



## IT University Travel Report

**Host University:** Queensland University of Technology

**Exchange Period:** semester (autumn/spring). Autumn \_\_\_\_\_ year 2019

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

Email: lmen@itu.dk (contact me anytime if you have any questions ☺)

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## Your stay abroad

Hi! My name is Louis Frederic Mendel, I am 23 years old, and I have been studying my 5<sup>th</sup> semester as an exchange student at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia in the autumn 2019 semester. This here, is my travel report containing various advice, observations and overall general thoughts of my experiences as an exchange student in Australia. Should you have any questions, also dumb ones ☺, feel free to drop me an e-mail ([lmen@itu.dk](mailto:lmen@itu.dk)) or drop me a message on Facebook at any time ☺

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

*QUT is a very big university when compared to ITU. The university has two campuses – Kelvin's Grove and Gardens point. Each campus serves around 25.000 people bringing the overall number of students to 50.000. Compared to ITU, the number of enrolled students is around 16-17 times as big – this of course means that the campus is huge. Basically, the campus reminded me of a small city with street signs for directions, food courts, many different buildings and overall huge infrastructure. I studied at the campus called Gardens Point which is located in the center of Brisbane which was very nice as everything is within walking distance.*

*In my time at QUT, I studied four different courses, or units as they call it, which was equivalent to 30 ECTS points (each unit is worth 7,5 ECTS). The courses were: Global business, International logistics, Building IT Systems and Bridging Cultures.*

*At QUT, exams can be either on premise tests, presentations, papers for hand-in, or other evaluation techniques. Typically, a unit has 3 different exams throughout the semester, each being worth a particular percentage of the overall grade. At QUT, one would typically need to have 50% or more in order to pass the unit. Remember, being on exchange, your grades will only be transferred to ITU as passed/not passed.*

*Global business is a first year unit which uncovers different theories of internationalization and overall global issues to consider when a firm operates outside of their home country. The unit was not particularly difficult. The tutorials were very useful. The exams were: two reports (20% and 30%) and a final on-premise exam (50%).*

*International logistics was a third semester unit as was probably the one I found most difficult. The content is a bit more advanced than Global business but still within the same area and is about logistical theories and issues for firms when moving from raw material into a finished product for the consumer. The unit was particularly focused on giving the student a vocabulary to explain different parts of a supply chain, and how a logistical strategy can be used as a competitive advantage. The exams were: one 5 minute online PowerPoint presentation (20%), one online test (20%) and lastly a final report for hand in (60%). The report was especially difficult, as you had to calculate a six page excel sheet for discussing relevant numbers of the case study. Either way, the report was what really got me understanding the content, and it was the unit where I (surprisingly) received the highest grade of my 4 units. The report was about 2500 words.*

*Building IT Systems was the unit I enjoyed the most. The unit is an introductory unit for Python programming, and you learn to program from scratch. I learned a lot from this unit, coming from some Python experience learned at GBI, to eventually building the front-end and back-end code for a working program. The exams were: 13 or so small online tests each Sunday (25% overall), two individual coding projects (each worth 25%) and an on-premise exam test (25%). This and Global business were by far the two largest units I had in terms of registered students, both having an amount of 1100 students enrolled. Very cool unit. Keep up with the weekly tutorials and tests and you'll be fine.*

*Lastly, Bridging cultures involved the area of cultural intelligence (CQ) and students had to carry out two CQ tests and use as data for writing reports. The exams were: one on premise presentation (30%), one reflection paper (30%) and one paper on a case study (40%). The unit were not particularly hard, but I found the quality of the lectures and workshops of low quality.*

*When starting your semester, you have the opportunity to join school organizations as a way to socialize with Australians. I did not do this though.*

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

*Going on exchange is scary of course, as you travel away from Danish day life, friends and family and move into a different culture. While this is true, this was also my motivation for studying abroad – to challenge myself and create unforgettable memories and experiences that you cannot obtain at home. This was also what I got from studying abroad. I challenged myself to do it regardless of it being scary and I learned valuable lessons and really benefited personally from living in Australia for 5 months. I would recommend it to everyone.*

**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 feel that I have become more independent by studying abroad and feel that I have gained new academic insights. It has also been extremely beneficial to learn concepts and theories from an Australian perspective rather than a Danish one, as you are able to understand the material across borders. Studying abroad have helped learn new material as well as understanding the globalization aspect better, which can be seen as the core element in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the GBI program. I can therefore take a lot with me on my future studies. Additionally, the fact that I have been on exchange can be noted on my resumé which is a valuable point to make for my future employer.*

