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## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

**Your Name:**

**Name of Study Abroad/Exchange Program:** University of Sydney Semester Exchange

**Quarter(s) of Participation:** Summer/Fall 2014

**E-mail Address:**

### 1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

**a.** Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

Urbanest Cleveland Street. There are many options as to apartment style (single, double, six-person share, etc.) and the location is perfect!

**b.** If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

There was a brief orientation regarding adjusting to school and living abroad—both from the University of Washington and the University of Sydney. To students who are traveling abroad for the first time, the orientation helps with quotidian odds and ends sometimes forgotten in the initial excitement, such as overseas banking, transportation, cell phone plans, and more.

### 2. ACADEMICS:

**a.** Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

The classroom structure at the U Syd was very similar to the UW— large lectures followed by smaller quiz sections. Teachers were, however, much more hands-off, and there was nowhere near as much help available to students. We're spoiled at the UW, with our study centers and long office hours, not to mention CLUE study groups and the like!

The administration was very similar as well, as were most facilities. However, the UW does have longer library hours.. it was only recently that the U Syd introduced a 24 hour library, and a small one at that.

The largest difference would be, without a doubt, the course structure. Rather than constant assessment, midterms, and essays, there would be an average of three assignments per course that determined your grade, and that would be graded harshly. Expect to see many essay/research essay assignments in Australia.

**b.** Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

The quality and content was very good and in depth, as expected from one of Australia's top universities. However, there was a large discrepancy between what was expected of one in class, and the harshness with which assignments were graded at the end of the quarter. It was, however, a good learning experience!

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

Any courses involving Indigenous Australian history of Aboriginal peoples' affairs are worth taking. Not only is the department's faculty very dedicated and engaging; a new side to life in contemporary Australia is revealed, one that city life in Sydney doesn't show on the surface.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

I furthered both my biology and anthropology majors through the courses Indigenous Australia, Psychology, and Genetics & Genomics.

### **3. HOUSING:**

a. What housing options were available to you?

I could have found a flat on my own, stayed in university housing, or stayed in Urbanest student accommodation.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I decided to stay in Urbanest due to a discount offered through my particular exchange, as well as the location.

c. What would you recommend?

Urbanest buildings are new and well maintained. Though they may seem a bit pricey, it's quite normal for a flat in the city with a location that optimal. I would recommend them to students!

### **4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:**

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus is absolutely stunning; it echoes the University of Washington's architecture, with the difference of quite a bit more sun. The buildings are all in gorgeous sandstone with stained glass windows and intricate facades, and the gargoyles... well, they're worth taking a close look at!

The community is also very friendly, in true Aussie fashion—especially if you get involved in a club or organization!

### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

I had no concerns—The insurance makes sure we're in good hands, and it's easy to find medical facilities who accept it.

### **6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

There is a class targeting exchange students- the 'Learning in Outdoors Education' course, through which I met many good friends. Urbanest also was a great place to meet people, as they organize many events for their residents.

**b.** Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.  
(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

I didn't encounter any significant cultural differences, other than that I found Sydneysiders to be generally more relaxed and aware of international issues. There is less social pressure for group-based activities, and people feel more comfortable doing their own thing, being their own person.

## **7. FINANCIAL:**

**a.** What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

A Charles Schwab bank account will allow you to withdraw money from any international ATM without foreign transaction fees. This was incredibly useful. Other than that, Bank of America and Westpac bank are sister banks.

**b.** How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

Approximately 500 AUD should be fine.

**c.** Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Everything is significantly more expensive; don't be surprised if your wallet feels like a sieve the first couple months. After that, you adjust!

**d.** If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any problems? If so, how did you address them?

n/a

## **8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:**

**a.** If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

Everything was flawless— e-mails answered promptly, orientation was well organized— thank you!

**b.** If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

n/a

## **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

A student who is flexible and easygoing, and looking for a big-city experience. Due to Sydney being an international hub, I would say that many student types would be suited to this exchange.

**10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

I wanted to make the most of my time there, without any rigid expectations. I wanted to meet new people and make memories with new friends, as well as experience (and be challenged by!) a new school system, all of which were fulfilled and exceeded. As with any sort of travel, I think the underlying expectation- and its inevitable fulfillment- is finding a bit more of yourself. Sydney definitely delivered that to me!

