



JOHNSON
Cornell University

הפקולטה לניהול
אוניברסיטת תל-אביב



Tel Aviv University
School of Management

General Experience

Studying abroad as an exchange student will most certainly be one of the best experiences you'll have in your life. My experience was splendid. I got an opportunity to meet people from all over the world, get to know their culture, learn from my fellow students and from top professors in their field – some are also industry leaders, and most importantly have the best time of my life in one of the most beautiful campuses around the US.

So, I encourage you to ignore all of your doubts and start the journey named “Exchange Program” at Johnson Grad School of Management, Cornell University.

Following you'll find the necessary steps (and a little extra) to get through this experience.

Accommodations

First thing to take care of! Once you got accepted, first thing to do is to take care of a place to stay.

You can reach out Cornell housing office (which I did) and ask for housing options (Ask your POC¹ at Cornell to give you information). That would be the easiest option where most utilities are taken care of – laundry, mailing, bills, etc. Cornell University offers Graduate students housing options:

- Maplewood housing – where I lived along with ~50% of the exchange program students. 4 bedroom apartment, fair condition (don't develop any high expectations). 15 min walk from Business school and from Collegetown (campus center, bars, restaurants).
One thing to clarify with them is whether it is available (they were planning on shutting down the place when I left to build new ones instead – but still worth trying).
Cost: 850\$ per month
- Hasbrouk Housing - pretty far from campus and central area.

Another option is renting an apartment/room which won't be easy since getting a contract for 4 months only - is challenging.

- Try craigslist.com – some of my exchange group found places/sublets through this website (US version for Yad2) Cost range: 800-1200\$

¹ POC = Point of contact

- Ask your POC at Cornell to get you inside the Facebook group of your exchange program ASAP so you can plan on finding a place together with some of them. Sometimes other students post accommodation opportunities in there.

One last recommendation – wherever you choose to live, take into consideration the distance from Collogetown, if you're interested in going out and having fun!

VISA

- Upon acceptance to the program, send an email to your POC at Cornell and ask about the VISA issuing process. You'll be required to:
 - Fill an I-20 request which as a student VISA request
 - Submit a financial balance showing you are able to finance your participation ~8500\$ (Bank approval)
 - Consider the type of VISA:
 - F-1: a student VISA, only for studying (the default you'd get)
 - J-1: a student VISA with permission to work for 3 months as an intern – that's more complicated, ask your POC for more information.
- Ask your Cornell POC to send you an I-20 file (sent via mail). Fill in the application and send it back to Cornell. This is a very important file that goes with your passport during the entire semester as part of your VISA.
- Fill in the US embassy VISA application online and set an appointment at the embassy.
- Hope for approval.

Insurance and Health Services

Every Cornell student is covered by the University Insurance (which will cost you ~1000\$ per semester – that's mandatory).

You will receive a health examination file to fill in with your doctor, asking for blood test results, immunization information and other data. You can either send it to Cornell Health Center (Gannet) or submit it when you get there (pretty close to business school).

Transportation

- Flight ticket – try to get one early on, since the semester starts at August, the most expensive time of the year to fly to the US.
- **Getting to Ithaca:** If you're flying to NYC, you can take a *shortline* bus from "Port Authority Bus Station" at Manhattan, NYC directly to Cornell Campus (~50\$ one way, ~5 hours ride)
You can also take a special bus operated by Cornell called "C2C"(Campus to Campus). This bus also leaves from NYC and considered more comfortable (~90\$ one way, ~4 hours ride)
You can also get to Ithaca by flight, however, that might be an expensive choice since Ithaca airport is less populated with flights.

- Getting around Ithaca: The very first day of the semester you will receive a Student Card(ID) of Cornell – this card serves also as a bus ticket, and for free (all first years/exchange students gets that). Ithaca bus system is pretty bad, but it is nice to have it for free – you can get to the Commons, Collegetown, Shopping Centers (Walmart, TOP, Wegmans). You can also use Taxies which are pretty expensive.
- Getting out of Ithaca: Car rental – Budget/Avis, from Ithaca airport. Enterprise, from downtown.

