

## **Memorial University of Newfoundland – Student Report**

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*You can write the report either in English or Icelandic*

**Name of the University: Memorial University of Newfoundland**

**Names of the students: Gadidjah Margrét Ögmundsdóttir**

**Exchange semester: Fall 2013**

**Faculty: Computer Science**

### **I GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

1. Describe the school and its surroundings – very short
  2. Number of students - graduate and undergraduate – number of exchange students
  3. Study structure
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1. Walking through the MUN's campus might take 15 minutes on a moderate stroll. Fortunately there is a tunnel system (MUNnels) that goes through the campus which students really appreciate on those rainy days. On campus there's a gym, library, multiple dining options like bars, coffeehouses, etc and then each department has its own building.
  2. Over 18.000 students are enrolled at MUN. 15.000 undergrad, 3.000 grad and around 2.000 of those are exchange or international students.
  3. 3 semesters each academic year. Fall: September 4 – December 18, Winter: January 6 – April 19 and Spring: May 6 – August 10.

### **II PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

#### Information before you left

- When did you receive the information package from the University?
  - I received a lot of information and answers to any questions I had through emails from Chelsey Laird – the exchange coordinator at MUN at that time. The following website helped for preparation as well: <http://www.mun.ca/isa/>.
  - I recommend applying for the MUN mentors program. MUN's mentor coordinator assigns you a mentor – a student already at MUN - which is ready to help you with the transition and offers you guidance during the semester. The mentor program also throws a monthly event where you can meet the other international students and the other mentors. [http://www.mun.ca/isa/mun\\_mentors/](http://www.mun.ca/isa/mun_mentors/).
- Any difficulties?

There were a couple of frustrating moments because of housing, MUN doesn't offer special help in that category so students should figure it out by themselves. The hostels are a bit pricy but they are worth it for the first few days so you can check apartments out in person. There are enough of apartments in close proximity to school.

#### Visa Procedure and travel experiences

- What problems, if any did you encounter?

Icelandic citizens staying in Canada for less than 6 months don't need Visa.
- How did you order your ticket – any problems?

I booked a one-way ticket to St. John's a couple of months in advance. Be sure that the flight's booked to St. John's airport YYT but not to Saint John YSJ. Apparently that's a mistake commonly made...

### Academic Calendar

- Arrival date – introductory week  
**Orientation is commonly 2 days before school starts. Be sure to check-in with the ISA office after arrival.**
- First day of the semester?  
**September 4th.**
- Last day of classes?  
**December 4th.**
- Examination period?  
**December 9-18th.**
- Any special events?  
**Semester break: October 14-16th**  
**See further at [http://www.mun.ca/regoff/registration/relevant\\_dates.php](http://www.mun.ca/regoff/registration/relevant_dates.php)**

### Reception

- How was the reception at the school?  
**Excellent. They provide you with any information you need at the ISA office.**
- Was the administration and faculty well prepared for your arrival?  
**Yes, they have a check-in exchange students are required to do.**
- Did the school's students participate in the reception of the exchange students?  
**If asked for. They have an airport pickup program exchange students can request. A student from MUN will then wait your arrival at the airport and provide you with a taxi and pay the ride up to \$30. <https://www.mun.ca/isa/new/pickup.php>**

### Housing

- Did you have housing at your disposal or did you have to find your own housing?  
**I had to find my own housing. I signed a lease for the whole semester two months prior to my departure. I would recommend to stay at a hostel for the first couple of days to be able to look at apartments before being stuck in a lease.**
- What support did you receive from the school in locating housing?  
**They posted a couple of links online to available houses but the employees at the hostel are used to advice good apartments to students in need.**
- Any special issues or good ideas for prospective students?  
**I wasn't happy with my landlord, it was hard to get him to pay me the security deposit back so I advise to ask for the deposit a week or two before leaving St. John's.**