Sydney, Australia – University of Sydney  
Winter/Spring 2014

## 1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
  - My recommendation for accommodations would be to apply for the various on-campus colleges that are offered. Some of these would be St. John's, St. Paul's, etc. I believe that these are the best way to become immersed into the Australian culture because you're living with predominantly local students. Personally, I rented an apartment at Urbanest, which is a fine location in terms of proximity to campus, shopping centers/grocery stores, and downtown/nightlife. This option from my experience was almost exclusively international students and other Americans. There were a few Australians that lived here as well, but not enough to feel the living culture that I heard about in those colleges. From listening to my friends who stayed there, and my experience hanging out there it is a much better option.
- b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?
  - My program had an orientation that just explained a bit of the structure that I could expect within my courses of study. It also explained some of the resources they offer like advising/library/technology information. As far as how it helped me adapt; it basically just got me to think of it just like school has been here at UW. For the most part, there wasn't much of a difference for me academically.

## 2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

Classroom Structure:

- Most of my classes were similar, being lecture-based with the occasional group projects.

Instruction:

- I thought the instruction was great. All of my professors were very knowledgeable of the topic at hand. The classes were challenging and fair. Again, the material and style was mostly given in a lecture-based fashion where we were expected to listen and review slides and take notes in our own way.

Teacher/Student Relations

- All of my professors were very friendly and happy to help when I needed.

Grading/Exams

- Smaller assessments were given in class and were a mix of multiple choice and short answer. End of semester exams were stricter and had their own designated classroom/time, all of which were in the week-long final period. There is a really long break between the end of instruction and the time in which you take exams. In some cases 3 weeks. I thought this helped me personally; having so much time to study. But also let me get out and do some traveling/sight-seeing to keep my mind off the upcoming tests.

Administration

- I didn't have too much interaction with the administration besides some logistical questions early in the semester. However, the contact I had went smooth and they were quick to answer any questions I had.

Library, computer, and classroom facilities

- Pretty similar to the facilities at UW. Some of which are older and less up-to-date with technology/seating. Some of which were brand new and very in tune with the latest resources.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

- I believe that I learned a lot from my time at Sydney Uni. The professors were great and presented the material in a thought-provoking way. I took 2 business classes that were very similar in nature to those I've taken here at UW, with just a slight twist due to the international aspect of dealing with other currencies and business methods. There is a difference in the way Australians do business that I think has its benefits and drawbacks. The other 2 courses I took were general classes that I took for fun and I enjoyed the break from the more stressful business units.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

- The 2 classes that I took that I thought were really good and I enjoyed were "Learning in Outdoor Education" and "Sport and Learning in Australian Culture". Both of which were comprised of weekly lectures but they had a component in which you took field trips with the class. The former, was primarily about experiential learning and we went on multiple bushwalking-excursions and camped for another weekend. It was a great way to get out and explore Australia in a fun but educational manner. The other dealt with the sporting culture of Australia and we went on 7 or 8 different field trips that gave me exposure to Rugby and international soccer that I was missing living here in the U.S.

**d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?**

- My coursework related to my UW education because of the 2 business classes I was enrolled in at Sydney Uni transfer over to give me credit for my Finance degree. One was upper-level finance elective and the other was a required International Business course. I was glad I took that class abroad because it gave me a more unique International Business perspective than I would've gotten here, in my opinion.

**3. HOUSING:**

**a. What housing options were available to you?**

- I had a few different options, but as I stated earlier I rented a single apartment at Urbanest, Cleveland Street.

**b. Which did you choose, and why?**

- I chose this place because I had heard good reviews, was in a good location and was just being built so everything was new.

**c. What would you recommend?**

- I think that if you chose to live here that you would be satisfied because it is a great living space. However, it is not the accommodation that I would recommend. It was expensive, but all of Australia is compared to the US. The main detractor that I found was the lack of Australian culture that I experienced. I think there are better options since Urbanest was predominantly international students. My recommendation would be to apply to stay at one of the on-campus colleges.

**4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:**

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

- I took part in a direct exchange through the Foster Business School in which I attended the University of Sydney. The campus was about a 10 minute walk from downtown Sydney and a 15-20 minute bus ride from the Sydney Harbor. The campus itself was great. I really enjoyed the mix of newer buildings and the few original buildings that still remained. The surrounding community was quite diverse in that different suburbs each had their own feel. The locations closer to the Central Business District were much more developed and upscale whereas those further out were a much more local and down to earth vibe.
- The campus life was fun and exciting, with a few university sponsored bars that held quite a few events.

