



## **IT University Travel Report**

*Dear Student, this is a template – the aim is to inspire other students who may wish to follow in your footsteps. You are free to give your report the shape you want and to go beyond the questions, as long as you cover the information asked for below. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not. Remember that the report will be made available on the intranet.*

**Host University:** Auckland University of Technology

**Study Programme at IT University:** MSc in Digital Innovation and Management

**Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:** Exchange Agreement

**Courses studied abroad:** Strategic Management, Advanced Project Management and Innovation Management

**Exchange Period:** autumn 2019

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: [ksbi@itu.dk](mailto:ksbi@itu.dk) / [ksenija.bickova@gmail.com](mailto:ksenija.bickova@gmail.com)

## **Your stay abroad**

**What was it like to study at [the university] (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?**

Initially, I chose Business Analytics as one of my courses, but I had to change it after the first lecture. I have read in one of the previous travel reports that someone also signed up for the course and had to change. I thought I will try it out anyway and I ended up not liking it.

To be honest, the academic level of my courses varied, which was a bit bizarre. For example, innovation management course was rather informal, the lecturers were using different presentations on slideshare to illustrate the concepts we were studying and provide study materials with no academic sources whatsoever. Meanwhile, the lecturer of strategic management course stressed out the high academic standards that the students had to adhere to – we were only allowed to use specific academic journals, cite using APA style etc. I think the best course I took was Advanced Project Management. The lecturer was very passionate about the subject and there few people with experience in project management, which kept the discussions in the classroom quite interesting, so I think I really learned a lot there.

Overall, I wouldn't say that I was challenged academically, at least not to a degree I have anticipated, but I loved everything else about my stay in New Zealand.

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

I have heard from many of my friends and other students how life changing going on exchange could

be. I didn't have a chance to do it during my bachelor's degree and since I am studying master's now, I thought it was my last chance to experience something like this. Overall, I really enjoyed my time in New Zealand.

**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?**

It was really interesting to experience a different educational system. In New Zealand more emphasis is placed on individual assignments than on group work. There were also more assignments throughout the semester, which forced me to study the entire time, instead of making most of the effort at the end of the semester as it usually happened in Denmark. Additionally, as the classes were quite small (anywhere from 15 to about 30 people), it was possible to get more attention from, ask questions and get into discussions with the lecturer, which was really nice.

I think what I have gained the most from this experience was the chance to challenge myself. I have been in Denmark for a while, so it doesn't really feel like I am abroad anymore. Going to New Zealand gave me an opportunity to establish new social circle, test my self-reliance and adaptability.

## **Arranging your stay**

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

To be honest, it was a lot of work. Even though AUT is considered ITU's partner university, the universities seem to have little to none communication between them. Therefore, you would be responsible for finding the requirements for the courses, finding the appropriate courses, getting all the approvals and all the other stuff as well as making sure that both universities are aware of all the latest changes. Be prepared that it will take quite a bit of time.

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

AUT Student Hub – they are really helpful with all the practicalities you need to arrange as soon as you get to Auckland. Kenneth Holt (I know that he left AUT now, but he was the key contact person at AUT at the time) was quick to respond when I had questions or needed to change one of my courses, so he was a really big help too.

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

I applied for WSA as other students have recommended. Even though the accommodation was quite pricey, especially considering that the full amount had to be paid in advance, it was worth it. AUT doesn't arrange a lot of social activities for foreign students, so you would really need to put more effort into meeting other people and having a social life, if you choose not to live in the student housing. At WSA there were lots of social activities throughout the semester, I also lived with four flat mates and had really friendly neighbors, so there were plenty of opportunities to make friends. Honestly, this is probably the part that I loved the most about my exchange semester.

There is a link on AUT website on how to apply and I also received an email from AUT coordinator with the reminder of the application dates. Be sure to apply as soon as possible, since there are many people who want to live there, so competition is fierce.

## **Expenses and Financing**

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

I paid for a lot of things before even coming to New Zealand like tuition fee, accommodation and flight tickets. While in New Zealand the largest expenses were food and, of course, travelling. Food generally

cost about the same as in Denmark with dairy and meat being a bit more expensive.

Most of my travels in New Zealand were in July – October period, which is not a busy tourist season, so it was much cheaper and easier to rent cars and book accommodation. I was mostly traveling with my friends, so it was possible to share some of the expenses making traveling even cheaper. You can also use [www.bookme.co.nz](http://www.bookme.co.nz), where it's possible to get really good deals on activities and tours like kayaking, skydiving etc.

As soon as I received a nomination from SAP to go to New Zealand, I drafted a budget in Excel, which I kept adding to as time went on. It really helped to keep track of all the expenses, savings and, potentially, scholarships.

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

I did apply for many scholarships, but since I am not Danish, I only got ITU Travel Pool and SU-Udlandsstipendium. If you are considering applying, do so as early as possible. Many scholarships had deadlines in late April and May, and writing applications as well as working on the projects for school and having other commitments was quite challenging. If you have time, try to prepare the most of your applications in March or as soon as possible.

### **Recommendations for other students:**

I am just going to sum up my recommendations in bullet point style.

- If you are looking forward to being challenged academically, AUT might not be the best choice for that. However, the whole experience of studying abroad will be worth it anyway
- Don't expect the application process to be smooth and easy, there will be delays and setbacks. You might even feel discouraged to continue at times, but don't give up, it all will be worth it in the end. Not a single person I've talked to about going on exchange said that they regretted it
- Budget well and try to save up as much as possible as soon as you decide to go on exchange. New Zealand is quite expensive, so you would appreciate having a bigger budget to try out and experience as many things as possible
- Take it easy on yourself the first week after you arrive in Auckland and try not to plan too much. You will be quite jetlagged and would need to take it really easy on yourself
- Bring some warm clothes with you. It might sound strange, but I knew a lot of people who were not prepared for the winter in New Zealand. WSA is poorly insulated and doesn't have a proper heating system, which means that it's getting really cold at night