Courses

Enrolling business school courses is a bit complicated:

- Enrolment is open since mid-July, pay attention to emails and make sure you receive them on a regular basis so you won't miss important notifications.
- You can enroll full semester courses or half semester (7 weeks) courses for the first/second half. All courses have cancelation period, therefore, you should enroll to more courses than you are planning to take so you could cancel those you don't want.
- If you failed to enroll those you wanted – don't give up, go to the first class and hope someone will drop it and you can get it from the waiting list.
- Be patient – Cornell's enrolment system is a mess and very frustrating to operate (studentcenter)
- The courses I studied:
 - **Management Practicum (Professor Randy Allen)**
A hands-on consulting course, in which students are working on a project with a US industry firm on different business issues – marketing, strategy, operations, etc. Very demanding, but interesting and extremely useful skills.
 - **Managerial Decision Making (Professor J.Russo)**
How to build a good process of decision making – liked the course and the professor very much.
 - **Project problem Solving (Professor Nathan Peck)**
Best professor in school (in my opinion), more of consulting oriented – how to lead a change in a firm – studying from a case and presenting to a CEO level your conclusions.
 - **Managerial Spreadsheet Modeling (Professor Larry Robinson)**
How to build good financial models and leverage Excel skills to do so (great useful Excel experience).
 - **Search for Alpha (Richard Marin)**
Introduction to the Hedge Funds industry, investment banking and the securities market.
 - **Oral Communication (Not Graded)**
Small class setting with great practice of various business presentations.

A hands-on course, presenting every class to improve your presentation skills (and English if you need to)

- **Current topics in marketing (Not Graded)**

Guest speakers' course. Each class we had a professional from the industry providing a lecture and a case analysis. Very easy course.

- You are required to take at least 12 credits during the semester to sustain your Student VISA
- Upon enrolment – make sure you take graded courses if you'd like to have a chance to get recognition at Recanati when you get back, and make sure you collect courses' syllabus.

Getting along

Johnson Grad School of Management is very easy to get along in.

- The school has a buddy program where a local student welcomes you and helps you to get familiar with Cornell and Ithaca
- You can reach out to Israelis at Johnson or at Cornell via LinkedIn and the Facebook group – “Israelis in Ithaca”. They are a great source of information and friends
- You can reach out the Hillel center and the Israeli fellow at the Hillel(search for Cornell Hillel)
- There is also a Chabad center at Cornell – very nice and warm family

School atmosphere

I don't want to spoiler but Johnson Grad School of Management is a great place to be in. One of the best parts of my experience at this school was the community feeling. Johnson's pride is the school community atmosphere provided by students, staff, faculty, dean – everyone.

Every Thursday there is an event called Sage Social – I wish we had something like that in Israel, different clubs you can join (sports, business interests, wine club, beer club, etc.).

Remember, you are have a once in a life time opportunity to strengthen your network of connections with students, guest speakers (go for the dinners/lunches/other events with guest speakers!) and faculty.-

Recreation

If all of the above is not enough, well, there is much more to do and see!

- You'll get a chance to see upstate NY at the most beautiful time of the year - Fall
- Cornell is a beautiful campus – go travel around
 - Libraries
 - The tower
 - The museum
 - Cornell plantations

- Bebe lake
- Different schools (Law, ILR)
- Ithaca is gorgeous (and full of gorges) - Go see Ithaca and all of the different gorges: the various falls, Cayuga lake, Farmers market, the Dams, just Google it and you'll find more places to visit than you can.
- Go party at Collegetown – have a Bagel at Collegetown Bagles, drink as much as you can with all Johnson students at Rulloffs, crash some house parties around the campus and have a great time, and maybe you'll get a chance to taste the awful fishbowl drink at Level-B.
- Don't miss the Commons area with more bars (Moonies, Loco's) and restaurants, and meet some Ithaca College students.
- And if you have time & money – rent a car and go travel (preferably in groups), you are too close to NYC, Boston, Canada, Syracuse and so on.

Packing

You need summer and winter clothing. Don't even bother to take sheets/blankets/etc from here – just get it on Walmart – it's pretty cheap.

Get a suit – although usually people wear business casual (and some get even too lazy for that) you'll need your business apparel sooner than you think – most presentations, guest speakers and other activities require business formal clothing.

Outdoor gear if you're into traveling – and there is a lot to see.

You can also go out for shopping at Waterloo premium outlet (an hour ride up north) offering most brands you can think of.

Living Expenses

For 4 months you need approximately 45,000NIS including housing, food, going out, school expenses such as: insurance, books, cases studies.

Some people also took a food plan – paying in advance to eat at cafeterias.

I spent ~60,000 total including all living expenses, flights, a lot of trips (NYC, Boston, Canada, Miami, DC) and some shopping.

Services

Get familiar with services that makes your life easier – Amazon (you can get a prime membership for free as a student), Airbnb, Uber, etc.

Finally, all you have left is take a deep breath, and enjoy an amazing semester!

For more questions, please feel free to reach out to me at: menni.elashvily@gmail.com