**5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

- There was at no point where I had any concerns or anything. Also, with the overseas insurance that I got I was able to go to the on-campus health facilities for miscellaneous things. As far as my safety, I wasn't ever concerned around campus or at my apartment. My apartment was excellent

**6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

**a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?  
(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)**

- The ways I became integrated most effectively was through a number of ways. I joined a few university clubs. I had classes that were very group-oriented, which helped introduce me to quite a few people. Additionally, going out to various pubs with my housemates, be it on campus or not.

**b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.  
(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)**



- There weren't too many social differences that were too noticeable to me, at least to the extent worth mentioning. The few that I did notice were just easygoing personalities. Everybody, with the exception of a few here and there, was very friendly and I really enjoyed that aspect.

#### **7. FINANCIAL:**

- a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?
- I have Bank of America, and they have an agreement where you can withdraw money through Westpac ATM's in Australia. I opened an account there and would periodically transfer money through these ATM withdrawals. There was a small interest fee. Like 2-3%, but that was about the best I had found. Other friends used commonwealth bank, and I never heard of any problems with them. I feel like you'd be fine either way as there are plenty of both bank branches in the area.
- b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
- Rent for me was around \$415 a week. It was ridiculous compared to what we pay here in the U.S. but it makes sense as the cost of living in AU is drastically higher. I'm positive you could find rent cheaper though, I just went with this option based on ease of decision-making/recommendations/location.
- Transportation wasn't too expensive. Most things are within walking distance and bus fares are relatively inexpensive. I believe it was about 10-12 USD for a bus pass of say, 10 uses.
- Food really depends on your eating preferences. Going out to eat is more expensive than in the states; a reasonable meal would cost you around \$15-18 dollars, from my experience. Beer and other drinks were around 8-10. I chose to do most of my eating at home, and I cooked a lot of meats and pasta. While I didn't keep track precisely I would estimate maybe around \$200 a month?
- c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.
- I didn't come across anything that I wasn't expecting.
- d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications? If so, how did you address them?
- I did not run across any complications.

#### **8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:**

- a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?
- The program I dealt with was the direct exchange through the Foster School; however it was also put on through the IPE. The application process and everything was fine. I was able to go and didn't run into any problems at all, so I would say their services were fine. The evaluation process was a bit time-consuming as I had to run around a bit to get signatures. All-in-all it was a fairly smooth process.

#### **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

- I believe that this program would be ideal for most majors. I personally went and continued in my pursuit of a Finance degree. It is a great experience for somebody who wants to continue their studies while having the opportunity to get out and see the world. Australia is a beautiful place and I recommend taking as many trips once you are there. If that's not doable, don't fret because Sydney is a fairly large city itself and there is plenty to do. Whether you enjoy hanging around the beach, at the park, downtown, or off in nature hiking up a mountain...you're in close proximity to it all.
- I think it would be best served for somebody who is outgoing and comfortable being uncomfortable. It will be a bit stressful and foreign at first but once you throw yourself into the fire you'll be happy that you did.

#### **10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

- My expectations were reasonable. I was set on having a good time, enjoying the area, taking care of my schoolwork and meeting new people. At the least I was fine with continuing my school work but I knew that I would experience so many wonderful opportunities traveling, attending sporting events, and hanging out with the locals. I met a ton of great people and really enjoyed myself studying abroad. I definitely recommend taking up this opportunity.





