

IT University Travel Report

Host University: University of Technology Sydney

Study Programme at IT University: MSc in Digital Design & Interactive Technologies

Activity Abroad: 1) Advanced Interaction Design 2) Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship 3) Media as Experience 4) Project Management

Exchange Period: 3th semester of my master's degree, which was in the fall of 2019

Your stay abroad

Please describe your stay abroad:

I had the absolute best time in Sydney and, as everybody else says as well, going abroad is one of the best things you can do while studying. I assure you will never regret it even though it takes a lot of planning and economic capacity to make it happen, it is all worth it when you are finally there.

Sydney is a very diverse place to live; it can be as laid back and beachy as it can be fancy and business-like. Besides the amazing culinary scene and the idyllic nature, this is one of the many reasons I came to love living there. Also, it is in every way a cosmopolite and multicultural city with an openminded and friendly attitude, why it is not hard to feel at home quite fast.

Studying at UTS was a little different from the way we are used to at ITU. There are a lot of smaller individual assignments, which constitute your final grade, and they take attendance in both lectures and tutorials. Since I did not know what was expected to pass the course, I spent a lot of time studying during the week. In retrospect, I want to stress that the local students took much easier on the assignments since it is not considered exams. Even though, the time you spend at lectures is only a couple of hours during the week, mostly in the evening, why there is plenty of time to enjoy the city or take a weekend trip.

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

I had always wanted to try to live in another country, why going on exchange seemed like an obvious possibility for experiencing a different culture and way of living. Also, I thought that studying at a foreign university could expand and challenge my perspectives on digital design and improve my academic English.

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?

The main takeaway from my stay is not a huge academic improvement since I had two courses, I found to be a bit off-topic – but I guess that is what happens to most people going abroad. Even though, I

perfected my analytical capabilities and got a more thorough understanding of digital design as well as some new, alternative perspectives on the field – which I will use when writing my thesis.

Going abroad definitely had the highest impact on my personal development. When you are starting a new life this far away from home you are getting out of your comfort zone; you have to make a new circle of acquaintance as well as a new way of living your everyday life. During my time there I meet some great new friends for life and got to know myself even better, which I find very valuable.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process involved in arranging your stay and what resources you found helpful:

As I wanted to go away together with two of my good friends, this complicated the process of finding the right location for our stay. Though, it sure did help with the time you have to spend on planning it. It is very time-consuming to apply for and finding courses, searching for scholarships and so on, why you need to do it structured and start as early as possible. Besides, to make sure you will get the courses you want, you need to apply for more than you need so you don't have to do it all over again if you don't get enough. The processing time at the universities can be quite long!

Because we were the three of us going, we each got a free mover spot through ITU. But, unfortunately, we did not have the best experience getting the help and answers we wanted, why we contacted EDU instead. I can highly recommend applying through EDU; they are very professional, knowledgeable and take care of every part of the process for you.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

It is not hard to find accommodation in Sydney, so don't stress about it. Though I would recommend you rent an Airbnb for the first two weeks before school starts, so you can overcome your jetlag and inspect apartments. Also, you can get familiar with the different neighbourhoods and decide whether you want to live by the beach or in the city. I lived by the beach, in Coogee, but other nice areas closer to the university are Surry Hills and Paddington.

There are a lot of real estate agencies in the city that rent apartments out furnished. We found our apartment through Biller Property, which was very professional. Be aware that it takes some time to complete the application since they need a lot of different information! You also need to set up an Australian bank account to get your bond back from the government, but it should not be that complicated.

Even though it is easy to find accommodation it is not cheap – so if you have the chance to live in an apartment which somebody else then I would recommend doing it!

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

Going on exchange is properly one of the most expensive things I have ever done, but I would never have been without the experience! That said, I am the kind of person who wants the full experience, why I spent a lot of money on going out, eating out, being cultural and travelling. But do not worry; with a little help from your scholarship friends, you can, of course, make it happen!

As mentioned, living in Australia is expensive, especially accommodation, but it is cheaper to go out and eat at nice restaurants and to buy coffee. Because I lived in Coogee, which is a 40 mins bus drive from UTS, lots of money was spend on transportation. This is also why you need to consider in which area you want to live!

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

I applied for around 12 scholarships and I cannot stress how important it is to do this properly and well in advance to get the funding you need to support your stay. When I started applying, I had not gotten either my acceptance letter from UTS or the prior recognition from ITU, which was needed to apply for some of the scholarships. My friends applied anyway and got funded, why my advice would be to do that as well.

I can recommend applying for the following scholarships: Augustinus Fonden, Nordea Fonden, Knud Højgaards Fond, Lemvig-Müller Fonden, William Demant Fonden, Dansk Tennis Fond and ITU Travel Pool. You can also take a look at Dansk Studie Fond if your tuition fee is way higher than the amount of money you get from SU Udlandsstipendium.

I bought a month's subscription at Legathåndbogen to find the scholarships I was qualified for as well as to keep track of deadlines. They also have templates for applications, budgets and so on, which was very helpful.

Recommendations for other students

If you have not been to Australia before then take some time off after you finish your studies to explore the country. It is so beautiful and diverse and can actually be done at a reasonable price if you hire a campervan. I went to Tasmania, which is absolutely stunning, and also up the east coast. I cannot recommend this highly enough!!!