

# **My Dual Degree Adventure: Studying International Business in Kingston and Maastricht**

My name is Ella Anderson, and I recently completed a Dual Degree Programme, earning a Master of International Business from Queen's University, Canada, and a Master of Science in International Business from Maastricht University, Netherlands. My journey began at Queen's University, my home institution, where I spent the fall semester before transitioning to Maastricht at the end of January. I completed one semester of coursework at Maastricht University, followed by working on my thesis from the summer until early October. This experience provided me with a unique opportunity to learn in two exceptional academic environments and develop the skills necessary to excel in international business.

Having already experienced a dual degree program during my undergraduate studies with the University of Ottawa and KEDGE Business School in Bordeaux, I was eager to pursue another one. The opportunity to study at two highly regarded institutions allowed me to broaden my understanding of global business dynamics while immersing myself in diverse cultural and academic environments. I enjoy stepping outside of my comfort zone and challenging myself in new situations to learn more about myself and the world around me. I also welcomed the opportunity to live abroad again, further broadening my international perspective.

The first semester of the Dual Degree programme at Queen's stood out for its close-knit atmosphere and sense of community. The school organized numerous activities, such as a culture night, where students brought food from their home countries and participated in a talent show, and a networking event in Toronto that provided valuable professional connections. A canoe trip during "welcome week" and the end-of-semester dinner were other highlights. Courses are conducted traditionally with a professor teaching in front of approximately 25/30 students, but participation is still very much present. Teamwork is also a big part of every course. The global consulting project was a standout experience, allowing me to gain real-world consulting expertise that directly contributed to securing my upcoming internship. The career office at Queen's also provided exceptional support, helping me refine my CV and cover letters and prepare for interviews.

Transitioning to Maastricht University required adapting to its Problem-Based Learning (PBL) format, which was different from the more traditional teaching style I was accustomed to. I quickly grew to appreciate the smaller class sizes and the emphasis on discussion and active learning. Specializing in Strategy and Innovation, I found the courses engaging and impactful. The thesis process was demanding, but it pushed me to new levels of academic rigor and left me proud of the final result.

In terms of practical matters, I arranged housing for Queen's through Facebook groups, securing a place in May and moving in by August. I recommend looking relatively early if you want to find something less expensive. I chose to live further from school to pay less rent. The Kingston city bus pass, provided by the university, made getting around convenient. However, public transportation doesn't run very late. If you are going out at night with friends your options, then are walking or taking an Uber. For Maastricht, I was fortunate that I already had a close friend from Maastricht who helped me find accommodation. For future students, I recommend leveraging personal connections or starting your housing search early. In Maastricht, I primarily walked or used an old bike I purchased from another student. I also got an NS pass to travel further in the Netherlands via train.

At Queen's, I worked a part-time job for about 15 hours per week, which was manageable alongside my course load. Students organized activities and met up regularly. Social activities included soccer games, movie screenings, and group outings. As I was in my home country, I didn't travel much, but I

did do 3 weekend trips with some students to Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. In Maastricht, the coursework was heavier, so I stopped my part-time job after completing my first 2 courses. The city is beautiful and lively from all the international and local students. Highlights included Carnival at the start of the semester, an international student open-mic night, various city parades, and a free museum event. I also traveled to Lithuania and Poland during the week off. During the summer and in the fall (after my thesis), I traveled to surrounding European countries, as well as explored the Netherlands extensively.

For potential future students, my advice is to be organized, seek help when needed, and take full advantage of the resources available at both institutions. Both institutions have great staff with resources to help you academically and professionally. Post-graduation, I plan to leverage my Dual Degree experience to pursue a career in consulting. This January, I will start an internship in management consulting with KPMG in Canada. This opportunity aligns perfectly with my long-term career goals, and I am eager to apply the global perspectives, analytical abilities, and adaptability I have developed. I am excited about what comes next and will cherish the memories I have made during the dual degree!



The Smith School of Business building and MIB classroom