University of Sydney Exchange  
One Semester: July – November 2012

SK ✓  
JUN 05 2013

1. Arrival Overseas/On-Site Orientation:
  - a. I recommend the housings around campus, such as Sydney University Village. Most housings around U. of Sydney are privately owned and there aren't much that are owned by the school itself for foreign students. These private housings are rather expensive, though.
  - b. The orientation by U. of Sydney mainly went over the basics of life in Australia and things to watch out and be careful for. This was very informative since the culture is so different. There was also a small tour of the campus itself. The orientation covered most of the things that students would need to know.
2. Academics:
  - a. The classroom structure is quite similar. The U. of Sydney is big and so the main lecture halls have plenty of students while the quiz sections are also of similar size to the UW. Everything else is pretty much similar except for the grading system. The U. of Sydney goes by semesters and their grading is mainly based on the final exam. All the sciences courses that I took had about 90% of the grade weighted on the final exam.
  - b. The quality and content of the lectures were great. At first, I did have a bit of trouble understanding the accents because some words were pronounced differently and I didn't understand some things until I actually read out the word. The instructors are very helpful and friendly as well.
  - c. I would recommend any anatomy class to science students because you get to study with a plethora of cadavers. Other than that, I would also recommend an Australian culture class, specifically designed for foreign exchange students. Those are really fun and you get to meet other exchange students.
  - d. Many of the study abroad coursework were in my field of interest and I would say about half of the classes dealt with my major. I didn't want to take too many science courses, even though I really wanted to, because the grading is really difficult to keep up with.
3. Housing:
  - a. There weren't many housing options that were specifically available for me. I had to look up what housing options there were and most of the ones that I found were private housings near campus that were very expensive. For those, you also can't check out the place first because you have to sign and confirm a deposit months before you actually arrive.
  - b. I ended up choosing a housing option provided by Sydney University Village. They had a good reputation and it was close to campus. It was one of the few that even responded back about any openings.
  - c. I would recommend Sydney University Village only if the student has enough money. If not, I suggest looking for housing options once you arrive there because those can be a lot cheaper.
4. Program/Exchange Site:
  - a. The campus is huge, much like the U. of Washington. Not only is it very beautiful, but it gets easy to navigate once you walk around a bit. The great thing about it is that it is so close to the City, the heart of Sydney. It's much like U. of Washington being close to

downtown Seattle, but it's walkable. The surrounding community is full of students and tourists, so it's a very lively place in general.

5. Health and Safety:

- a. The only thing I would be worried about in Sydney is the intense amount of heat. It can get very hot in Sydney, and for a Seattle-ite, it might be too drastic of a change. Even when it rains, it is hot. They tell you some safety precautions in the orientation, but the heat is definitely something to look out for.

6. Cultural Aspects:

- a. Sydney is a really easy place to integrate in to. There are so many aspects similar to Seattle that it's not too bad. One thing about Sydney is that people drink there a lot. The legal drinking age is 18 and it's a norm drinking alcoholic beverages almost everywhere there is a gathering.
- b. Australians are very proud of themselves, and so it is wise not to be so boisterous and rude. This would only cause them to think of negative connotations of Americans and being obnoxious would definitely get you into some fights.

7. Financial:

- a. The best way to access/transfer money from the U.S. is to get a credit card that doesn't charge you international fees. I mainly paid my bills to my American credit card online. You really want to avoid ATM charges.
- b. Rent was expensive for me. I spent ~\$1400 per month for a studio apartment. It was ridiculous, but I had already signed the contract by the time I got there. Everything in Australia is generally more expensive. McDonald's (Maccas) didn't even have a \$1 menu. They had a \$2 menu where the burgers were quite plain and very small. I mainly did grocery shopping and spent ~\$200-400 per month on food. Transportation might also cost a lot depending on how much you don't want to walk.
- c. Much of the unexpected expenses came from shopping for small appliances and getting a cell phone contract. I completely forgot about having to pay for a cellular service provider and having to buy small things (such as shampoo, soap, utensils, cups, bowls, and etcetera), which ended up costing more than I imagined.
- d. I did use financial aid to help fund my exchange program, but I am not sure what the question is asking. If it's asking for how I got the money, it was directly wired to my American bank, which I would access online to pay my credit card.

8. Program/Exchange Administration:

- a. The IP&E were great at helping me along the whole process of the exchange program. They replied to my emails with a timely manner and was always there to guide me. I guess a service that could be improved is really the housing situation for U. Sydney. That part was so vague and it put a lot of pressure on me that I signed up for whatever came first, which was one of the most expensive housing plans.

9. Program/Student Type:

- a. This program is suited for a student who is outgoing and loves to play. Australia is a laid back country. They almost have the mentality of "work hard and play hard." It's definitely meant for students who have a strong mentality on knowing when to study and when to play. Also, you must be able to handle intense amounts of heat!

