



IT University Travel Report

Host University: Queensland University of Technology [QUT]

Study Programme at IT University: Global Business Informatics [GBI]

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad

Courses studied abroad:

- BSB105 - The Future Enterprise
- BSB108 - Business Environment
- BSB119 - Global Business
- MGB131 - Introducing Human Resource Management
- MGB235 - Monitoring & Managing Operational Performance

Exchange Period: Autumn semester 2022 [Spring / Semester 2 at QUT]

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here:

kmjo2508@gmail.com or find me on Linked-In: Katrin Maria Jonsdottir

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at QUT (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

Academic:

For a third year student, the academic level seemed lower at QUT compared to ITU, due to many of the available courses being a part of first year curriculum of the bachelor programmes. Also, the teaching methods are different, as assessments (often shorter written assignments or presentations) are prioritised over final exams, so I had 11 assessments throughout the semester, and one exam that only counted for 50% of my total grade in the course. This means, if you are not good at exams, you can choose courses that have no exams and be assessed based on two to four submissions in each course instead.

At QUT courses are called units and instead of referring to the name of the unit, you would mention the course code often consisting of three letters and three numbers. When selecting the units for my semester abroad, I decided to do 37.5 ECTS points, meaning I had one extra course on my 5th semester. This allowed me to have 7.5 ECTS less on my 6th semester, while writing my bachelor project, which I found beneficial to better concentrate on the project.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic it had been three years since the last exchange, which meant some things had changed including the units we were allowed to register for at QUT. I searched for units on their website using key words from the courses I knew I had to substitute first, and then I looked for interesting units for my two electives. To cover *IT, Globalization and Culture* [15 ECTS], I decided on the combination of *Global Business and Business Environment*, though I would not recommend the last mentioned due to a poor execution of the unit and many being confused about the content, including previous students who had completed the course a few semesters prior. There are several other options for this one, including *Bridging Cultures* and *Intercultural Communication and Negotiation skills*. To cover *IT-Enabled Supply Chain Management* [7.5 ECTS], I registered for *Monitoring and Managing Operational Performance*. And lastly, to cover two electives [7.5 ECTS each], I chose *The Future Enterprise* and *Introducing Human Resource Management*.

The units are built the same way as courses at ITU, with the teaching split into lectures and tutorials (exercises) that are taught every week. You have to register for classes yourself and it is possible to build your own schedule, as tutorials are often offered at different times during the week. At QUT all lectures are recorded, which means the attendance for them can vary. Many Australian students choose to watch the recordings from home and only attend the tutorials, which made it difficult to actually meet any natives and get to know them.

Social:

There are many ways of going and living abroad, which is very individual to your needs. We were a couple of students from ITU going to QUT this semester and some traveled together, while I decided to go solo. I wanted to experience everything on my own, meaning I went abroad to experience the culture, meet new friends and become more independent. QUT and the student organisations offer many events and activities through out the semester, including faculty specific, interest based and events for international students. Attending the orientation and social events in the beginning can give you a chance of meeting other international students whom you can meet up with to study at the library, go out for dinner and plan trips with during the semester.

I was barely in contact with the other ITU students, though I noticed we got several mutual friends and we crossed paths a couple of times. I mainly stuck with a group of German and Norwegian friends that I met on a hiking trip organised and sponsored by the obligatory overseas health cover (insurance) provider Medibank in the beginning of the semester.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

I came to Australia wanting to become more independent, as I have never really done anything on my own. I have travelled a little by myself, but definitely not at this level. I moved from Jylland to Copenhagen with my partner and we have been depending on each other since, so it was good for the both of us to grow and become aware of what we can achieve on our own as well.

My initial reason to go outside of ITU started with me wanting to do more business courses and none of the electives at ITU were what I was looking for. I want to work with business development and organisational change, so I started considering electives at CBS or anywhere else in Denmark, but still wasn't finding the perfect match for my vision. I then searched through ITU's partner universities and when I saw QUT was on the list, I knew I had to look into it. I saw it as a once-in-a-lifetime experience, as I have family living in Queensland only an hour away from Brisbane, which offered me a "safety net" that resulted in my partner and parents to worry less and the chance of getting to know my family better. I stayed with my aunt and uncle for the first two weeks until my rental agreement commenced, and then came to visit a few weekends, which I am very thankful for, as I have had minimal contact with them since they moved Down Under 15 years ago.

