



## IT University Travel Report

**Host university:** Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

**Study Programme at IT University:** MSc Data Science

**Exchange agreement or Free mover:** Free mover at Partner University

### Courses studied abroad:

- Mobile Systems Development (COMP826)
- Neuroinformatics (COMP800)
- Digital Transformation and Change Management (ENSE881)

**Period studying abroad:** autumn 2024 (Semester 2, July-November)

**If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here:** [idza@itu.dk](mailto:idza@itu.dk)

## My stay abroad

Studying at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) was overall a positive experience. Compared to ITU, AUT is a much larger institution, which allows for more opportunities and a wider range of courses and various academic and social opportunities.

### Course selection and academic level

For course selection, I looked through the course catalogue for semester 2 for courses of master's level. My semester consisted entirely of electives, so it was somewhat easy to find courses as I didn't have anything to directly map the content to.

A Study Abroad coordination from AUT contacted me with a link to the course catalogue and to help me with the process. I gave my prioritizes for courses and initially got enrolled in my first, second and fourth priority. I did end up changing one of my courses within the first two weeks of the semester, as spots had opened up on my third priority.

This means I ended up having the courses Mobile Systems Development, Neuroinformatics, and Digital Transformation and Change Management, corresponding to 22,5 ECTS points.

The academic level is lower than at ITU. I found that most academic activities did not require as much as if I had been at ITU, and given the final grade is based on assignments throughout the semester it also took some pressure off from the actual exam period. Generally, I spent significantly less time on the academics than I would have back at ITU in Denmark. This is also considering that I only had courses for 22,5 ECTS points. My previous semester with the same ECTS points has been way busier than this one in New Zealand. All of my courses were level 8 (corresponding to graduate/masters level), but reminded me more of bachelor level at ITU. I had read travel reports

from former foreign students at AUT, so I did not expect the academic level to be high.

### **Social activities**

The university (AUT) offers lots of social activities. I personally enjoyed activities at the recreational center such as yoga and cooking classes, but they also offered dancing, gaming and tons of other events.

Generally, most of my social life revolved around my dorm, which also arranged a lot of social events. The first week consisted of daily orientation activities where a lot of my friendship evolved from. Most people in the dorm are international as well, so it is not the go-to place to meet and interact with locals. People are generally more straight-forward and welcoming than in Denmark, so it was not a challenge to meet locals elsewhere.

I also met friends through the AUT hike club, OffGrid, where I joined a couple of easy hikes. Furthermore, I joined the ski club from University of Auckland (UOA) on one of their weekend trips, as it wasn't required to be enrolled at UOA.

There are many ways to connect with others, whether that's through dorm life, university events, or shared interests. Overall, AUT provides an inclusive environment that makes it easy to build new friendships and engage in social activities – and additionally one can check out UOA.

### **Initial motivation and expectations**

I love to travel and going abroad felt like an unmissable opportunity to explore a new country, experience a different culture, and broaden my perspectives. The choice of going to Auckland, New Zealand mostly came from seeing a documentary and then seeing it on the list of partner universities. Generally, I also wanted to go far from home and experience a part of the world I had never been to.

### **Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?**

I cannot say I learned or gained a lot academically. I obtained good grades without the biggest effort, whereas I would have had to “work for it more” at ITU.

I met a lot of great people, gained a lot of great friends from all over the world, and had an experience of a lifetime. It's a unique experience studying abroad and one I would recommend to everybody considering it.

## **Arranging your stay**

### **Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay**

#### **What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?**

As AUT is a partner university, the planning process was somewhat smooth. I benefited from advice from an ITU student who had previously been as well as guidance from AUT staff, including their Study Abroad coordinator, Brett Armstrong. I was also fortunate that other students from ITU were going, so we could help each other and talk through the process.

Be aware that due to the opposing seasons the start of the Danish autumn semester in New Zealand (and Australia too) is already in July. This was at times difficult when meeting different deadlines for application and registration.

#### **How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?**

I arranged my accommodation through AUT at the student accommodation Wellesley Student Apartment (WSA). Here I shared a fully furnished five-person apartment with two Danes, a Canadian and a New Zealander, which added to the social aspect of my stay. It generally housed international students which made it easy to meet people in the same situation as oneself.

Though WSA has since closed, AUT offers other housing options ideal for international students which are listed on their website.

## Expenses and Financing

### Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

New Zealand is not a cheap destination, but undoubtedly worth it. My flights cost around 16.000 DKK (to and from), including stops in Australia and Indonesia on the return to Denmark.

I paid 338 NZD (approx. 1,387 DKK) a week for my furnished room at Wellesley Student Apartments. This is cheap for Auckland and WSA was also the cheapest of the AUT student accommodations. However, be aware that in AUT student accommodation the rent had to be paid all at once and not on a weekly/monthly schedule when being an international student. This meant there was one big transaction before going, which is a bit overwhelming.

Groceries were more expensive compared to Denmark, specially produce during winter. I found that it can pay off to buy in bulk in Pak'n'Save or buy eggs at smaller Asian grocers.

Dining out and coffee were generally cheaper than Denmark. Public transport was cheaper than Copenhagen, but also less efficient.

### Scholarships

I applied for a handful of scholarships and got funding from Knud Højgaards Fond, William Demant Fonden, Richters Fond, and ITU Travel Pool. While applications require effort, the financial support significantly eased my budget and allowed for more travelling.

I used the list available on ITU Student and looked at [legatbogen.com](http://legatbogen.com) for grants I was eligible for.

### Recommendations for other students:

- Check out the events around AUT. There are so many clubs hosting events, many offering free food, activities, or resources like clothing swaps.
- Use the facilities at the Recreational Center around the corner from City Campus for activities like yoga, dance, and sports.
- Befriend people with cars or share rentals to explore beyond Auckland as a car is a necessity for easy travel. There are so many gorgeous day and weekend trips.
- Don't bother purchasing the linen pack if you end up staying at one of the university housings. Better options are available at Kmart, The Warehouse or similar for cheaper or the same price.
- Include a road trip around the South Island whether it be during the 2-week semester break or after the exams.
- Watch some rugby. The Danish autumn semester is sadly off-season, but there are often still a few matches. I got to see the All Blacks play in Eden Park and it was a big experience!
- Learn about the Māori culture through performances or museums. It's an important part of New Zealand history.

### A few amateur iPhone pictures