10. Overall Experience:

- a. My personal experiences were through the roof! It was an awesome experience, one that I definitely can't describe in words. In terms of academic, it was much harder than I expected, and so that's one area where I didn't feel so great in. I definitely wish I was accustomed to their way of studying habits.

gk ✓

Program location: Sydney, Australia  
Term/year of participation: Fall Semester 2012

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
  - I had secured myself a studio apartment in Sydney University Village (SUV) and moved into my room immediately upon arrival.
  - I enjoy living at SUV as it was on-campus and hosted monthly events to help meet other students at the University of Sydney.
- b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?
  - I missed my orientation because I had planned a trip to travel before starting school and wasn't aware of the orientation dates prior to booking my trip.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following the University of Washington's system:
  - Classroom structure: Very similar to the University of Washington.
  - Instruction: I feel that the University of Sydney was less helpful towards students and that you had to be more self-sufficient. Lecture content was formatted fairly similarly though.
  - Teacher/student relations: I think the teacher/student relations are not as strong as they are at the University of Washington.
  - Grading/exams: Grading is very different as everything is graded on a 100 point scale. Expect to get lower grades than you would at the University of Washington. A grade in the 70's range is considered doing very well. I had no exams, only essays.
  - Administration: Fairly organized and similar to the University of Washington.
  - Library, computer, and classroom facilities: All very comparable to the University of Washington.
- b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
  - I found the quality and content of instruction to be more interesting and enjoyable than most classes I've taken at the University of Washington.
- c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
  - I would recommend taking Sociology of Friendship to any Sociology majors. The course was very interesting and different from UW courses, which I found to be a great learning experience. I also enjoyed Sociology of Terror, which was another unique course that was both engaging and very different from any UW Sociology class I've taken.
- d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?
  - I took all Sociology courses, which is my major, so my coursework directly correlated with what I am majoring in.



3. HOUSING:

- a. What housing options were available to you?
  - UniLodge and Sydney University Village were the only places I found available rooms.
- b. Which did you choose and why?
  - I chose Sydney University Village because it was closer to campus and I knew I could have my own room.
- c. What would you recommend?
  - I would recommend Sydney University Village because it was convenient and in the perfect location for going to class, the gym, grocery shopping, and getting downtown.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

- a. Describe the campus and surrounding community.
  - I absolutely loved the University of Sydney campus. Very old, architecturally neat buildings. The campus size is comparable to the University of Washington, maybe slightly larger. The surrounding area was very fun and conducive to college students. The downtown area is only a five-minute bus ride so that was convenient. I felt safe and never encountered any issues with robbery or crime.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

- a. Please describe any health or safety concerns associated with your study abroad experience.
  - I had no issues with health or safety concerns. I didn't get sick once the entire five-month period that I lived in Sydney and I never encountered any threatening situation where my safety or health was put at risk.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

- a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?
  - By living in Sydney University Village I found it very easy to meet other people and make quick friends. I bonded most with other study abroad students and met many. Going to the bars and clubs also helped to meet people.
- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encounters and how you addressed them.
  - The cultural norms in Sydney are not very different from those in the United States. Other than the lingo being slightly different, I really didn't have much of a problem adapting to the Sydney culture, especially since the city is quite culturally diverse itself.

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?
  - Pulling out the maximum limit from ATMs was how I mainly accessed money. There is a charge to pull out money, but there is also a surcharge for most credit cards so you have to decide which fee you would rather incur.
- b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

- Per month, I spent about \$1200 on rent, \$100 on food, \$20 on transportation, and \$50 on various other things. Sydney is an expensive city so you have to be prepared to spend a lot more than you would in the U.S. Their minimum wage is \$18.
- c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred
  - I wasn't aware of the inflation in Australia so I didn't know how expensive everything would be, but everything is almost 50% more than it would be in the U.S.
- d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any transportation, etc. If so, how did you address them?
  - I didn't use Financial Aid.
- 8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:
  - a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?
    - I thought the IP&E was effective and I don't see how their services could be improved.
- 9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:
  - a. Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.
    - A student for this program needs to be independent and prepared to take on the challenge of relying on oneself to get everything done. Other than getting accepted into the host institution, the direct exchange program doesn't really help you out otherwise.
- 10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE
  - a. How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?
    - I ended up doing better academically than I expected. I also enjoyed myself way more than I anticipated and my time abroad was an experience that is hard to justify through words. I loved every minute and had the time of my life while also learning a great deal.

