

IT University Travel Report

Host University: Auckland University of Technology

Study Programme at IT University: DIM (Digital innovation & management)

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Study Abroad

Courses studied abroad: Advanced project management, Innovation management and Digital interaction & user engagement

Exchange period: Autumn, 2018

Your stay abroad:

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

Studying at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) was very different from studying at ITU. First of all, AUT is a very big university compared to ITU – this means a lot of students and places to get lost 😊 It takes a few weeks before you become familiar with everything (such as – where do I print? Where is this classroom?). Second of all, everything is done a bit differently. I was used to sitting in big lecture theatres at ITU – that was not the case at AUT. Here, the teaching was done in smaller classrooms with fewer students. I really liked that about AUT! Furthermore, I must also mention the grading system. At ITU we are used to having exams at the end of the semester – these exams are what determines your grade. At AUT we had assignments throughout the semester – all in which was a part of our overall grading. This was great! It definitely removed some of the normal “exam pressure”.

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

I decided to go abroad a few days before the deadline for applying. To be honest, it was a very spontaneous decision (but ended up being a very good one!). I did not go abroad on my Bachelor and have always regretted it. Right before the application deadline I realized that this could very well be my last chance of going abroad – therefore I applied.

I am so glad that I applied! It has been the best experience. Overall, it has met my expectations. I did not learn as much at school as I would if I had stayed home and studied at ITU, but it gave me so much more which I also find very valuable.

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 don't even know where to begin! I learned a lot about myself. It was a challenge to move to a new country – on the other side of the world – and learn how to manage everyday life. How do I get a phone number? Where is the best store for grocery shopping? How do I set up a bank account? Everyday stuff that I take for granted at home. It was such a healthy experience to go through this!

Academically, I didn't learn as much as I thought I would – but that doesn't mean that I didn't learn anything. I really improved my English – both oral and written. This will, without a doubt, benefit me when I have to write my thesis.

Arranging your stay:

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

This was the worst part! If you are considering going abroad – DO IT! I will warn you though - the process of arranging everything is not fun. There is so much paperwork that must be done. I can only recommend that you take it one step at a time, breathe, and look for help from ITU, AUT and team up with another student who's also going abroad. It is really helpful to have one to ask who's going through the same process as you. I won't go in details with the process (I forgot half of it anyway) – but a main thing is to apply for student visa – this is really important and can take some time.

I promise – that it will all be worth it! Seriously, do it!

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

As I mentioned before, ITU and the international office at AUT was really helpful. I think I read all the travel reports at study guide – It was helpful to see what others have done. If possible, team up with a fellow student! It is really nice to have someone to talk to that understands the process you're going through.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

My situation was a bit special, as I travelled with my boyfriend (who was not a student). He received a working holiday visa and worked in Auckland while I studied. Therefore, we did not have the option of staying at the student accommodation. We booked an Airbnb for the first week of our stay (We arrived a week before the semester started). We spent the first week searching for an apartment in Auckland. It was a bit stressful, but it worked out really well. If you don't want to stay at the student accommodation I can recommend you check the website "trademe" – this is how we found our apartment.

Expenses and financing:

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad:

Auckland (and New Zealand in general) is expensive. You must be aware of that before going. I believe that a semester abroad is an investment in your future and an experience of a lifetime – of course it is not cheap. When making a budget, you must be realistic – and you will (most likely) exceed your budget 😊 Remember to put some money aside for travel and fun.

But again, I cannot say it enough – it is worth it! 😊

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

Yes! And you should do the same! I ended up being able to cover most of my expenses with the scholarships I received. It is very time consuming to apply for scholarships – but it can really pay off. My advice would be to buy “legathåndbogen” and also pay for a membership at “legatbogen.dk” - this helped me a lot. Start as soon as possible – you do not need to have all documents ready from the beginning – you can always send documents later. And finally - put some effort in writing a good application 😊

Recommendations for other students:

Do it! What do you have to loose? If you have an apartment/room – rent it to someone else while you’re abroad. If you have a job – talk to your boss (maybe, they will agree to put you on a leave). All the practicalities can be solved one way or the other – but you do not always have the change to live abroad for a semester. You won’t regret going – I promise 😊