

CONCORDIA STUDENT EXCHANGE PRE-DEPARTURE PROGRAM



WHY YOU NEED A PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

The Exchange Pre-Departure Program is a key part of your international learning journey. It will guide you through personal, academic, and administrative preparations for your time abroad.

What you will Learn

By the end of this session, you will understand:

Academic and administrative steps to complete prior to leaving, when you arrive at your host and when you return to Concordia

Visa requirements and how to prepare for them

Budgeting tips for managing finances abroad

Safety practices to follow while traveling

Health management and cultural adaptation techniques

Other essential pre-departure information

Goals

This session will:

Provide practical information for pre-departure, your stay abroad, and return to Concordia.

Help you set realistic goals and expectations for your exchange experience.

Equip you with tools and strategies to navigate challenges while abroad.

Roles and Responsibilities in the Exchange Program

Concordia International:

Your first point of contact for non-academic issues. Concordia International is responsible for:

- Managing non-academic issues related to the exchange program
- Administering the Quebec Mobility Bursary
- Handling exchange coding and other related processes
- Overseeing the receipt and processing of official transcripts from your host institution
- Correspondence with the host institution on matters such as:
 - Medical & travel insurance advisement
 - Legal issues
 - Emergency contact information

Your Faculty:

Responsible for all academic-related matters, including:

- Approving courses and assisting with transfer of credits
- Waiving pre-requisites, if applicable
- Providing registration assistance post-exchange
- Supporting potential graduates with academic advising

Your Responsibilities:

As a student, you are responsible for:

- Meeting all **academic and non-academic requirements** at both **Concordia** and your **host institution**

BEFORE LEAVING CONCORDIA

ACADEMIC
PROCEDURES

HOST ADMISSION PROCESS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Admission Letter Timeline:

You will receive your admission letter two months after the host application deadline.

• Final Admission Decision:

Your host university makes the final decision regarding your admission and the availability of courses.

• Submission of Admission Letter:

Ensure that your International Liaison Officer (ILO) has a copy of your admission letter.

• Meeting Deadlines:

It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet all deadlines set by your host university.

Registration at Concordia during your Exchange Semester

Course Registration:	Register for courses at Concordia for the semester you plan to be on exchange
STOQ Coding	All exchange students will receive a course placeholder code: STOQ (Studies Outside Quebec)
STOQ credits	Undergraduate Students: STOQ=15 Concordia credits (equivalent to full-time tuition) Graduate Students: STOQ = Full-time Status
STOQ Code Activation	The STOQ code will be added closer to your departure after completing the pre-departure requirements and receiving the host admission letter
Importance of Maintaining Full-Time Status	The STOQ code ensures you remain a full-time student at a Quebec university. STOQ Code doesn't ensure that you are registered full-time at your host university. IMPORTANT: Do not drop this coding in your MyConcordia portal.

Dropping Concordia courses prior to DNE

You are responsible for dropping all Concordia courses you have enrolled in for the exchange semester by the DNE deadline.

Warning: Failure to drop the courses means you will be charged for both the STOQ credits and the Concordia courses.

Registration at Host University

Course Availability:	Host institutions cannot guarantee enrollment in desired courses Flexibility in course selection is required
Course Approval	Only take courses that have been approved in writing by your department or faculty advisor
Credit Requirements	Verify with your faculty the number of courses/credits needed to meet Concordia's minimum full-time registration requirement. Minimum Equivalent: 12 Concordia credits Maximum Equivalent: 15 Concordia credits Graduate Students: Must maintain a full-time course load
Variation in Course Requirements	The number of courses required to meet Concordia's minimum/maximum full-time course load will vary by institution. Each host institution has its own registration system.
Grading Policy	Courses graded with pass/fail (P=Pass or F=Fail) will not be credited towards your degree.

