



IT University Travel Report – Thomas Buchholdt

Host University: Queensland University of Technology – Study Abroad

Study Programme at IT University: Digital Innovation & Management

Courses studied abroad:

- IFN502 IT Innovation and Disruption
- MGN428 Creating New Ventures
- MGN442 Self Leadership
- DXB204 Design Thinking

Exchange Period: Autumn 2019

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My stay abroad

What was it like to study at QUT?

Studying at QUT was similar and at the same time quite different from studying at ITU. Class structure is very similar to ITU; lectures for one to two hours, and then a workshop. However, I had one online course, meaning that it only consisted of lectures, and you could follow the lecture from home. At QUT almost all lectures are recorded, so you can watch them later. This was really helpful if you want to go travel a lot while you are here, because you don't have to worry about missing lectures. You will quickly realize that the university is massive compared to our little ITU, and there are almost 9000 international students at the university. However, there is a similar social environment compared to ITU, and in my experience it is very easy to meet new people. There are a ton of different student organizations and in particular one called QUEST arranges pub nights every single Wednesday (Make sure to follow on Facebook).

I can now confirm from what I heard from others before I left – you rarely hang out with native Australians. It is mostly international students who participate in the social events from student organizations, and therefore, unless you meet some in your classes it is quite difficult to meet locals.

Academically, I was quite disappointed. However, finding a positive in the negative, I can say that ITU has a really high academic standard and we are way ahead in understanding innovation and digitalization

compared to Australia. I quickly realized that it is very uncommon to have a relevant student job or have any prior experience, which meant that very few actually truly understood how organizations work in practice. I would recommend everyone who wants to study at QUT to take Self Leadership. It was the aforementioned online course and was perhaps one of the most unique and interesting courses I have ever had. This was without question my favorite course where you focus on your own development and really looks inwards of competences, strengths, and areas for improvement.

While the level is not very high at QUT, there are more assignments than compared to DIM. In all courses, there are multiple assignments that count towards your final grade that you have to finish throughout the year. They vary in length and difficulty, but you can expect to have something almost every single week, which you need to plan accordingly.

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

I really wanted to study in a different country than Denmark before I begin working full-time. I wanted to experience a different culture, meet new people, and study in a completely new environment. I chose Australia because I wanted to see something completely different than Denmark and it sure was different. I love spending time outside in the nature and Australia has perhaps some of the most amazing landscapes one could imagine. Socially and as an experience I would say it definitely lived up to my expectations. Being as classes were somewhat easy, I had more time to travel around and see all of the East Coast which was really nice.

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?

Personally, you learn a lot from going on exchange. From one day to the next you are in a new country and you honestly don't know anything, which for me was really fun. There is no such thing as a comfort zone the first couple of months, and you really learn to be adaptable to different situations.

Academically, while I did not learn that much from my classes, except Self Leadership, I would say you learn a ton of skills and competences by being on your own in a new environment, because you have to find solutions even when you have no idea what you are doing. I think you learn many skills without being aware of them, but that is why Self Leadership was a fantastic course, because it helps you become more aware of these things.

I am almost done with my studies, but I would recommend everyone who has ever thought about going abroad just for a tiny second to do it. You will not regret it, and most likely you will come back knowing a lot more about yourself and what is important to you.

Arranging your stay

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

Being a study abroad student naturally is not as easy as exchange. However, there is plenty of help to find which makes everything much easier. I contacted both Kilroy and EDU to see if they could help. After a meeting with Kilroy I was positively surprised by just how easy it is to study abroad. Kilroy arranges everything for me – I just had to send them a few documents. I was accepted to study at QUT after 7 days and barely

had to do anything. Kilroy did everything free of charge because they had an agreement with QUT. Applying for the visa to Australia is a little tricky because there are so many questions and some of them can be quite difficult to understand (pro-tip: You don't need to fill out every single vacation from the last 10 years – just take some of them).

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

I was lucky enough to have a friend who know someone that was in Brisbane in the Spring semester of 2019. She spoke very positively about the house she lived in and helped me arrange that I could stay there for my semester. Therefore, it was a very smooth and easy process. I had a place to stay from the moment I arrived and have been very happy about staying at the house. It has become quite famous for being a “Danish” house because a lot of Danes always live there. However, the place was great, cheap, and had the perfect location for living in Brisbane.

We were 15 people in the house. Everyone has their own room. Kitchen, bathrooms, and toilets are shared. Facilities are fine, but nothing extraordinary. Wi-Fi was slow but you will probably be studying at the university anyway. It is a solid walk of 25 min to QUT Gardens Point Campus and 25 min public transportation to QUT Kelvin Groove Campus. West End is the perfect neighborhood with a ton of bars, restaurants, and cozy places nearby.

When you first arrive in Australia, you need to get an Australian phone number. Buy a pre-paid sim card or a subscription at one of the tele communication providers (Vodafone). After that, go to one of the banks (Commonwealth or ANZ) and set up an Australian Bank account. You will need this for payment of rent to your landlord.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

Studying abroad naturally entails a ton of expenses. Flights to Australia certainly aren't cheap, you have to pay for the visa and there is an obligatory medical insurance. Otherwise, I would estimate that prices are similar to Denmark. However, while dormitories are cheap in Copenhagen, they are incredible expensive in Brisbane, and I was very happy to live in a house that had a similar vibe to that of a dorm, just much cheaper.

I travelled quite a lot while I was down here and saw everything on the whole East Coast and spent a month in New Zealand after finishing up my studies, which ended up costing quite a bit.

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

I spent a lot of time finding potential scholarships and applied for all the ones I believed there was a realistic chance of getting. Luckily, my hard work paid off and I received a lot of money from grants that covered pretty much all my expenses during my semester abroad, which meant I did not have to work while in Australia. It is easier getting scholarships as a Master student, but even if you just get one it is a very good investment of your time. I created a long list of potential scholarships – feel free to write me if you would like me to share it with you.

Recommendation for other students:

Do it! Go abroad. It does not really matter where you go, but it is incredible valuable to experience a different culture, and actually living in a country compared to just being there on vacation is a completely different experience.