## Arranging your stay

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

*Arranging the entire stay is of course a complex process and a long one as well. First of all, I looked at the options you get with GBI and I considered different destinations – but as mentioned, I wanted to challenge myself and therefore chose a place very far from Copenhagen, literally on the other side of the world. I applied for exchange and was fortunate enough to be granted one of the two exchange spots. I then started to apply for QUT officially which was an easy process. Eva, the one responsible for exchange and study abroad at ITU, was very helpful and had knowledgeable insights into the process and how everything worked (thank you Eva 😊). I found the courses that I wanted to take at QUT and applied for a pre-approval of the courses, which is needed as ITU wants to ensure that the courses in your exchange is equivalent to the material you would have learned at ITU. I received my approval from QUT and purchased the needed Australian health care and the student visa. Afterwards, I purchased plane tickets and was on my way the 5<sup>th</sup> of July, pretty soon after my final exams at ITU. All this happened between February to July, so it was a long process of back and forth communication with various people.*

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

*Accommodation was easy to arrange. It is nothing like Copenhagen, there is a lot more available apartments, and you can get inspections usually in the same day that you call to an agent to hear about an apartment. You should not arrange it from Copenhagen, rather, this is what you should do:*

- 1. Book a hostel/Airbnb/hotel (with decent wi-fi) for about 5 days somewhere around Brisbane center. It being in the center of the city is important as you will walk to everywhere in the beginning, as you do not have a translink card yet (similar to rejsekortet). I booked a hostel for about 11 days which was way to many days as I found accommodation after a couple of days search.*
- 2. Arriving in Brisbane, you should start right away with your search. Pretty simply, you go to google, or Facebook, and search for rental accommodations within your price range, arrange an inspection, and go look. It is a good idea to book multiple inspections on the same day in order to make full use of your time. At the inspections, ask the agent if they have anything similar available – sometimes they will know of places that are not yet listed online which is how I got my accommodation.*
- 3. Plan right away. I arrived 17 days before my semester started and purely used that time to find a place to live and settle down before the start of the semester. This was early, but useful as there weren't many other exchange students looking for accommodation at the time, meaning that I had broader options.*

*I considered some of the places you find when googling 'Brisbane student accommodation', such as: Scape, Unilodge, Iglu, Urbanest, Studentone etc. Basically, these are student solutions where they provide everything for you, have nice facilities etc., but you pay a fortune to live there, in small rooms. I would not recommend it.*

*I stayed in between the areas of South Bank and West End in South Brisbane. In general, I would recommend West End as a nice area to live as there are a lot of students living there and the area has lots of cafés, bars, cool stores etc.*

## Expenses and Financing

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

Going on exchange is expensive, no doubt about that – but it is definitely up to you how your cost of living is. There were expenses that could not be avoided such as plane tickets, accommodation, OSHC, student visa, etc. A plane ticket from Copenhagen to Brisbane was about 6000 DKK. Accommodation in Brisbane was about 4300 DKK per month. OSHC and student visa was about 2700 DKK. In Brisbane it is definitely easy to live cheap. What I did a lot was to prepare lunch from home and bring it to uni – rather than eating out everyday. Also I did not shop a lot of clothes etc. (mostly due to me not having room in my suitcase). What was the most expensive was the trips I did outside my studies. I went to different places around Australia, to New Zealand and to the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand before heading back home to Copenhagen. This was the most expensive part, and it is doable to be on exchange without spending ridiculous amount of money if you limit your expenses, such as travelling.

I also bought a used car in Brisbane with a friend which was nice to use for trips around the area as the distance between destinations is much bigger in Australia, compared to Denmark. The car had some troubles though, and we had to pay for service and some repairs. Overall, the money used on the car was pretty much returned on the sale of the car at the end of our exchange but I would not recommend purchasing a vehicle as it was a big hassle with all the procedures.

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

*I used a lot of time collecting recommendations from professors, writing motivational letters, collecting documents etc. and finding scholarships to apply for. It is a bit more difficult for bachelor students than masters as there are simply fewer available options. I applied for several and was granted the Lemvig Müller Legat for 10.000 DKK and the ITU Travel Pool for 2500 DKK. I would recommend only applying for those that seem fit for your education. Otherwise, you will be wasting your time applying for scholarships with hundreds other more qualified applicants.*

#### **Recommendations for other students:**

*Going on exchange was a unique and really cool experience and I would recommend anyone to do it. If you like nice beaches, warm weather and also a good quality university, lectures and teaching material, I would recommend that you consider Brisbane and QUT as your choice of destination.*