HOW DO I GET MY COURSES APPROVED

Course Approval Process

Follow the instructions on your Faculty's website for course approval. For any questions, contact your Faculty's academic advisor via email:

- **Arts & Science:** Email your department advisor and CC: fas.exchange@concordia.ca
- **John Molson School of Business (JMSB):** CSEPrequest.jmsb@concordia.ca
- **Fine Arts:** amanda.holt@concordia.ca
- **Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science (GCS):** sakib.shahid@concordia.ca
- **Graduate Students:** Contact your Graduate Program Director (GPD)

BEFORE LEAVING CONCORDIA

**Travel
Preparation**

IMPORTANT TRAVEL & VISA INFORMATION

Passport Validity: Ensure your passport is valid for at least **6 months** beyond your return date.

Student Visa Requirements:

- A **host university admission letter** is required to apply for a student visa.
- Check your host country's **immigration office website** for specific student visa requirements.

Purpose of Travel:

- Your primary reason for going abroad is to **study, not work**. Be mindful of visa restrictions regarding employment.

Dual Citizenship Considerations:

- Investigate whether your **dual citizenship status** could affect your visa application or travel plans.

ACCOMMODATIONS



On-Campus Housing:

- Not all institutions offer on-campus housing.
- If available, **apply early** to secure a spot.

Off-Campus Housing:

- If on-campus housing is unavailable, you will need to **arrange independent accommodations**.
- Be aware of potential challenges in finding housing—**start your research early**.
- **Watch out for scams** when searching for accommodations.

Adjusting to New Living Standards:

- Housing abroad may differ from what you're used to at home.
- Do thorough research and be prepared to **adapt** to different living conditions.

Resources:

- Review **Student Exchange Reports** from previous participants for insights into housing options that past Concordia students have chosen.

BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

Do not book any flight until you have received your official admission notice from your host university

You are financially responsible for all travel costs to and from your host destination

You may want to purchase a travel insurance package to cover

- Flight cancellation
- Trip interruption
- Baggage/personal belongings

You can apply for travel funding via LOJIO if you are a permanent Quebec resident. Information regarding their application process has been sent to all CSEP participants



HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE



Health Insurance Requirements:

Ensure you meet the health insurance requirements of your **host university** and **country**.



Concordia Health Insurance:

Some students may be able to use their **Concordia health insurance coverage** while abroad.

For details, consult the **Studentcare** website.



Additional Insurance Considerations:

Consider the following types of insurance:

- **Emergency and medical evacuation**
- **Repatriation insurance**
- **Travel cancellation insurance**
- **Property insurance**
- **Liability insurance**



Mandatory Health Insurance:

Be aware that your host institution or country may require you to purchase their **health insurance coverage**.



Quebec Health Insurance (RAMQ) coverage

Notification Requirements:

- If you have **RAMQ coverage**, you must contact RAMQ to notify them of the dates you will be studying abroad.
- Failure to do so may result in your public health coverage expiring if you are away for more than **183 days**. Note that the days spent on exchange will count toward this limit.

Coverage for Students Abroad:

Students who inform RAMQ that they will be studying abroad:

- Will remain covered for the entire duration of their studies as if they were still in Canada.
- Will have the **183-day countdown** start only after the exchange semester ends, provided they remain outside Canada.

Required Documentation:

- To maintain coverage, students must complete a specific form, which is mailed by RAMQ to their home address in Quebec. This form is **not available online**.

Additional Information:

- For more details on the RAMQ process for students studying abroad, please visit the official **RAMQ website**.

HEALTH AND WELNESS WHILE ABROAD



Research Destination:

Understand local healthcare systems and wellness resources.



Medical Exams:

Ensure you have taken necessary medical, dental and eye examinations prior to departure.

Concordia health clinic provides medical exams and some vaccinations for students travelling abroad.



Vaccinations:

Make certain to get all immunizations required by your host country or any country that you may be travelling to while on exchange.



Medication Management:

Pack necessary medications with a doctor's note; know local pharmacy options.

Make sure any medication you need to take is legal in your destination country.

