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: Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Study Programme at IT University: DDK

Activity Abroad: Study Abroad Semester

Exchange Period: semester (autumn/spring) ________________ year __2015____

Your stay abroad

Please describe your stay abroad:

I spent my study abroad semester at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia in autumn 2015. Generally speaking, I was very happy and satisfied with my time over there. The semester started early – already in July and therefore also ended ‘early’. We were done with exams before the end of November, which meant we had plenty of time to travel and experience stuff before having to be back in DK. I had really interesting courses and I learned a lot during my studies there.

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

Most of all, I guess I just wanted to use the opportunity to go study abroad while I still could and I told myself that if I wouldn’t even try to apply somewhere, I’d be upset with myself later in life. Another thing was that it was something me and my boyfriend planned together, he had the opportunity to go at the same time, so it worked out just great.
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?

It is tricky to say what I got out of the stay personally, as I’ve tried living in different countries and adapting to different cultures quite a few times now. But it doesn’t mean I didn’t learn anything or didn’t get anything out of it. Being more independent and open are things that I often tend to notice, but also confidence in my ideas and in the things I do, are things that come along when you stand in a situation when you happen to do things differently from others. Then again it works the other way around as well, knowing that my way is not always the ‘highway’ and getting ‘out of the box’ becomes in some situations easier.

Academically, I must say I learnt a lot as well. Those three courses I took in Swinburne were a part of Communication Design masters program so I was together with the same small group of people in my class every time. The courses were quite different from what is normally offered at ITU, with a greater focus on creative freedom, independent work and personal development, which I felt was just exactly what I needed at that point of my studies. The study environment and the teachers were quite relaxed, however still demanding so I also felt like my limits were pushed a bit further. Those lessons are very valuable to me personally but also for my future studies, as I feel more confident in my practical skills.

Arranging your stay

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

For me the planning process was the most stressful thing ever because I wasn’t sure if I could go to Australia at all, until 2 days before the final flight. I started the planning early in December 2014 and applied through EDU, who was very helpful and supportive but unfortunately there was a number of communication issues both with ITU and Swinburne, financial issues and also some trouble with getting a visa (which shouldn’t really have been a problem at all, but it was all one big miscommunication). But then suddenly it all worked out 😊

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

EDU’s help was definitely of the highest value as they were helping me with the whole application process to Swinburne. A few scholarships(legater) was an incredible help from the financial side.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

At first I stayed at a hostel in the city center in Melbourne, where I started searching for apartments/rooms, I could go and check out. There were some stories of people who had found something already back home, paid everything and then when getting to Melbourne, they’d realize
that they were going to live in a garage or something. So it was a better idea to be there and meet
the landlords and rooms.

**Expenses and Financing**

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

Australia is generally a very expensive destination. If you think Denmark is expensive, then try living
in Australia! Everything from rent, transport etc to internet and phone service is slightly more costly
than you would expect. Also food and groceries – eating healthy is quite expensive, but if you want
to save up then eating candy and drinking soda is cheap and will do that for you.

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

I applied to a million fonds in Denmark but it seems like it’s a bit tricky to find ones that support
international students in Denmark. I did however receive support from Oticon and Marie & MB
Richters Fond which I can recommend to other international students. Apply in Danish though ;)

**Recommendations for other students:**

One of the things I’d like to point out to other students is that make sure you think about why you
are going abroad. Is it just to study or also meet other people, develop an international network or
get better at English? I noticed that there were very big groups of German and also Scandinavian
students who would always hang out together, speaking their own language and thereby just staying
apart from other internationals. It is always nice to have someone from back home, especially when
you’re on the other side of the world but just make sure you think about it if you want to stay in
those ‘closed communities’ or open up to a bit more diverse circle of people.

Other than that I don’t think there’s much I could add, that you wouldn’t hear from another place –
stay open-minded, pay attention to formalities and all the paperwork regarding your stay and make
sure you have proper funding before you take off!