100 students in a lvl. 100 class is already perceived as immense and rare at Bishop's, so you should generally expect smaller classes than in Germany. For instance, in 4 of my classes, we were only 12 students. The workload in class is not very different from Wuppertal, and the reading pensum is manageable. The major organisational difference is that, instead of one big final exam at the end of the term, you will have to submit smaller assignments during the term, which already count for your final grade for the class. Sometimes there will also be a mid-term exam and a final exam, but they are relatively easy and not as big as the exams in Germany, I'd say.



The other big difference is the relationship between professors and students during each class. Generally, the relationship is much closer and familiar with every professor at Bishop's! They usually know your name after the first 2-3 weeks, and communication during class is always respectful, funny and chilled. Since some of them also live on campus, professors know what is going on in university life, and there is a high chance you see lots of them taking part in other out-of-class activities around campus. One of my professors, for example, had invited a bunch

of other students and me over to his warehouse for dinner one day before we helped him drag heavy rocks out of a mine he had discovered months earlier while having a beer with his colleague. You will not be perceived as a “normal” student or number at Bishop’s!

Living Bishop’s



Before I finish this review, one final piece of advice: **Participate in as many activities as possible!** I wish I could tell you everything about living at Bishop’s, but this would probably go beyond the scope of this article. It simply cannot be explained! You have to experience it! You have to live it! You will see that it is impossible not to be involved in

the Bishop’s community. I literally got flooded with all sorts of activities to dive into, and before I could plan what event to join first, I had already been notified of the next ones. Studying became secondary at some point in my first term, and I started to live Bishop’s when I embraced this overwhelming community. I don’t regret it!

For this reason, as a starting point, I provided some images to give you a glimpse of what university life at Bishop’s looks like. I highly recommend that you follow the social media channels of Bishop’s on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). You will get all the necessary information on major events through these platforms and your Bishop’s e-mail. When you plan your trip to Canada, I strongly encourage you to participate in O-Week, too, because this is the gateway to this dream and something you definitely don’t want to miss! Even though it probably will cost you a little, you will meet so many different people worldwide and make so many friends within the first seven days, which does not even let you think for a minute of homesickness or something in that direction. To requote Bishop’s outgoing principal Goldbloom: “The world meets on this campus!” I promise you will be pulled into the Bishop’s bubble within the first hours! The sense of community at Bishop’s, the way everybody works, studies, parties, and laughs together, cannot be described in written form or verbally.

With this being said, dear future gaiters, I wish you the best of luck, and hopefully, you will become part of the Bishop’s community as well!

- Jonas Kreitmayr
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