



IT University Travel Report

Host university: San Diego State University

Study Programme at IT University: MSc Computer Science

Exchange agreement or Free mover: Free mover

Courses studied abroad: Reinforcement learning, Neural networks, AI & strategic decisions

Period studying abroad: fall 2025

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: sesa@itu.dk

Your stay abroad

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

I read multiple reports that the academic level at SDSU is lower than ITU before coming, this is true in my experience also. The courses I took were good and the lecturers were passionate, but since you get your grade through many different activities it is easy to pass. Choosing courses also proved pretty chaotic like I had read already, but I generally got every course I wanted and I think this is more often the case for CS students. There are not too many courses to choose from though as a CS master student, so definitely go into the catalog and look at previous years!

Socially SDSU is kind of weird. There are not many (if any) organized events for you to meet other exchange students, which was kind of a bummer for me who traveled alone. But in general everybody you meet is very social, so you need to try to be outgoing and join things. I found my friends mainly through my apartment complex and was very lucky with finding like-minded people. Generally, the crowd is younger, so being 25 I was almost always the oldest one and the general age was around 20. There are many parties around campus at the fraternities, but it is really hard to get in and not really fun (loads of 18 year olds trying to get laid). I would say it is extra important at SDSU to be active in the start to find friends, especially if traveling alone.

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

I wanted to experience a different culture and how it was to live across the world in place with a warmer climate. My stay definitely met my expectations even though my expectations were high after reading all the hyped up exchange reports, so go for it!

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?

On a personal level I got a lot out of my stay! Overall, I probably had one of the best semesters of my life, made great friends and enjoyed the relaxed lifestyle of southern California. I have lived abroad before, but never this far away, and it was very fun and rewarding living in San Diego.

Academically I also got what I hoped. Though the courses were easier I still learned lots which I will now hopefully apply when writing my thesis, but I will say the academic output was not my main priority when choosing SDSU and I think this is the same for a lot of people going here.

Arranging your stay

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

I planned my stay as a freemover together with EDU Danmark. I took an interest in SDSU after attending one of EDU's matchmaking meetings and talking to one of their representatives. EDU then helped me apply. The whole process was very smooth and easy, except for getting a VISA for the US which was expensive and took a while. SDSU accepted my application within 48 hours.

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

Mostly used EDU's website to look at relevant schools and compare them. After being accepted to SDSU I was given access to their canvas page which had all the info needed before going with a checklist, this was very helpful.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

Unlike many others I didn't have accommodation lined up before I left, therefore I booked an Airbnb close by campus and spent the first couple of days going around talking to the different housing complexes. I chose to stay at 6Nineteen because they offered 1 semester leases and because I had the impression there were a lot of other exchange students staying there. The latter proved true and 6Nineteen was a very good fit for me since it was close to school and very social. Every accommodation I looked at was on-campus, but I know many exchange students also stayed closer to the beach. The traffic gets pretty rough in SD, so living by the beach might cause you to spend loads of time in rush traffic. The first months we mainly took the trolley downtown, but this takes time and is not practical if wanting to go to the beach. Later we rented a car from Dirt Cheap Rentals, which was quite affordable when split between 3 people - this is a must! It is so much easier to get around with a car, and you can do a lot more.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

The total cost was quite a lot, and I think I spent roughly 180 000 DKK. It should also be said that I lived comfortably (eating out, car rental, etc.) and did lots of trips (Yosemite, Utah, Mexico, Hawaii), so the total could probably be reduced.

Recommendations for other students:

Travel as much as you can! California is amazing and there is so much to see. Though one of the trips I was most surprised by was our trip to Utah; Bryce and Zion national park are amazing!

The ENS courses at SDSU are great and you should definitely take one. I took surfing, but in retrospect I wished I tried something else (like sailing, wakeboarding, etc.) because we ended up renting a car and buying surfboards anyway, which was much better for progression.

Loads of great food in SD. For tacos I would highly recommend The Taco Stand (hits extra hard after a surf session) and going across the border to Tijuana and eating at Tacos de Franc. Except from the fast-food classics like In-N-Out and Chic-fil-a, you should also try Daves Hot Chicken!

If you want to try to pick up surfing you should buy a beginner board (e.g. Wavestorm) on FB marketplace and go multiple times a week. Best spots for beginners we tried were Tourmaline and Scripps, Blacks is also fun but a bit harder. The locals are usually friendly as long as you don't drop in on them too much.