

IT UNIVERSITY TRAVEL REPORT

Host University:

University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

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:

Third semester of my Master programme, during the fall of 2019

EXPERIENCE ABROAD

I love traveling and initially dreamed of studying abroad in a country with a profoundly different culture than Denmark, like the countries of South America or Asia. However, I also wanted to go abroad with a group of friends from ITU and we figured, that being accepted to an Australian university, like UTS, would be our best option due to language similarities, a large number of offered courses and not the least the fact that they highly rely on getting tuition fee payments from foreign students. It's fair to say, that I had an **amazing time** in Sydney and I am very happy, that we settled on going to Australia. To me, it was incredibly giving to live in a **city as diverse** as Sydney, where you have the most **superb beaches** and a **pulsating central district** within a short distance. I will never forget how amazing it was to live by the picturesque Easterns beaches and go for morning swims in the ocean every day and do not even get me started on the **food**... It's amazing and from all around the world! So even though Sydney might not seem as 'exotic' as other destinations, I feel like I was able to employ a very **different lifestyle** while living there, which was one of my motivations for going abroad.

Taking **courses at UTS** is very different from ITU. The form is **similar to high school** in the way they **take attendance** and you have **weekly-ish assignments** – either written products or oral presentations – that you have to complete in order to pass the course. To be honest, I had hoped that there would be more free time during the semester, but from a positive angle, you don't really have that intense exam-period in the end and the semester finishes very early. Academically, I wanted to improve as my ability to work in international teams while studying abroad. With over 15,000 international students, UTS is an extremely **multicultural institution** and I got to interact and collaborate with students from all over the world. This was sometimes exciting, but also a **big challenge** since many of the foreign students spoke extremely **limited English** and seemed to have a lower academic level, than my fellow ITU-classmates, which made it hard to cooperate. For the same reason, my oral English did not improve significantly, which I had hoped. On a positive note, many of the courses were **less theory-oriented**, than I am used to and I highly enjoyed primarily using and improving my **creative abilities** in subjects like *Media as Experience*. Moreover, the course *Advanced Interaction* has provided me with new and interesting understandings of UX, which I will draw upon in my thesis.

ARRANGING THE STAY

The first step is to get **acceptance** from ITU to go abroad as a free-mover, which is the easiest part of all – just do a well-written application and you will properly be accepted and ready to begin the actual planning of your stay. From here on, it is NOT an easy and fast process. There are many deadlines and work to be done and ITU is, to be honest, not very helpful with information, so you need to be alert and proactive yourself. I would advise you to **get help from EDU**, who can support you in many ways, both in terms of applying for the courses, but also the general activities related to moving abroad, such as applying for your visa. The help from EDU is **free** and we all felt way calmer and ‘on top of things’ after contacting them.

A key activity is, that you have to **find UTS-courses** in their course catalog and apply for them. Do this as soon as possible, since classes fill up quickly. Pay attention, that you might not have the required prerequisites for all courses and also that you often have to match the courses with the ones, you would have taken at ITU, in order to **have them preapproved by ITU**. Do apply for A LOT of classes – around 15 even though you only need 4 – since ITU, to our surprise, did not accept many courses that we found to be very relevant. When applying for the preapproval of credit transfer, expect a longer time than promised from ITU, and therefore, again: Do it ASAP.

As a free mover, you should be eligible to get part of your **tuition fee covered** by the Danish government. However, you CANNOT receive any tuition support from the Danish government BEFORE you have all of your courses accepted by both UTS and ITU and can provide a proof of the tuition payment. Since ITU did not accept my courses within the time, they had promised, I had to transfer +45.000 DKK to UTS before I received the support from the government. Therefore, apply for courses as soon as possible!

Concerning **accommodation**, I would recommend that you stay at an **Airbnb.com.au** to begin with in order to experience the different suburbs of Sydney first hand and then decide where you would like to stay. We lived in Coogee in the eastern suburbs, where you find loads of great beaches. We used **Realestate.com.au** to look for places to rent via real-estate agents. By doing so, you are sure that you find nice and neat places, you receive a contract and you can rent an entire apartment together as a group of people. You can also make use of **Gum-tree.com.au** and such services to find private leases.

EXPENSES & FINANCING

Moving to Sydney to study abroad is indeed **expensive**. You will need to pay for a **student visa**, **mandatory insurance** through UTS, to expand your **own insurances** via your Danish provider, **plane tickets** and maybe **tuition fee** if the amount exceeds the funding from the Danish government. **Accommodation** is furthermore quite expensive compared to Denmark – you can expect to pay at least around 6000 DKK if you share a flat with others. Therefore, I highly recommend, that you apply for **scholarships** to cover some of your expenses. You can make use of **Legathåndbogen.dk** for inspiration for your application and to search for scholarships. Especially if you are a Master student, you should be eligible to apply for numerous scholarships, to mention some: **Dansk Tennis Fond**, **Nordea-fonden**, **William Demant Fonden** and **Lemvig-Müller Fonden**. Again, start as early as possible, since some deadlines for applying could be right after you are accepted to go abroad by ITU.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I would highly recommend, that you do some **traveling** before, while or after you begin your studies depending on your budget and time available. You can for instance easily visit **Melbourne** over a weekend during the semester and before/after, you begin school – depending on when you have warmer weather – I can recommend, that you hire a **campervan** to see some of Australia. We did **Brisbane to Sydney** as well as **Tasmania**, which is amazing if you enjoy nature and the more simple life.

The **study vacation** mid-semester is also a great possibility for taking trips, that require more than a weekend's time both within the Australian borders and to the many exotic foreign destinations nearby. We were a group of friends that went to **Fiji** together, which was great, even though it was quite expensive compared to Bali and similar destinations. However be aware, you might need to do some extensive studying before or after your getaway, since UTS sees it as a study vacation and will plan study activities accordingly.

... I hope you can use some of my info and tips. Enjoy your trip!