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 find that I learn the curriculum better if I can apply it to real life and that is also the reason I chose ITU to begin with. QUT promote themselves as the university for the real world, which I found interesting, as they provide many real life cases in class - just like ITU.

The key takeaway from my stay is that everything seems easier and more doable if you are passionate about what you do and though I enjoy studying GBI, the focus of my electives at ITU would have been more technical, including more data and/or programming, which are not my strongest elements. I searched for courses that had a stronger business focus and my semester ended up including significantly less technical skills and knowledge. The courses at QUT are all relevant to my future career in different aspects, but common for them all is the fact that I had a genuine interest for what I was learning. Though my workload for the semester was increased, due to my extra elective, I found the courses more interesting and therefore enjoyed the teaching more than I would back at ITU.

I am currently in the process of writing a new contract with my current employer for a position where I can especially see the knowledge gained from the courses Introducing Human Resource Management and Monitoring & Managing Operational Performance being useful.

Personally, I have become more independent and I found that my own company is enough. I would have loved to share all my experiences with my partner, I am also grateful to have accomplished everything on my own, though some assessment pieces were based on group work. I have become more confident in my own work as well and I found that I did not need anyone to sit next to me to finish my assignments - something I can definitely use next semester, when I write my bachelor and will have to work more independently, though I will not be writing alone.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:

I started the process very late, and I cannot recommend doing it the way I did. Even though I did end up making it to Australia, I was too relaxed and not really as committed to going as everyone else. I was pretty scared and I was really doubting myself "can I really go? Should I just stay home? Should I go somewhere closer to home?".

I decided I wanted to apply for the exchange and study abroad spots at QUT a week before the application deadline, so my application was pretty rushed. Some steps I pretty much skipped, which resulted in me having less knowledge than I should have about the university and everything else, at the time of applying. While I was waiting for news, I started to make a budget and planning some things, which included making a calendar with key dates for the semester for orientation, mid-semester break, exam period and more. After receiving the nomination letter in mid-February, I started taking it a bit more seriously and I worked more determined to find the courses I was interested in at QUT, to be able to send my pre-approval application as soon as possible. Then there was a wait to get a reply from SAP, where I worked on my budget for the third time, and then I was ready to apply to QUT. I was accepted to QUT in late April and next steps were to pay my deposit (part of the tuition fee), sign up for courses, buy tickets to Australia and figure out where to live. Lastly, I had to register for classes in the beginning of July and then I was ready to fly from Copenhagen on 12. July.

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

Though I have family in Queensland, they were not able to provide me with many tips or tricks, as the rental market in Australia is very competitive, especially in the larger cities. Additionally, they were noticing an increase in prices for groceries, so 2022 was a very chaotic year to try to plan anything.

I attended several online events and webinars about studying abroad provided by [EDU](#) and [CA](#) from January to May, which I can definitely recommend - also a year before you intend on going. I cannot stress this enough: the sooner you start planning the better! The information provided in these presentations were really useful and gave me many insights on what to expect, how to write an application, how to make a realistic budget, and much more.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

Accommodation is very expensive in Australia and as I am very introverted, I was not interested in sharing an apartment with 3-7 other people. I therefore looked for a small one-room or studio apartment, which allowed overnight visitors for when my partner came to visit. I found my studio apartment through QUT's website, as they have linked a few student accommodation providers, but be aware that those are also expensive. I stayed at UniLodge South Bank, which is located just on the other side of the river from QUT and it took me 10 minutes to walk to school.

Generally I was told South Bank was also a popular area for students and there were several options for student accommodation with UniLodge and Scape located next to each other. Even though the public transport system in Brisbane is efficient and you can get around pretty easily, the location was a huge bonus, as South Bank is the most popular area to go out for dinner or a couple of drinks (if you are going clubbing, you would rather go to The Valley).