### Costs

- Describe the most important expenses such as rent, books, food, etc.  
**Rent was the biggest expense. The coursebooks are from \$60-\$120.**

### The International Office

- Is there an international office?  
**Yes.**
- Who is responsible for incoming exchange students?  
**MUN International Student Advicing Office.**
- How does the international office function?  
**You can drop in on their open hours with questions regarding anything. They are very helpful. Emails are efficient as well.**
- Do you receive all relevant information?  
**Yes. If they can't help they should redirect you to somebody who can.**

### Social Activities

- How is your relationship with other students?  
**Very good.**
- How is the relationship among the exchange students?  
**Very good.**
- Is there a student organization, and if so, are the exchange students part of it?

**Yes, each department has their own student room where the organization will throw mixers throughout the semester. Exchange students are free to participate.**

- Are there any special activities and gatherings for exchange students?  
**Yes. MUN ISA held quite many events and gatherings for the exchange and international students.**
- How do you like it at the school?  
**Really well. Enough of various things to do. Places to relax. Places for intense studying and adequate places to eat. The bus system is okay as well. Bus 10 and 15 stop at MUN Centre, they go both to Avalon Mall and downtown which are not too far away. 20 minute walk to Avalon Mall and maybe 30 minutes to downtown.**

#### Culture and Language

- Do you have any language problems with the faculty or other students?  
**None.**
- How are the possibilities to experience the country and the culture?  
**Very good. The international committee at MUN is strong and throws many events at the campus bar for students to experience and enrich in other people's culture. They have a „Welcome to St. John's“ event where they take you to see Signal Hill, Cape Spear, Quidi Vidi Lake among other places.**

#### Cultural and Social Effects from the Exchange Experience

- How do you think the exchange experience influences your future career possibilities?  
**I have contacts in various places in the world in the same field as me which could be very beneficial after graduation.**

### **III ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

#### The Teaching situation

- In which language are the courses taught? Any problems?  
**All courses were taught in english. No problems.**
- How would you evaluate the level of study in relationship to the level at RU?  
**The Computer Science department at MUN is not at RU's level yet.**
- Is the teaching primarily practical or theoretical?  
**There was more focus on theoretical material at MUN.**
- Are the professors using cases, group work or lectures (or a mix)?  
**Lectures, labs where the last 10 minutes students take an exam regarding the material gone through in the lab, not much of group work.**
- How is the workload compared to that at RU?  
**Weekly projects but not as difficult as at RU.**
- How is the relationship between faculty and students?  
**There is a good chance of establishing a good relationship with faculty.**
- What is the relationship between the students in the classroom?  
**Good.**

#### Exams

- What types of exams were you given?  
**One practical exam in HKR, but all other exams I took were written.**
- What knowledge level was required to pass the exams?  
**50% sufficed to pass the exam.**

#### Other

- Do students have easy access to the library and it's resources?  
**Yes. With a MUN Student ID card everything should run smoothly. There's a wifi on campus which you can set up at the library.**
- How is the access to the computers?  
**Good. Labs on every floor in the engineering building where students can log into a computer set up with linux on their student ID.**

- How is IT used in the teaching or as a distributor of information?  
They use <http://online.mun.ca> where you have access to course information and grades. Some teachers might put up the lecture slides, project descriptions, etc online as well.

Description of Courses

Course name:	Prereq.	Exam	Major at RU	Approved as (Common/elective/extra)
Introduction to Algorithms and Data Structures - COMP 2711	COMP 2710	Written	Comp. Science	Algorithms/Reiknirit (Common)
Basic Computing and Information Technology - COMP 1600	<i>None</i>	Written	Comp. Science	Databases/Gagnasafnsfræði (Common)
Calculus I - MATH 1000	MATH 1090 or placement test	Written	Comp. Science	Calculus I /Stærðfræðigreining (Common)
Resistance Training for Health and Activity - HKR 1001	<i>None</i>	Written		Elective

Names and e-mails:

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