IT University Travel Report

Host University: Victoria University of Wellington

Study Programme at IT University: Digital Innovation and Management

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Study Abroad

Courses studied abroad: Advanced Mechatronic Engineering 2: Intelligence and Design, Current issues in Information Systems Research, IT, Innovation, Value & Productivity, UX Design Practice

Exchange Period: 3 semester, autumn, 2018

Your stay abroad

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

Studying abroad at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW, soon to be University of Wellington) was a great experience where I learned a lot and met many exciting people, but the process of getting courses was a tedious and tiresome.

Before going to VUW I had selected various courses which I found on their website. There was not a lot of relevant courses but I managed to find enough to meet the requirements and get them preapproved by ITU. However, three weeks before I was going to New Zealand I was sent an email explaining that I would not be able to get the course I had applied for. After many emails back and forth, I ended up leaving for New Zealand with only 2 courses, which meant I had to find 2 more upon arrival. It took me about a week to get some new courses and while the university was very helpful it was a bit stressing spending the first week of studies figuring out which courses I could study. The list of courses internationals can apply for is consistently imperfect every year I learned from speaking with coordinators from the university. I would therefore suggest that you double-check the course you wish to study with the course coordinators at the university. Besides the bad experience of getting the right courses at VUW the experience of studying there was very good. The academic level was rather high and the teachers was very enthusiastic and friendly, and the facilities are very up to date with Danish standards. In addition, the courses was very oriented towards having practical elements, which I liked a lot. The university they have a different system for completing courses than ITU has.

Instead of having final exams you gather the percentages of your final grade from handing in assignments, completing tasks and making presentation throughout the course. I only had 1 exam, which only contributed 30 % of the final grade. I like this system as you did not pass or fail on a final exam, but build the grade from all of your doings on the course. This system forced one to show up for all the classes, read all the material and turn in all the reports in order to pass the courses. This insured that you get a good academic takeaway from studying at VUW.

The social life at VUW was very good. There was many happenings, a very nice Friday bar (though it shuts down early) and heaps of different clubs and societies that you can join. I joined the tramping club, which is a club that plans various hikes (tramps), walks, trips and parties. Through this club, I met a lot cool people and had some great experiences, so it is something I strongly recommend checking out.

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

My initial motivation for going abroad was to gain some new perspectives both on my personal and professional life and see new parts of the world that I had not explored. In many ways, my stay sufficed as to meet my expectations. I discovered that the university in New Zealand was concentrating on many of the same subjects as we do in Denmark, but from another background and with new takes on these. I met many nice people, saw many incredibly beautiful sceneries and tried new things. However, in many ways, New Zealand was a lot like Denmark (just with much more beautiful nature) therefore I did not experience a completely different culture as I was hoping.

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 take away both personally and academically from studying abroad at VUW was the recognition that I could thrive in a new international environment. Both a personal and academic I have gained new tools and skills to adapt to- and thrive in new very different environments with very different people. Tools and skills that is hard to develop back home. These will be of great benefit in my future career as well as my personal life and has given me more confidence in my own abilities.

Besides these skills and tools, I specifically obtained practical skills such as coding and experience working with various engineering and programming platforms. I also worked with data gathering through a survey and analyzing results, which was presented in a report. By studying in an English country, I became a lot better at writing and speaking the

language. This will also be of great value for me in the future.

Lastly, I learned the rules for Rugby, I am not sure how useful this will become, but it was hard, so I thought I'd mention it.

Arranging your stay

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

I initially wanted to go to Kyoto, but that was not a possibility any more in autumn. I looked at the other places and thought that Wellington New Zealand sounded very good, also as they had six spots and therefore a good chance of being accepted. I wrote an application and were accepted, then I applied at VUW and got accepted. Afterwards I had to plan going there; finding the courses and get the visa and I also started looking accommodation. I later decided to find accommodation when I got over there. I met with the other students going there to talk about . I also contacted a student that was there the year before to hear about her experience going there, and if she had any recommendations.

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

I read about the university in a travel report and EDU.dk was a big help to figure out their ECTS system and such. I booked my flights through Kilroy, which was very easy and worked as it should. I looked up courses on the school website. I got some help about rules and such from Eva the exchange coordinator. I found grants through the website called legathåndbogen.dk.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

I started out by looking online at places such as Airbnb, but also what the school offered. I found a Reddit page that described the dorms at the school and found out that they did not sound so nice. Therefore, I started out by sleeping in a hostel for the first week as I thought it would be easier to find an apartment once I was in New Zealand. I had talked with two other students from ITU before going and we went looking for an apartment when we got down there. We saw about four apartments and was offered three of them. We found the apartments through a website called trademe.com.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

New Zealand is an expensive land, even more expensive than Denmark. I spent about 8000 KR. on the apartment and food each month. Other expenses are = the flight tickets, Visa, Books, Travel expenses, drinks and various experiences. Bring as many as you can, it is an expensive journey.

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

I applied for about 11 scholarships and got around four grants. The specific grants I assigned were; Nordea Fonden, Lemvigh-Müller Fonden, KV- Fonden, Tennis Fonden. Each grant provided me with 10.000 to 25.000. I it is a lot of work writing the applications but it really pays off in the end.