Pack a First Aid Kit and wear Medic Bracelet if needed.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO COPY

Make copies of important documents:

- Passport
- Admission letter
- Prescriptions
- Medical records
- Keep a set in Canada and take a set with you

AUTHENTICATOR APP (MFA SIGN-IN)

- **Install Microsoft Authenticator app:**

- Ensures access to your Concordia account while abroad
- Replaces text message which might not work abroad
- Visit <https://aka.ms/mfasetup> using an incognito/private browsing
- If you are student, please sign in with your netname@live.concordia.ca email address. The password is the same password you use to login to concordia.ca
- From there click on the "Change" button at the top of the page to input a new authentication method



WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM

Common reasons for withdrawing from exchange

- Lack of adequate financial resources
- Death or illness in the family
- Inability to find adequate number transferable equivalent courses
- Other academic or work commitments

Steps to take when you withdraw from exchange

- Please inform your Concordia International ILO **IN WRITING** as soon as you know that you will withdraw from the program
- Make certain that if you have already been STOQ coded, that the code is removed from your transcript
- If you withdraw after DNE deadline / during your exchange semester, you will be responsible for the tuition fees that the STOQ has charged you
- Your bursary application will not be processed or if you have already begun your exchange and withdraw while on exchange, you may be required to reimburse the bursary

ARRIVING AT YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY

Settling in and
studying abroad

COMPLETING & SUBMITTING THE CONFIRMATION OF ARRIVAL

Complete and return the Confirmation of Arrival form to Concordia International MAXIMUM two weeks after your course registration is finalized at your host institution

Take this form to your host institution's International/Exchange office for a signature and/or stamp confirming that you are enrolled at that university

Return this form to Concordia International by e-mail (international@concordia.ca)

Not returning this form could result in having your exchange status at Concordia cancelled

We cannot finish processing your Quebec Mobility Bursary until we have received this form



CONCORDIA INTERNATIONAL

CONFIRMATION OF ARRIVAL

1 GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

This form is intended for students who are participating in an internship/ research project/ study program outside Quebec. For the purpose of receiving your mobility funding, you must return this form within 3 weeks of the start date of your activity abroad along with a boarding pass or other proof of arrival.

1. Complete the "Student Information" section of this form
2. Have your host institution's International office/supervisor complete and stamp the bottom section
3. Return this form to Concordia International by e-mail international@concordia.ca

2 STUDENT INFORMATION

Concordia ID# : _____

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Email: _____

Year: _____

Concordia semester: Summer Fall Winter Academic Year

Host Institution: _____

Host Country: _____

I understand that I must maintain a full time enrolment at Concordia University while abroad.

I understand that I may be required to re-pay all or part of my mobility funding if I do not complete my internship/research/ study program outside Québec.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

3 HOST INSTITUTION (to be completed by your project supervisor or the International office)

First, Last name: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

I confirm that the student has arrived and started his/her internship/research/ Study program:

Yes No

Start date: DD/M/YYYY To End date: DD/M/YYYY

Date: _____ Signature and/or institutional stamp

Date: _____

QUEBEC MOBILITY BURSARY

Quebec Mobility Bursary (via CSEP Application):	No separate application is required for the Quebec Mobility Bursary; it's included in your CSEP application
Requirements:	You must remain registered full-time while on exchange Undergraduate (UG): Minimum 12 credits Graduate (G): Full-time status required
Must have completed a minimum of:	24 credits (UG) or 9 credits (G) by the time you leave for exchange
Bursary Confirmation and Payment:	Your bursary will be confirmed once: You receive your official admission letter from the host institution. STOQ has been added for you. Payment will be processed after you have submitted the Confirmation of Arrival form to Concordia International

ADAPTING TO LIFE ABROAD

Cultural norms and
differences

Cultural Awareness

Opportunity for Growth: Studying abroad offers a unique chance to develop **professional, language, and intercultural** skills.

Cultural Differences Matter: Even in countries that seem geographically or culturally similar (like within Europe), **cultural differences** should not be underestimated.

Immersive Learning: Unlike a short holiday, living abroad provides an opportunity to **immerse yourself** in a new environment, allowing for a deeper understanding of that country's culture.

Challenges of Cultural Understanding: You may encounter situations where **cultural misunderstandings** arise due to aspects of the culture that are not immediately apparent.

THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

10% - what we see
SURFACE CULTURE

Food
Flags Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

DEEP CULTURE
90% - what we
don't see

Communications Styles and Rules:
Facial Expressions Gestures Eye Contact
Personal Space Touching Body Language
Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations
Handling and Displaying of Emotion
Tone of Voice

Notions of:

Courtesy and Manners
Friendship Leadership
Cleanliness Modesty
Beauty

Concepts of:

Self Time Past and Future
Fairness and Justice
Roles related to Age, Sex,
Class, Family, etc.

Attitudes toward:

Elders Adolescents Dependents
Rule Expectations Work Authority
Cooperation vs. Competition
Relationships with Animals Age
Sin Death

Approaches to:

Religion Courtship Marriage
Raising Children Decision-Making
Problem Solving

THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE CLASSROOM



Eating in Class: Considered impolite and strongly discouraged.



Dress Code:

Avoid wearing **sweatpants, flip-flops, or pajamas** to class.

Many partner institutions expect students to dress **formally** and **conservatively**.



Email Etiquette:

Avoid sending "one-liner" emails.

Always begin with a proper greeting and address the recipient by name.

Include your **full name, host institution student ID number** (if applicable), and mention that you are an **exchange student**.



Punctuality:

Arriving late to class is widely regarded as disrespectful.



Attendance:

Regular attendance is crucial; missing more than **two classes** without a medical note may lead to a failing grade at certain partner institutions.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES



- **Communication styles and rules:**
 - Public displays of affection: in many countries PDA is frowned upon and considered offensive
 - Body Language: Slouching in your chair, sitting with your arms crossed, or yawning in class may be considered disrespectful
 - Expecting the same “student-friendly” service offered by Concordia University at your host institution’s internal offices/departments
- **Concepts of time:**
 - Waiting for a response from administrative at your host bodies may be longer than what you are used to at Concordia
- **Attitudes toward authority:**
 - Confronting authority figures or professors regarding grading, assignments etc. may not be perceived in the same manner as it would be at Concordia

MANAGING YOUR EXPECTATIONS

You may find that your personal expectations of the country, its people, the institution, etc. do not match reality

Identify the reasons you wish to study abroad

What are your impressions of the country where you will be living? Are they realistic?

Research your host country as much as you can in advance

Learn the laws and customs

Expectation	Reality
Exciting New Culture	Culture shock can be overwhelming; adjustments take time
Fluent Language Skills	Language barriers may persist, and communication can be challenging.
Easy Social Integration	Making friends can be difficult, and building relationships takes effort.
Beautiful Living Conditions	Accommodation may not always meet expectations; it can be basic or shared.
Travel Opportunities	Travel can be expensive and time-consuming; schedules may be restrictive.
Learning Opportunities	Learning can be challenging due to different teaching styles and expectations.
Personal Growth and Independence	While independence grows, feelings of loneliness and homesickness can also increase.
Cultural Exchange	Misunderstandings can happen, and navigating cultural differences requires sensitivity.
Networking and Career Opportunities	Building a professional network takes time and may not yield immediate benefits.
Unique Extracurricular Activities	Opportunities may be limited or different than expected; involvement takes effort.
Support from Fellow Exchange Students	Not all exchange students will bond; some may feel isolated in their experiences.
<p>Conclusion Exchange students should prepare for both the highs and lows of their experience. Being open-minded and adaptable can help them navigate the differences between their expectations and reality.</p>	

MENTAL HEALTH WHILE ON EXCHANGE

Tips for Maintaining Your Wellbeing

- 1. Keep an Open Mind**
Embrace new experiences and perspectives.
- 2. Attend Orientation and Welcome Activities**
Engage with the university community from the start.
- 3. Join Student Groups**
Connect with others who share similar interests and experiences.
- 4. Develop Patterns and Routines**
Establishing a daily routine can provide stability.
- 5. Explore Your Surroundings**
Take time to discover your new environment and local culture.
- 6. Set and Achieve Small Goals**
Focus on attainable objectives to build confidence and motivation.
- 7. Focus on Language Acquisition**
Improving your language skills can enhance your experience and communication.
- 8. Exercise Regularly**
Physical activity can reduce stress and improve overall mental health.



