

IT University Travel Report

Host University: Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

Study Programme at ITU: DIM

Agreement: Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad: Advanced Project Management, Innovation Management & User Centred Design

Exchange Period: Semester 3, Autumn 2017

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My stay abroad

What was it like to study at AUT?

AUT has different campuses located all over the city of Auckland, in the beginning it was quite difficult to find the different locations. However, my papers were located at the business and computer science campus. My first weeks at AUT were quite turbulent, I had a paper (at AUT courses are called papers) – Business Analytics, where I had difficulties understanding the professor, and the paper was technical demanding. I really wanted to substitute the paper, luckily, AUT and ITU was easy to communicate with, and I received a new pre-approval from ITU and could change my paper at AUT. You have to keep in mind, that you have 2 weeks to decide which papers you want to have, and afterwards they are locked. They did an exception with my case, but you have to get an approval from the professor. The papers I ended up with had a lower academic level than what we are used to from ITU, but I really liked it. The papers were hands-on, i.e. Advanced Project Management we did a simulation, and understood how complicated it can be to lead a project. Innovation Management was also completely different, here our professor was Steve Henry an entrepreneur and super smart. In his class we did not have any textbook, but you got so much knowledge in his lectures – so if you like to learn everything about starting a company this is the paper to choose. The social life at AUT is good, they host a lot of events one can attend. My experience was that a lot of the events were primarily for exchange students. I lived at WSA, and they have events almost every week, and a lot contains free food, which is nice when you live on a tight budget

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

I have been on one exchange semester in 2015, and my motivation to go abroad again was to gain new friendships, explore New Zealand, which had been a dream since my teenage years, and to get academically challenged. The first two motivations were definitely met, I gained so many new friends from all over the world, and I got to see most of beautiful New Zealand, and I was not disappointed at all. Academically, I could have chosen to take more technical courses, which would have challenged me, but in the end I chose the papers, I found most interesting. Overall, I do not regret my choice for doing my exchange semester in Auckland.

What did I get out of my stay, both personally and academically, and how I you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

Being on exchange always gives you new tools to use, or at least that what I have experienced. My exchange semester in Auckland gave me a lot of insight, and learned that you need to take action if you want to make things happening, but also the fact that it isn't that dangerous to ask for help or anything. Academically, I gained a more hands-on approach to project management, but also a more practical approached to usability testing, which is extremely relevant for my future job opportunities.

Arranging my stay

Description of the process of arranging my stay:

I had an idea that I wanted to go a semester abroad, but it was relatively close to the application deadline, where I decided that I would apply. I was confused due to practical stuff, i.e. subletting my and my boyfriend's apartment, leave my job. But I decided that this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I have not regretted my decision. As the decision was made, I considered different universities and decided to go to New Zealand, afterwards I wrote an application and got my first priority. Afterwards, I began to investigate papers at AUT, but be aware to notice if the paper is offered at the semester you are at the at AUT. Many of the papers I found interesting were not offered in that specific semester.

What resources did I find helpful in planning my stay and which people did I use?

I used other Travel Reports, however, I did only find one Master student report. Furthermore I had some communication with other ITU students, students who either were going to AUT or had been there.

How I arranged practicalities such as accommodation?

As I read in other travel reports people recommended to stay at the student accommodation offered by AUT: WSA. I decided to apply for that even though it is more expensive than if you are to find a room yourselves. WSA is a social place with a lot of events. However, the cleaning can be questioned, I arrived at a dirty apartment (my room was clean), apparently it is the ones living at the apartment responsibility to clean the apartment, other than that it is nice place to live, but I personally think it is too expensive. But it is an easy process to get a room, and it is central located.

Expenses and Financing

My expenses connected to my stay abroad

The biggest expense was the tuition fee, but with the "SU stipendie" and the 10 % discount I ended up paying 10.000 DKK for the tuition, which was affordable. Other things one has to account for is: Flight tickets, insurance, visum, rent, general living expenses and study expenses (AUT have Enrolment Fee, Learner Services and Application Fees).

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

I applied for 20 scholarships and received 3: Nordea Fonden, Knud Højgaards Fond and ITU's travel pool. I would recommend you to start as early as possible.

Recommendations for other students:

My recommendation is, that if you have a dream to go aboard you should do it! Do not focus on all the stuff you need to prepare, it will be all right and you will manage it and have an unforgettable semester.