TRAVEL REPORT

STUDY ABROAD AT
QUEENSLANDS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA
MOTIVATION AND EXPECTATIONS

I chose to take a semester abroad, because I was eager to gain an unique experience that could enrich and develop me personally as well as academically. I saw the opportunity as a mark of quality for gaining me professional academically skills that could help me understanding to collaborate with multinational background and offer me global competences that could open up for more opportunities internationally. Therefore I chose to study in an English speaking country where I always wanted to go- Australia.

I chose to study in Brisbane at Queensland University of Technology, because the university offered high quality courses in marketing, which I wanted to gain more expertise in. I was especially convinced that this university was the right for me after having met a former ITU student, who talked positively about her stay at QUT. Brisbane as a city was also the right choice for me, because it is placed close to beautiful beaches, the weather is warm all year around and living expenses is cheaper than Sydney and Melbourne.

I have had six amazing months in Australia and overall my stay at QUT has met my expectations. The experience has gained me the understanding of working in marketing and communication on an international level. Though the academic level was found to be lower at QUT, which I found disappointing at times. I felt the way of teaching was not as well prepared and the learning content not as advanced as expected. The assignments were to be written within short time given little time to immerse into the topic. At times it was frustrating, but on the other hand I have learned to work with assignments differently, which has gained me other competences than expected.

Looking at my expectations of developing me as an individual the experience has not been a life changing experience. Australia is a culture very similar to the Danish making it easy to navigate and adapt into the environment and surroundings. Even though I had expected more personal challenge I do appreciate the fact of Australians (Aussies) being friendly and easygoing people, which has made my stay pleasant in every way.
HARD WORK AND PLEASURE

The first month was all about understanding the formalities, expectations and grading system. Though the university is used to helping study abroad students out with any issues that might occur and offers support given the opportunity of adapting quickly to the system. I was in fact amazed of how organized and service minded QUT was in helping new students getting settle into QUT and the Australian daily life.

Studying at QUT was a good combination of hard work and pleasure. At times it was stressful due to the workload and new way of approaching assignments, but then the weekends were spent on going to the beach or on other fun trips. I had chosen to study courses in Consumer Behaviour, Digital Strategy, Integrated Marketing Communication and Managing in a Globalized Economy. I found the content of these courses relevant and supplemented my current studies in Digital Design and Communication. The focus of the courses were more digital marketing orientated, which has enriched my profile and given me better understanding, skills and possibilities of working within this area. Also the focus on learning was hands-on and closely related to the real world with collaborating with companies, which I found as good practice for when starting a job.

Outside studies the university offered the opportunity of joining plenty of clubs and social activities, which also contributed to a great social life. Since the weather in Brisbane is warm all year around sport clubs, outdoor events and student activities are popular. The university holds around 8.000 international students who are eager to meet and enjoy the stay in Brisbane together, so it is up to you to join the fun.
WHAT I GOT OUT OF MY STAY

Personally the study abroad experience has contributed to my life experience and international understanding. It has taught me how to navigate in unknown situations, how to settle into another environment and follow new formalities. Facing the challenge of study abroad has prepared me for the obstacles that can occur when living overseas as well as given me the courage and desire to follow my dream of working abroad after finishing my studies.

Moreover the study has taught me to adapt to other ways of working and handling stress. Each assignment only allowed little time for immersing into the topic making the assignment writing very intense. Therefore quick writing techniques, quick decision making and fast executing skills were gained in order to keep the deadlines. I believe this experience can help me executing work on high demand in the future, especially it will be a great help in my thesis writing.

The chosen subjects that highly focused on digital marketing have gained me a toolkit of valuable methods and skills. It has improved my professional profile of proficiency in online marketing with an international perspective. This I believe this has given me a chance of position myself better on the job market.

ARRANGING MY STAY AND HELPFUL RESOURCES

The process of arranging the stay was some times confusing, so it is beneficial to start looking at the formalities early on. I struggled to understand how event to begin the process and actually knowing what I had to do, when to do and how to do. In order to understand this process I went to the study abroad meetings at ITU and also asked former study abroad students about their experience. I think asking former study abroad students, EDU and Kilroy were a great help, because it gave me an idea of what I could expect of the stay and the applying process. It was a great help to join EDU’s and Kilroy’s Facebook group to be informed about the upcoming study abroad presentations.

Then I started on getting an overview of the paper work, funding and formalities that ITU and the host university would need. Again I found this confusing, because each university has different standards to meet. Here I especially found ITU’s international coordinator Eva very helpful and generally through out the entire process. I found myself to be very dedicated, structured and determined, which I think is extremely important in order to meet the different deadlines.
Before going abroad I researched the possibilities of finding accommodation in Brisbane. Though the best help was to ask former students from QUT of the best way of finding accommodations. They encouraged me to find my accommodation upon arrival in Brisbane, because it would give me a better chance of finding the right and cheapest place. This recommendation was out of my comfort zone, but I ended up taken the advice and I spend the first 2-3 weeks intensely visiting different accommodations. Renting and finding a place showed to be easy and full of options, so I will recommend you doing the same if going to Brisbane. I found the contacts to different rental companies and landlords through the university, Airbnb, Facebook groups and Flatmates.com.au. These platforms made it simple and easy to set up a meeting quickly.

Moreover, practical questions such as “whether to open a bank account”, “how to activate the insurance” and “which mobile subscription is best” will arise within the first weeks. I encourage taking part of the orientations days “O-week”, which was extremely helpful for giving an overview of these practicalities.
EXPENSES AND FINANCING

Studying abroad is an investment. Even before the journey begins there will be expenses such as paying the insurance, visa and maybe tuition fees. Personally I financed these with savings. I spent quite a lot on these before-going expenses, because Australia had specific requirements before entering the country.

Also I applied to a variety of scholarships, which has been a great help for my study abroad budget. There are a variety of scholarships to choose from. It is a good idea to start gathering scholarship options and start writing them early on, because it can take some time to get response. Personally, I received a scholarship from Nordea Fonden and Knud Højgaards Fonden, so I would recommend applying for these. Also my friends were lucky to receive these.

Besides financing my travels with savings and scholarships I supplemented my SU with a SU-lån. I found this combination of savings, scholarships and loans to be enough to live a good lifestyle with travels, eating out and for activities. Again it costs less living in Brisbane than Sydney and Melbourne, so here the budget worked out perfectly.
ON THE LAST NOTE

It is a cliché but I will mention it anyways. **Just do it!**

Studying abroad is a great experience that you only get once in your lifetime. It would be a shame to miss the chance. Trust me, you will not want to go home after six months of fun.

If you doubt on whether to go for it, because you think the process is too long or whether it is something for you I recommend talking to former students who have already been studying abroad. This was what convinced me 100% on going and I have not regret it once.

The stay is worth every penny.

**Best regards**

**Alexandra Viskum**