



IT University Travel Report

Host University: Queensland University of Technology

Study Programme at IT University : SWU

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange

Courses studied abroad:

- CAB302 Software Development (*Second Year Project: Software Development in Large Teams*)
- CAB320 Artificial Intelligence (*Elective*)
- CAB402 Programming Paradigms (*Second Year Project: Functional Programming*)
- IFB295 IT Project Management (*System Development and Project Organization*)

Exchange Period: semester (autumn/spring) spring year 2019

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here:

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at QUT?

Studying at QUT was not too different from studying at ITU. The lectures lasted from one to two hours and were followed by a tutorial/workshop/practical either right after the lecture or later in the week. The greatest difference from studying at home in Denmark is that you have to speak English as well. At ITU I tend to immediately fall back into Danish as soon as I talk with my fellow students, but at QUT that is not an option, which was one of the reasons for me choosing an English speaking country.

I managed to find units for all the courses I should have had at ITU and was generally satisfied with all of them. I especially liked CAB402 Programming Paradigms and IFB295 IT Project Management because of the excellent teaching staff, regarding both lecturers and TA's. They made the challenging and at times a little dry content seem interesting and relatable to the real world.

CAB302 Software Development turned out to be very similar to Introductory Programming, which was quite disappointing; however, for most of the semester it meant that I had one less unit to stress me out, since I was familiar with most of the content.

I found the academic level to be on par with that of ITU, but the weekly workload was much lighter. I only had one textbook out of four units and usually only had around 30-40 pages of reading in total each week. This meant that the semester started out quite slowly and then suddenly at around week 4 I had an assignment in each unit, which counts in the final grade average, and mid-semester tests that I had to prepare for. So, do not let the slow start fool you, there are still stressful times, especially around the mid-semester break and the week leading up to the exam period. However, for the majority of the semester I did not find staying on top of schoolwork to be a problem whilst also having time in the weekends to get around and explore the Brisbane and the Queensland area.

The social life was okay. QUT were good at providing help and opportunities to meet new people, but they did not do much to make people bond. That is your own responsibility. There are also a lot of student clubs with many different focuses such as sports, academics and social clubs. One of the social clubs was the Exchange Buddy club, which was great for getting around and seeing the area without having to endure hours on public transit or renting a car.

I did find the Australian students to be more reserved than I expected. The social clubs mainly consisted of other exchange or international students, which was a bit disappointing.

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

I wanted to study abroad to experience the education system in another country, explore a completely different part of the world, speak a lot of English, and test myself in a new environment where I could not rely on my family or friends for guidance. All these wishes were definitely fulfilled, however, the stay was quite different from what I expected. I had expected to make some more connections with other students or people in general, but ended up feeling a little isolated in my room and travelling around Australia on my own. I gained a lot of responsibility and confidence by travelling alone, but I also missed sharing my experiences with someone. Although I experienced some low points as well, I do not regret my stay at all.

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?

Personally, I found out how resourceful I can be, when the situation calls for it. As previously mentioned I gained a lot of responsibility for myself and for others and confidence in my own ability to take care of myself and to approach new people.

Academically, I proved myself in a completely new and international setting, thereby gaining the same academic knowledge, as I would have received back in Denmark with the added bonus of greatly improving my English skills and getting a perspective on the education at ITU and different ways of teaching the same content.

All the above-mentioned qualifications have made me a more open minded and help-seeking person, who is not afraid to ask for help when I need it.

Arranging your stay

Arranging my stay was a stressful experience, but not as bad as I feared. Since I was on an Exchange Agreement, ITU handled most of the application process. The most stressful part was the course approval and unit/class enrolment at QUT, because you have to coordinate the deadlines between the two universities. I also had some trouble with a unit at QUT, which meant I was not able to sign up for a specific class when the window opened, but QUT was fairly quick to sort it out, and I ended up in a class which was better than the one I had planned.

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

Before applying, I got a lot of help from SAP who was very generous and helpful in answering all my questions and worries about studying abroad. I also wrote to the head of the SWU education, Dan Witzner Hansen, for enquiries on and guidance with pre-approval of courses. The international coordinator at ITU, Eva, was also very helpful in informing us about the process and keeping me updated about the progress at QUT. When I had received my acceptance letter from QUT, I also contacted their International Student Services with several questions, especially regarding the unit debacle previously mentioned.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

I did as advised by almost every website I read about studying abroad in Australia: I arrived two weeks before Orientation Week and booked a hostel for a week. When I landed in Brisbane I went to an introductory session held by the university in order to help incoming students settle in, and they helped me search for accommodation. The university even provides the service of driving you around to different houses that you have found online, and that was how I found my accommodation. The place I found was a shared house with four other students and within walking distance of the university.

In my shared house people primarily kept to themselves, so we did not do many social things together, but it was a fine house and they were friendly enough.

I did not really look at student accommodation because I had heard that it was very expensive, however, I met another exchange student who had booked his student accommodation room quite some time in advance from his home country, and this enabled him to get a good discount on the rent. So maybe try and do some research for accommodation anyways before flying down under, though finding something when you are there is also a fine possibility.

When moving to Australia you also need a bank account and a phone number. I had been told by my bank in Denmark that I did not have to open a bank account, but that turned out to be incorrect, since rent need to be drawn from an Australian account. My advice for setting up both a bank account and a phone number is to make an inquiry in an actual store and not online, and to do so as quickly as possible.

Expenses and Financing

Studying abroad is an expensive trip, but it is worth it when you consider that it is really an investment in your future.

I was quite nervous about the financial side of the stay, because I had not really been saving up for the trip. However, I managed to get by with my everyday expenses, such as rent and groceries, solely on the SU grant, and my flight and three trips I made in Australia were financed by a combination of my own money and money from my family. Therefore, I would say that the right amount of money for you is mostly dependent on how much you want to travel in- and outside of Australia before, during and after the semester.

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

I tried a couple, but not with great enthusiasm, because I had heard that it is not very likely for bachelor students to receive anything. I did apply to the Travel Pool at ITU and received 2500 DKK, which I can definitely recommend.

Recommendations for other students:

- Find and apply for pre-approval of courses as early as possible. That was definitely the most nerve-racking part of the application process for me.
- The earlier you arrive in Australia, the more options of accommodation you will have.
- If studying in Australia, you must:
 - Dive at the Great Barrier Reef
 - Get up close to Uluru (Ayers Rock)
 - Explore the Cairns area with the rainforest on one side and the reef on the other
 - See the famous harbor view of the bridge and opera house in Sydney