

## “If I could have the same experience again I wouldn’t hesitate for a second!”

*Maddie Cook, a young English student, had a year rich in multicultural experiences – first a semester of studies in Quebec then a 6-month internship at the International Office at the uB.*



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*“The 2016-2017 university year was so memorable and varied that I felt as if I lived two lives – in one year. As a student in my third year of Bachelor’s in French and Russian at the University of Exeter in the UK I had to do a year abroad and I chose to focus on French language and culture. Firstly I did a semester of studies at UQAM University in Montreal as part of a university exchange programme with my home university and then I did a six-month internship at the University of Burgundy in the International Office.”*

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### Canada

“UQAM, which is also one of the uB’s partner universities, is just huge. I took classes in French language and history. Sometimes it was difficult to concentrate during 4 hours of French classes but it helped me to improve my level as unfortunately outside of classes I did not have a lot of opportunities to speak French since I stayed in a group of international students who only spoke English.

The city of Montreal is magnificent, very dynamic with a very rich and diverse cultural life. It is a city which never sleeps. I felt at ease in its tea salons, its restaurants and shops, its museums, on Mount Royal... The architecture is impressive – the contrast between the old and the new left a big impression on me – I loved my walks on the Vieux-Port after which I came back to the modern part where my student room was. For a girl who lives in a small town in the English countryside it was a totally different way of life.”

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*“My best memories are the trips away with my friends. We visited Ottawa, Toronto and the City of Quebec when it was -25°!”*

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“We also spent a weekend hiking in Mauricie national park as well as a week in a log cabin and we went on a ski trip to Mont-Tremblant.

These were incredible experiences which I will never forget.”

## France

“At the beginning of January 2017 I touched down in Dijon directly after Canada. I felt the effects of jetlag and I found that it was very cold. For Europe in any case.

Before starting my internship at the International Office I was very nervous because, even if I had done several student jobs, I had never worked in an office, let alone in a foreign language! My first week was very difficult and demoralising because I could not speak French well but I adapted quickly to work and life in Burgundy.

I really enjoyed conversations with my colleagues which allowed me to stay up to date with the news and to learn a lot about life in Dijon and cultural differences.”

### “The phone, my best enemy”

“Working in an international office is impressive – it’s a great opportunity to hear different languages on a daily basis and to meet people of many different backgrounds. This atmosphere made me want to learn a new foreign language when I got back to England – either Portuguese or Italian.

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*I am also grateful for all the professional skills which I acquired. I learned how to reply to phone calls in French and each time I was very scared when the phone rang, but by the end it was very good training to understand and manage in French. It was not easy each time but it was highly formative.*

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My other tasks were dealing with emails, helping with the management of grants and the dossiers of outgoing exchange students. I think I became a professional in insurance as I had to verify several hundred insurance statements.

I also helped out with reception and communications at the International Office where I gave information to the public about possibilities to go abroad or to come and study at the University of Burgundy. I also did a lot of translation from French to English.”

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*“This internship was an ideal opportunity to improve my French because I did everything in French.”*

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“True, there were days where I could not speak French correctly and I was angry with myself but afterwards I understood that it was not the end of the world and that you must persist and continue to learn little by little.”

## Life in Dijon

“Dijon is a very pretty city and I really enjoyed my stay there. I did the owl’s trail several times and each time I learnt new things and interesting details. I visited the fine arts museum and I went to classical music concerts, something I did not really have the chance to do before.

I also enjoyed the calm moments on the terraces of Dijon, making the most of the atmosphere of the city of dukes. I discovered the beauty of Burgundy and I would love to come back one day.”

## In conclusion...

“This academic year spent abroad was a great experience which I will never forget. As always in life, there were difficult moments but the positives outweighed the negatives. Above all it was all the people I met who made my trips so special. I hope we will stay in touch in years to come.

And if I could have the same experience again I would not hesitate for a second!”



*Dijon campus*



*Beaune*