MENTAL HEALTH WHILE ON EXCHANGE

Seeking Additional Support

- For further assistance in managing stress, consider reaching out to:
- The host university's **international office**.
- Your **international liaison officer** at Concordia International.
- Additionally, **Concordia University Health Services** offers valuable resources on stress management and other health topics, including nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and sleep. For more information, visit concordia.ca/healthyliving.

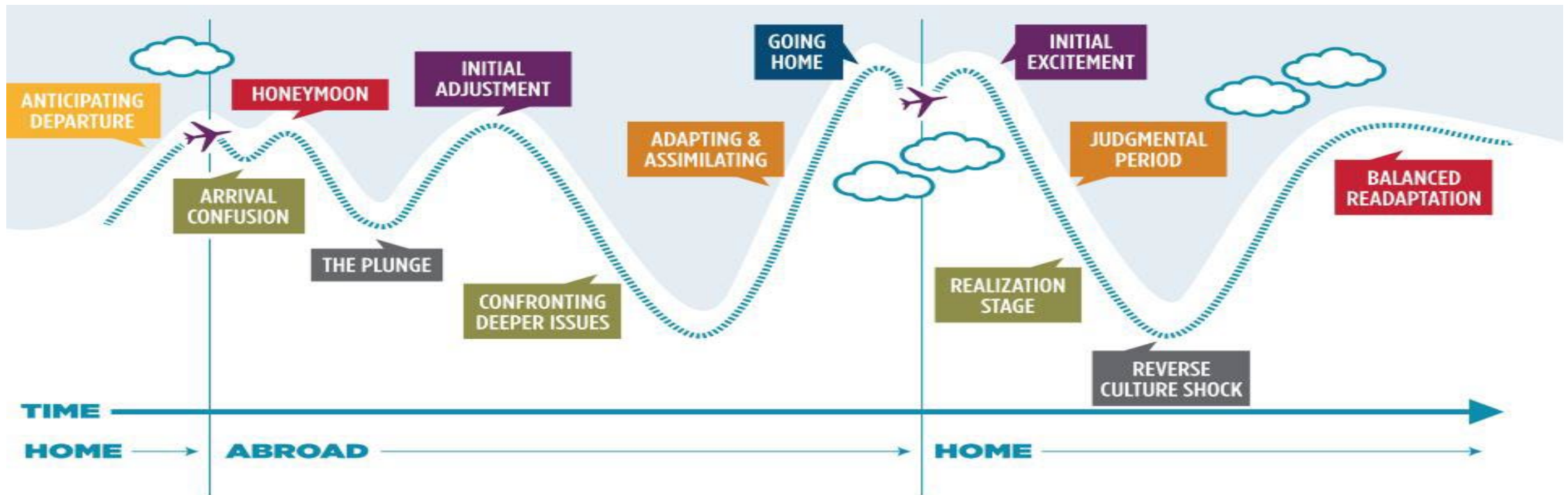
Staying in touch is critical!

- Make sure to check your email regularly for news and updates from your ILO (make sure that we have your most current e-mail address)
- Join the MS Teams CSEP Peer-to-Peer Platform
- Contact our [Student Exchange Ambassadors](#) for practical tips
- Send us photos or stories of your exchange , we'll be happy to share them on our Instagram account (@Concordia.International)
- Keep in touch with your family and friends on a regular basis
- Register at the local Embassy or Consulate of your nationality



STAGES OF EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

You may pass through these stages in a different order or skip some stages altogether



CONCORDIA GLOBAL LEARNING PORTAL

FINANCIAL and RISK
AWARENESS TRAVEL
MODULES

MANDATORY CONCORDIA GLOBAL LEARNING PORTAL

You will soon receive an invitation to access the **Concordia Global Learning Portal**, hosted on Moodle.

- **Key Information:**
- **Purpose:** The portal provides interactive modules focusing on:
 - Financial aspects related to your semester abroad
 - Risk Awareness Travel
- **Mandatory Participation:**
 - All CSEP participants must join the portal.
 - Completion of **four interactive modules** on Risk Awareness Travel is required.
- **Benefits:**
- Equip Concordia students traveling overseas with essential information and strategies to manage:
 - Personal health and safety
 - Emergency situations
- All CSEP participants must complete Concordia Travel Registry prior to their departure. Link to access it will be sent to you by Concordia International.

