

**Student: Emma**  
**Fall Semester 2014/15**  
**Semester 65**

I attended the Ontario Science Centre Science School during semester 65, and I can honestly say it has been one of the best decisions of my life. Coming from a rural town in southern Ontario, I have to admit I was a little apprehensive about committing to the experience. The idea of leaving my home and family for five months was daunting. But I am so glad I did. The whole experience was an incredible adventure. I had never lived in the city before, so that was an adventure in itself. Seeing the museums, the Toronto zoo, the CN tower- even being in the science centre every day was something new to explore.

Even if you live in Toronto, the unique atmosphere of the school alone is rewarding. The teachers are motivated, and dedicated to their students, especially considering there are 30 students maximum per semester! At the science centre, I got a lot of personal attention from my teachers that really helped mitigate any trouble that came with the brisk pace of learning. Aside from my teachers, I also spent a lot of time with my other classmates, and made a lot of friendships that I will treasure. With only thirty students, all of us sharing common interests, and many of us being away from home, we quickly became a tight-knit group. It was amazing to be surrounded by a handpicked group of passionate, intelligent, and friendly individuals, who all wanted to be there. Everyone, (though we may have complained about homework!) wanted to be there, and wanted to learn.

Science school gave us a chance to take control of our education, and follow our interests, in a way no other school can. I love science. I also love to interact with other people. For me, the science centre was an ideal learning space. I was able to learn science in the classroom, and practice soft skills on the floor interacting with visitors. I was able to develop my presentation and public speaking skills.

My time at the science centre also helped give me insight for my future. My time spent on the floor translated into a hosting position during March Break, which allows me to see an alternative job in the science field, dealing with science literacy. I was also able to narrow down my focus for university. I had known I wanted to go into the sciences, but I wasn't sure where exactly. Since science school was focused solely on science, I was able to explore specific subjects easily, eventually finding the one I like best. Leaving home and managing my time by myself was great practice for university as well.

While these benefits are something any science school alumni could tell you, I have a few aspects of the science school experience that I can personally discuss. First of all, I am an identified gifted student, and I came from a school with virtually no high school gifted programming. The science centre provided plenty of enrichment, and the classes move at a quick pace. There are also innovation periods, for working on various projects. The experience was

very stimulating, and there was never a lack of things to learn. Secondly, I am on an IEP (individualized education plan) for Post-Concussion Syndrome. I require a variety of accommodations for my school day, including extra time writing tests, taking frequent breaks, and a reduced workload. The teachers were all very supportive, and all my accommodations were met. I think the small classes really helped in terms of flexibility, and the teachers were readily available when I needed to catch up on work for days missed, or needing supervising to finish a test.

In conclusion, the Ontario Science Centre Science School was a great learning environment, and a great experience. I got a great science education, as well as a variety of other skills and friendships that will last much longer than my memories of organic chemistry. I highly recommend applying to everyone with a love of science.

- incredible adventure, living in the city
- a chance to take control of your education (choose to work in a science enriched environment)
- awesome people
- Many more opportunities
- Small class sizes with a real sense of community
- As a gifted student, with no real gifted programming at my high school, this was awesome
- Very understanding of health concerns.
- Public speaking