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: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Study Programme at IT University : MSc Software Engineering

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Study Abroad, Postgrad

Courses studied abroad: iPhone Software Engineering, Project Design for Quality, Information Retrieval, and Usability Engineering

Exchange Period: semester (autumn/spring): 2. Semester of 2013 (Danish fall, Australian spring)

If you read this before 2016, feel free to contact me at ndbl@itu.dk with any questions about Melbourne. If you read it after I’ve probably forgotten most of the details of my stay, so don’t bother asking me 😊

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at [the university] (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology is a massive university with an abundance of courses to choose from for a student with a software background. The quality of the courses varies a lot and the unambitious student will be able to pass courses easily. I usually can’t help myself but to do my very best every time I do a university course and I found it relatively easy to get high marks compared to what I’m used to from the ITU.

I believe the issue is that it is not really in the Australian culture to take Master’s degrees. Instead most academics do two Bachelor degrees, which in turn means that there are fewer postgrad
courses to choose from. Furthermore, most postgrad courses get filled with undergrads lowering the level of difficulty considerably.

RMIT arranged several introductory parties and I got to know heaps of people the first couple of weeks. It is definitely worth joining the Surf club as well as the student union, RUSU, for the social events they arrange.

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

My reasons for studying abroad were more personal than they were academic. I wanted a different perspective on life and get to know my limitations better. I went there by myself and only knew one other Dane in the Melbourne when I arrived, so it was up to me and my social skills to build a new social network. Melbourne and RMIT is amazing for meeting new people with the same interests as you, and if you’re willing to make the effort the possibilities are limitless. Melbourne was way more awesome than I expected it to be and feels like a second home to me now.

Australians are generally really forthcoming but be careful with asking too blunt questions before you get to know them. They’re generally quite private people behind the courtesies.

**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 got to know a bunch of Melbournians as well as international students and some of them changed the way I see the world. We Danes tend to be very negative in our approach to life and we never seem to be satisfied with the state of things though we’ve gotten too complacent to do much about it. Australians are, as they would tell you themselves, easy going. They’re polite and helpful without expecting anything in return and I’ve learned a lot from their way of living.

With all the traveling I’ve done I now see the world as my playground and I could easily see myself living in a different country than Denmark after I finish my degree.

Academically I think I would have gained more if I had stayed back in Copenhagen, but I still got to know some interesting new fields of research that RMIT is better at than ITU. Information Retrieval was my favorite course, but I can hardly see that I should have further use for it in my academic career.

**Arranging your stay**

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

It’s a long a tedious process and you just have to get it over with. First, I went to RMIT’s website to find a list of 10 courses I would like to do. EDU Denmark helped me get in touch with the university and apply for the Study abroad program after I had gotten the courses preapproved by the Study Board at ITU. Even though there was a lot of paperwork to be filled out to apply for the program the whole application process went pretty smoothly thanks to EDU Denmark.
What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?

I mainly used EDU Denmark and their website. If I did not have them as my agency I would have had to arrange everything myself. I also happened to know a couple of Melbournians before I left Denmark, which helped me to pick the right university in the first place.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

With regards to accommodation, I basically just flew to Australia and started worrying about it when I arrived in Melbourne airport. I had booked 3 nights on Space Hotel and looked at a couple of housing websites before I came, but I had been told that it was pretty easy to find accommodation in Melbourne. That turned out to be true and after 4 days in town I had found an amazing apartment in Southbank with a cool Australian roommate. We had access to a big pool, spa, tennis court, and gym in the apartment building, all included in the rent of $1000 a month.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

I spent a lot of money on this trip. There is always something cool to do and see when you’re on exchange, so naturally you will want to have saved up 40-50.000 kr. before going, if you want to have money to travel to e.g. New Zealand.

My monthly rent of $1000 was one of the more expensive in the group of exchange students I was hanging out with, but I got what I paid for and I had an amazing time. If you want to live cheaply you should check out accommodation in Carlton or some of the other northern suburbs. DO NOT get tricked into thinking that Uni Lodge, “The Village”, or any other sort of university-sponsored student housing is for you. It is dirty, asocial and filled with Asian exchange students that have just moved away from home.

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

I applied for one at Rambøll but didn’t get it.

Recommendations for other students:

If you go on exchange anywhere in the world, don’t fall into the trap of hanging out with other Scandinavians. Force yourself to befriending locals; you will not regret it. It is the only way to go.

If you’re thinking of going to Sydney or Brisbane instead of Melbourne you should not. Melbourne is the place to be if you’re a student even though the weather can be treacherous.