



## **IT University Travel Report**

*Dear Student, this is a template – the aim is to inspire other students who may wish to follow in your footsteps. You are free to give your report the shape you want and to go beyond the questions, as long as you cover the information asked for below. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not. Remember that the report will be made available on the intranet.*

### **Host University:**

*Auckland University of Technology AUT*

### **Study Programme at IT University :**

*Digital Innovation and Management*

### **Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:**

*Study Abroad*

### **Courses studied abroad:**

*Advanced Project Management*

*Digital Interaction and User Engagement*

*Innovation Management*

**Exchange Period:** *autumn 2018*

**If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here:** *julia.mihalyiova@gmail.com*

## **Your stay abroad**

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

Studying at AUT was great! The university have many different campuses. I studied at the City Campus which was just 2-minute walk from the Wellesley Student Apartments where I stayed. The campus has a library, computers that you can use and spaces for group work and also quite places for studying. There is a café, canteen and a gym that you can join for 10NZD/week with many group classes (also yoga!).

There are plenty of courses to choose from but you have to make sure they equal level 8 when you are going to AUT from your master's program. I chose Advanced Project Management course that equals 15 ECTS points, where we learnt how to work with a software for project planning – Microsoft Project.

In general, the academic standard at AUT is a bit lower than at ITU. There is not a lot of compulsory reading so will definitely have time to explore New Zealand. But maybe it depends on what kind of courses you choose.

There is always something happening at the campus and they care about exchange students a lot. There is also "Got to get out" group on Facebook, where they organize various trips around Auckland and further and it is an amazing opportunity to meet new people and make friends.

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

Already at the moment when I was applying for ITU and I saw they have a partnership with universities at New Zealand, I knew I had to do this. It is an amazing opportunity to discover this amazing country, which is so far away (17 000 km away). I was also at the point at my life – where I studied and worked full-time and broke up with my boyfriend. I was very close to burn-out point. The 5 months in New Zealand really turned my life around. It definitely exceeded my expectations. I met so many amazing people and some of them I can say are friends of life. We travelled around and discovered breath-taking places together.

Because I did not get the working visa, I had more time on my hands. I renewed my energy, changed my lifestyle with vegan diet, exercising a lot of hiking and no drinking (yes, it is possible not to drink during an exchange program).

If I could I would definitely do it again. I would recommend it to everyone. However, it's not going to be easy. There is a lot of papers to fill and emails to send but you should definitely just push through it. It is 168% worth 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.**

I already mentioned above how this experience benefited me personally. It made me realize that life is not just about stress and money. I reconnected with myself spiritually and it was at New Zealand and thanks to New Zealand that I found out what I want to do in life.

Academically, I would say it is up to you to make the best out of it. If you want to learn something new, you will. If you don't, you won't. The subjects I chose, were quite similar to the ones I had in my previous studies at KEA and CBA. But due to interaction with students from different parts of the world (a lot of Asians) I still learnt a lot. I learnt a lot about cultures and life.

## **Arranging your stay**

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

I started very early. Since the semester in New Zealand started already in July (which was out autumn semester), the admission deadline was very early. First, I had to apply for study abroad at ITU, where you write a motivation letter and a list of universities you would like to go to according your priorities. Once I got chosen by ITU, I could send my application to AUT. I selected the courses and sent it to ITU for approval before to make sure I could transfer my credits when I come back.

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

I was reading the reports of other students that studied at AUT and I found them quite helpful. When I was confused about anything, I contacted the people at ITU student office and they were always very nice. [Eva Maria Steensig Hauerslev emsh@itu.dk](mailto:emsh@itu.dk) was our study abroad coordinator. And once I got the answer from AUT that I was admitted, I got a contact for a person there. He was also very helpful and nice to talk to, replying my emails quickly.

**How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?**

There were people who preferred living in rented rooms in Auckland but you have to search a lot. And it's the easier once you arrived in Auckland. I chose to live in the dormitories that belongs to AUT – Wellesley Student Apartments. It was the easiest choice for me and you can meet a lot of new people there. I also applied in advance as there is a deadline as well. I paid the full amount for the entire semester in advance. You can also pay by instalments but the total amount is then a bit higher.

## **Expenses and Financing**

**Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad**

The biggest expense connected to studying at AUT was the tuition fee, administration cost, enrolment fee and the insurance which all together cost around 12.000 NZD. Then I paid for the full amount for a room in the student accommodation. I didn't spend much on the travelling since I lived in the center of Auckland and close to my school. I saved a lot on food since I was cooking for myself and not eating out or take-aways.

I would recommend to have some savings for travelling around and exploring the area. We did a lot of trips with friends during the weekends and the days where we didn't have school.

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

I applied for Udlandsstipendium which is a scholarship provided by ITU as well as for many grants. I was also applying for grants and I did all the applications and motivation letters in Danish even though I'm an international student. I applied for about 20 grants and I received one. I took me a lot of time and energy but that's how it is. I had some savings as well but I had to take a loan since I had to pay tuition fee before I received the funds.

## **Recommendations for other students:**

My advice is to start researching and applying for grants as soon as you know that you would like to go abroad. Don't wait until you receive the admission letter from AUT because that might take a while. Many grants have deadlines until when they receive the applications. Apply for as many as you can but always write a personalized motivation letter or at least tailored a bit for the specific grants.

It is going to take a lot of time and energy, lots of emails and letters but don't get discouraged and do not lose hope. The experience is definitely worth it.

You will need to apply for a visa to be able to visit New Zealand and one of the requirements is to show them either the return ticket or a proof that you have enough finances to be able to purchase the return ticket. My advice is do not buy the return ticket, you will be then more flexible with your travels. As New Zealand is very close to Australia, Fiji and Bali, I would definitely recommend you to visit these destinations while you're there.

Good luck :)