RETURNING HOME

EXCHANGE REPORT,
TRANSCRIPT & TRANSFER
CREDITS

Student Exchange Report and Photo Contest

Share Your Experience!

- This is your opportunity to provide feedback on your host institution and your semester(s) abroad.

Mandatory Submission:

- Submitting a **Student Exchange Report** is required for all CSEP participants.
- Your ILO will send a reminder by email towards the end of your exchange.

Important Note:

- Failure to submit the report will result in **no credit transfer** being requested.

Publication of Reports:

- Concordia International publishes selected Student Exchange Reports on our website to assist future exchange participants.
- If you prefer your report not to be published, please inform your ILO upon submission.

Upcoming Event:

- **CSEP Photo Contest:** More information will be shared soon!

TRANSCRIPT & TRANSFER CREDITS

Credit transfer is requested by Concordia International upon receipt of your official host university transcript

Your faculty transfers your credits – can take up to 3 months

Only courses that have been pre-approved will get transferred

STOQ code remains on your transcript

ACADEMIC YEAR 2010-11										
FALL-WINTER										
Course		Course Name	Credits	Grade/Notation/GPA	Class Avg	Class Size	Program Credits Earned	Other		
PSYC 321		Transfer Credit: MAASTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
PSYC 464		Transfer Credit: MAASTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
PSYC 483		Transfer Credit: MAASTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
PSYC B		Transfer Credit: MAASTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
STOQ 001	/2	ZZ STUDIES OUTSIDE QUEBEC A	0.00							
PSYC 333		Transfer Credit: MAASTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
PSYC 363		Transfer Credit: MAASTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
PSYC 433		Transfer Credit: MAASTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
PSYC 387		Transfer Credit: MASSTRICHT UNIV				2010-11	3.00			
STOQ 001	/4	ZZ STUDIES OUTSIDE QUEBEC A	0.00							
ACADEMIC YEAR 2011-12										
FALL-WINTER										
Course		Course Name	Credits	Grade/Notation/GPA	Class Avg	Class Size	Program Credits Earned	Other		
EXCI 251	/2	AA FUNDAMENT-HLTH&PHYS ACTIVITY	3.00	A (4.0)	3.17	158	3.00			
FFAR 298T	/2	A SPECIAL TOPICS IN FINE ARTS	3.00	A (4.0)	3.05	81	3.00			
		(CENSORING POP CULT./AMERICA)								
PSYC 311	/2	01 RESEARCH METHS & DESIGNS II	3.00	A (4.0)	3.52	44	3.00			



Eligibility for Refund:

Undergraduates who register for and successfully complete the equivalent of **12 previously approved credits** will be refunded the **3-credit difference**.

Refunds will be issued once credits have been transferred by faculty after the exchange.



Refund Process:

Refund requests are submitted by **Concordia International**.

Processed by the **Student Accounts Office**.



Conditions for No Refund: You will **not** receive a credit refund if any of the following conditions apply:

You registered for **less than 12 Concordia credits**.

You registered for the **equivalent of 15 Concordia credits**.

REFUND POLICY FOR UNDERGRADUATE CREDITS



CLOSING REMARKS

Don't forget...

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Remember:
 - This is an academic exchange, not a vacation
 - You are representing Concordia University and Canada
 - You are expected to perform well academically - your reputation and Concordia University's reputation are valuable
 - Be considerate and aware of cultural values of your host country and respect them
 - Do not behave in a way you would not behave at home

ASIA, AMERICAS, OCEANIA & UK

Christine Archer

christine.archer@concordia.ca

EUROPE, AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

Pauliina Rouleau

pauliina.rouleau@concordia.ca

MOBILITY BURSARY

international@concordia.ca

**CONCORDIA
INTERNATIONAL
CONTACTS**



**GO FORTH WITH CURIOSITY AND
ENTHUSIASM**
