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 : Msc Digital Design and Communication

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad: 3D-Scanning and Printing, Creative Entrepreneurship, Interaction Design and Development for Screens

Exchange Period: Autumn 2017

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here: jeppekJoller@gmail.com

Your stay abroad

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

Overall, I really enjoyed my stay in Melbourne. However, I found the academic level lower than at ITU. It could have been the courses I selected, but I found that the quality of instructors and courses differed greatly. None of my courses seemed as organized as they would have been at ITU. Creative Entrepreneurship was a disaster, and none of the teachers seemed to know what they were doing (to the dismay of both myself and my fellow students). ‘Interaction Design and Development for Screens’ and ‘3D-Scanning and Printing’ were both really fun, the style of teaching in both of those courses, very much encouraged self-learning to a much greater degree than ITU does. I did some really cool projects in those two courses, and was supported by my instructors in both courses, who put in a lot of their personal time to assist me with my projects. To me it seems, that because the overall level might be lower, the instructors spend a lot more resources assisting those students who are ambitious and come up with interesting projects. My fellow students who were lot ambitious, didn’t seem to learn a whole lot from those courses (though I could be wrong). The social life on campus was pretty good. I fairly quickly found a group of international students at Swinburne university that I spent a lot of time with during my stay. It is a bit harder to get to know any of the locals, understandably so.
What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?
First motivation was to see a country far away, and learn stuff I couldn't have learned at home. I succeeded in both and even though it was an expensive trip, even taking grants into account, it taught me a lot. The academic level didn't quite meet my expectations, but I still learned a lot, because I put in a lot of effort and time in the two courses that interested me the most.

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 think I grew a lot, both personally and professionally while in Melbourne. As someone who has never lived outside of Denmark, it was a cool experience to get to know another city and country that well, and having to meet and get to know new people to have a social life.
I'd say that my main takeaway was one of perspective. I found my strengths, when comparing myself to students from a wildly different background. This has made me a lot more confident in my professional skills, which I'm sure I will benefit from in the future and while writing my thesis.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:
Prepare to spend a lot of time sorting out visas, exchange agreements, grants and all that. It is quite stressful to say the least, but also well worth it.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?
My own girlfriend, who has studied abroad 3 times before.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?
We had rented an air-bnb apartment for 3 weeks prior to us arriving in Melbourne, and used that as a base to look for apartments through Seek.com.au and other similar sites. We got lucky finding a furnished apartment in a nice neighborhood, quite central in Melbourne. If you are traveling alone, I would recommend looking into the accomodation near the university. Swinburne should be able to tell you more.

Expenses and Financing
Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad
Depending on the amount of traveling you wish to do, it’s gonna be an expensive trip. Planetickets and visa alone ended up costing me well over 25000. And on top of that, Melbourne is a fairly expensive city. You will need savings, grant/scholarships, loans or some other means of paying for your trip outside of regular SU.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?
I can recommend the ones I was granted.
- Knud Højgaards Fond
- Oticon Fonden
- ITU’s Travel Pool
- Augustinus Fonden

I also applied for Nordea fonden, but was not granted anything from them, but it is easy to apply, and I’ve heard of many others who have been granted this, so might as well go for it.

Recommendations for other students:
My main piece of advice for anyone thinking of going on exchange: Do it, it’s gonna be great, probably no matter where you choose to go. If you go to Swinburne University of Technology, be prepared to put in a lot of effort in the courses you find really interesting. Do projects you are passionate about, and put in good hours to learn in your spare time. My experience is that the instructors love this, and will give you certain perks for doing so. For myself, my instructors put in their personal spare time to assist me in making my ideas possible, and one of my instructors even let me use his personal (and larger) 3D-Printer so I could accomplish my idea. And completely unrelated advice: Get a Myki (rejsekort) concession card, as an exchange student you should qualify for one, effectively cutting traveling expenses in Melbourne in half.