If you have any preference regarding your neighbourhood, or housing in particular, I would definitely recommend looking into it early and not wait until you get there (which we were recommended), as the current rental/housing crisis resulted in many students having difficulties finding a place to stay. I applied to UniLodge in the beginning of June, which was the very latest, as many of the student accommodation were fully booked already by then and UniLodge only had a few rooms left. You can go to [@itustudent](#) on Instagram, take a look at [my room tour](#) and click through my story highlights for a better feeling of the environment.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

The trickiest thing for me was the exchange rate, as it fluctuated a lot and it went very much up (wrong direction for me) in the first half of 2022. As I was a Study Abroad student and therefore had to pay tuition fees, I was gambling with the exchange rate when paying my fees and waited for it to go down by 0,1-0,3 percentage points. As I decided to do an extra elective and cover 37,5 ECTS points, my tuition fees were higher than usual and therefore also received more money from the SU Udlandsstipendium. I ended up paying around 64.500 kr in tuition due to the high exchange rates while, as I am writing this, it would have been around 57.000 kr. Luckily most of my tuition was covered by the SU Stipend and therefore I ended up only paying around 6.000 kr (basically the difference in exchange rates) myself.

The biggest expense of my stay was definitely rent; I paid \$449 per week, which equalled \$7.184 (ca. 36.000 DKK) for 16 weeks. It can be done a lot cheaper, if you are willing to share an apartment and only have a small room to yourself. As I am used to sharing my apartment with only my partner back home, I believe the big change in accommodation would have been too much, in addition to everything else, and therefore I prioritised finding and paying for a studio that I could have to myself.

Flight tickets from Denmark to Australia were around 8.500 kr and if you have decided on your return date in advance, you can get a return trip (DK - AU - DK) for 12.000 - 14.000 kr, if you are lucky. Groceries vary a lot and depends on your preference, but I read an article that \$100 per week in groceries can be enough for one person. This did not match what I experienced, due to the inflation and prices increasing by the week just like Denmark. I recon I spent around \$130 - \$150 per week, which was around 650 - 750 kr at the time.

Additionally, I went out for dinner with friends one or two times per week, so I would recommend setting aside at least \$200 for food and drinks per week - because you never know what the week will bring!

My stay was cut a bit short due to the significant changes in the global economy, which resulted in everything becoming more expensive than what I initially had budgeted for and I had to cancel my plans to go to New Zealand. I would have loved to experience much more of Australia but as I have family there, I have a reason to come back to visit.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

Prior to my stay abroad, I worked quite a lot and I decided to prioritise my work over fund applications. I applied for a couple of funds, but I only received the ITU Travel Pool, which did not surprise me. Even though you can get a lot of money from grants, it takes a lot of time (which I did not have) and effort (also lacking from my side). Most funds and scholarships favour or are solely intended for masters students and therefore, there are not as many funds available for bachelor students. I know it is possible to receive a lot of money from funds and scholarships, but you also have to work for it, which is why I chose to work where I was promised a salary in stead.

Recommendations for other students:

If you are considering going on exchange - JUST DO IT! Though it was an expensive semester, I do not regret a thing; The personal growth and memories I gained were definitely worth every dollar.

In addition to the aforementioned recommendations, I would like to emphasise that going far away from home can be tough and cultural shock is a very real thing that can hit you whenever, not just the first couple of weeks. It can come in many shapes and sizes and it can be triggered by many different factors - mine was the week I had to hand in four (plus one) assessments from Friday to Friday. I felt a bigger pressure than I was used to back home, I did not feel confident in my work and I was constantly doubting my English capabilities; something I would usually never do. I missed having a group to lean on and I was reminded that I would usually have my partner there to support and motivate me - and now I was on my own. The teaching methods were very different from what I knew from home and I was miserable for three or four days, but remember: this is completely normal and if everyone else have done this before you, you can too!

Other recommendations:

Start planning as early as possible, but don't plan too much.

Plans change and I would not recommend having plans every weekend, as many of my best adventures/experiences were impulsive and not planned at all. Make a few travel plans during the semester, utilise the mid-semester break, but you can easily find people to travel with during the semester and plan last-minute trips.

Remember your grades do not matter, as long as you pass.

You will only have passed/failed registered on your transcript from ITU, so all grades from courses you have taken outside of Denmark do not count. I had a hard time with this, but please do not stay home on a Saturday when your friends invite you somewhere because you have an assessment you have to finalise. I work well under pressure, many students do, so enjoy a beer and just go home a little earlier than you normally would to get up early on Sunday instead.

ENJOY EVERY MINUTE!

Time goes by so fast and you are back home before you know it. Embrace every second, take lots of photos and videos, call home whenever you feel like you need it, and live your best life. Exchange is a wonderful experience that most people only get to have once, if ever.