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

Study Programme at IT University : Digital Media and Design

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad:
- Academic Literacies: Situating University Knowledge
- Innovative Business Practice
- Fundamentals of Marketing
- Research skills project

Exchange Period: semester (autumn/spring) Autumn year 2017

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

Frederikke Grunnet – freg@itu.dk
Your stay abroad

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

Swinburne University of Technology is very similar to the IT-University, just way bigger. The campus is located in Hawthorn in Melbourne, which is 10-15 minutes from CBD (the city centre in Melbourne) by train. The people are very sweet and open, and it is not at all weird talking to random people on the train, in the elevator or at the library.

The courses I was enrolled in were mainly courses made for first year student, and thereby had no prerequisites. That was the main reason why I choose them, however I also believed that they could benefit my education. Moreover, only one of them had an exam, will the rest of them were passed through assignments throughout the semester. As my fellow students were first year students, a lot of the courses were very basic and not on a very high academic level. However, it did not bother me, as it meant that I had time to do a lot of other things that just studying.

There is a lot of events happening around campus, and the orientation week is a good way to get introduced to the different clubs and organisations that you can sign up for. Even though the orientation week in nothing like the “Rus-uge” which we are used to in Denmark, it is still a good way to meet other exchange student. However, it is really important that you make an effort in talking to new people and make plans with new friends, as these will probably be the people you spend the rest of your semester with.

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

I have earlier travelled around the world, and stayed for a month at the East Coast of Australia, and ever since I have been longing to go back and explore other parts of Australia. Melbourne has one of Australia’s best study environments, and is a modern and western city at the other end of the world. I wanted to meet new people from all over the world, try to establish a new life in a new city and improve my English.

My stay definitely met my expectation, and I got so much more from it than I initially expected. Not only did I meet sweet and outgoing aussies, I also now have connections all over the world. Melbourne is truly an amazing city, and it is not for nothing that is has been named the most
liveable city in the world for seven years in a row. People are so much more outgoing and friendly that in Denmark, and there are so many things to do in and around Melbourne. I loved living in Australia, studying in Melbourne and meeting new people from different cultures and countries. 

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?

Personally I became more outgoing and open, and learned how to become friends with people that are totally different from me. For my further studies, it is now easier for me to present and write in English, and I am my calm doing it. Academically, I improved my English both in writing and orally. Even though my courses were quite “easy”, I still learned a lot from them and got to explore some new study fields. By electing my own courses, I learned what I find interesting and what I do not find interesting. For my further studies, I now know what I want to specialise in and which courses I pref
Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:
It takes a lot of effort arranging your stay, but that is only when you are planning and applying for everything. When you’re arriving in Australia, you can enjoy your stay. However, as there are a lot of forms to complete and practical things to do, it becomes easier if you discuss it with other students that are also heading to Australia.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?
As I was one of the first exchange students from ITU studying on Swinburne, I did not have a people to consult or a lot of resources.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?
I had a Danish friend from University of Copenhagen, whom I decided to live with before leaving Denmark. She arrived in Melbourne 2 weeks before me, and went on heaps of inspections to find us a place to live. We used the websites Flatmates and Gumtree and the Facebook page “Fairy Floss” to find available accommodation, and she visited the ones we found interesting. It is very important that you inspect the accommodation before paying or signing the contracts, as there is a lot of people who fake pictures etc. of the place – you want to make sure that you’re getting a good place to live. People mostly live in shared houses or apartments around the city, and mostly there is a Land Lord who is responsible for several properties.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

Studying is abroad is really expensive, but without a doubt worth every penny! The most expensive part of it, is of course all the travelling. Now that you’re actually located in another country in another part of the world, you want to explore Australia and the countries close to it. Despite the fact that it is very expensive studying in Australia, you receive SU (and SU-Loan if you choose that) so it does not seem as expensive afterwards.

Rent is approximately the same as here. I payed 720 australian dollars a month (3500 DKK) for a room in CBC, which I shared with another girl and it was in an apartment with 8 people in total. If you want your own room, you’re probably going to pay minimum 1000 Australian dollars a month (6000 DKK).

If you choose to live away from campus, public transport is a great expense as well. If you are an exchange student (not study abroad), you are eligible to get a commission card that gives you discount on public transport. Normally you pay around 4$ each way (max 8,90$ a day), but with the commission you pay around 2$ each way (max 4,90$ a day).

Groceries are a bit more expensive that in Denmark, but eating out is a bit cheaper. As everyone is living in small apartments, you eat out most of the time – thereby food is a great expense during your stay. Drinking alcohol is more expensive as well.
Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

I applied for heaps of scholarships, but only received one from Fynske Bank. I found it hard to find scholarships for design or IT students, so I mostly applied for scholarships that were generally supporting students going on exchange. I found that your chances of getting a scholarship is hard when you’re only on your bachelor, but if you apply for more “local” scholarships as your home city, chances are better.

Recommendations for other students:
- If possible, choose courses without exams (just makes life easier now that you actually have the choice to pass a course without an exam)
- Make your timetable as soon as you can, the good classes are quickly filled up
- Most people living on campus are around 18-20 years, so if you’re older than that, I recommend you to live in a shared house or apartment instead. Not much are happening in Hawthorn, so if possible, find accommodation in CBD, Carlton, Fitzroy or Richmond. These are cool suburbs and easy to get to Swinburne from.
- If you have a small sense that you would like to go on exchange by yourself, DO IT. You’re so much more open and outgoing when you’re by yourself and every other exchange student is just as alone and lonely as you are.