MAR 07 2012

1. a) many people stayed in hostels such as Base when they first arrived. I was lucky and moved into my shared house right away.
2. a) Classroom structure was very similar to medium sized classes at UW. No ~~too~~ persons lectures. My professors were incredibly enthusiastic about their subjects and more than fit for their job. They have high standards and their grading system is different. Don't freak out. UW accounts for this. Their average is just set lower. They grade with pass, credit, high credit, distinction and high distinction. They have a very extensive vocabulary, it is intimidating and inspiring at the same time. They have a great library system. Printing was a little confusing but just ask for help. Computers available, but it is always pretty busy and there is a queue (line).  
b) excellent content of instruction. Sections or tutorials are very stimulating. I feel like there is a lot more student participation and discussion, again inspiring.  
c) I loved my Anthropology and the Global course. It was demanding, but way worth my time.  
d) I was just taking electives I was interested in
3. I lived in a shared house owned by Cityshare.  
125 Abercrombie St. Chippendale NSW, 2008.  
I highly recommend. Close to campus, to Broadway shopping center (groceries), Central train station, buses and more. I lived with other exchange students from Paris, Germany etc. All excited to explore and have a good time.

4. They like to call their community multicultural.  
very friendly, clean, vibrant and I felt safe.

5. Health Center on campus.

6. Get an Australian bank account! I had Commonwealth.  
Many also had NAB. You don't want to pay fees  
for taking out cash using American cards.

I payed \$790/month for rent. I paid every two weeks.  
At minimum I spent \$50/week on food, I cooked  
for myself. You can buy a bus pass for \$8 that  
has 10 passes. I would say I used one/week.  
Does not include going out or shopping.

plan to have lots of money for any breaks.  
Melbourne? Cairns? Great barrier reef? And other  
packages.

8. Administration may be slow on both ends.  
but very helpful.

9. Not afraid to meet new people and put yourself out  
there. Really embrace their culture. Many subtleties  
that opened my eyes and allowed me to have a  
great experience.

10. AMAZING!



  
FEB 03 2012

## **International Program/Exchange Evaluation Report** **University of Sydney Direct Exchange, Semester 2011**

### 1) Arrival Overseas/On-Site Orientation

- a. I stayed at the Billabong Hostel upon arrival. It is located in Newtown, about a ten-minute walk to campus, and fairly cheap.
- b. The international office did hold an official orientation with a general welcome session and lots of time to meet people. There wasn't much information provided, but they gave you a good feel for the school and what to expect as an international student. There are a few question-and-answer sessions before this official orientation, and they're good to go to if you have specific questions. I did research before I arrived, and I didn't learn much from these, however. They're very general. The best thing to do if you have specific questions is to go directly to the office.

### 2) Academics

- a. The classes at U Sydney usually start late. The classroom structure is similar to lectures and so is the smaller workshops, or quiz sections. Instruction is like a normal UW class lecture or lab. Teacher relations vary depending on the teacher, but I'd say it's also similar to UW. Most hold office hours or are willing to meet. The grading is VERY different. Averages usually hover around 60-65%, so expect to get lower scores. If you score above an 80%, your paper is publishable. Even though the UW converts grades, you should still expect a semester at U Sydney to lower your GPA average. It was the most shocking factor to me and by far the most frustrating. The administration is usually very helpful and willing to talk to you about any problems you're having, especially as an international student. The libraries, computer systems and classroom facilities are all very similar to UW with standard systems. The only major difference is how you get WiFi on a device. It's a little complicated but they help you figure it out.
- b. In my opinion, the UW has much better instruction in regards to content and quality. Classroom attendance at the U of Sydney is low because most lectures are recorded and it's not necessary to be in class.
- c. There are a few interesting elective classes at U of Sydney, but you're mostly taking what you can get into as an international student. I had to take all freshman level classes as a junior because their pre-requisites are strict.
- d. UW is a great institution. Studying at one of Australia's best education facilities did not compare to UW instructors and the quality of instruction.

### 3) Housing

- a. I could have lived on campus, but the application process for this would have

had to be completed before Semester 1, for the most part. It's also crazy expensive to live on campus.

- b. So I lived off campus in a flat with four other roommates. It was expensive (\$1,000 a month) but was clean and close to campus.
- c. I'd recommend living off campus to save some money and meet more people that you wouldn't get to meet in a dorm style living situation.

#### 4) Program/Exchange Site

The campus is beautiful! The surrounding area is nice, too. There is a lot of housing around the immediate area with many restaurants and opportunities for shopping. If you don't want to, you'd never have to leave the campus area.

#### 5) Health and Safety

I had no health or safety concerns. I didn't get sick, never had to see a doctor and had no issues with theft or security. Just walk with a buddy when it's dark in Sydney. It's a large city and you should always be careful.

#### 6) Cultural Aspects

- a. Having housemates really helped me meet people and get integrated. Also, I met a few people in my classes that were really nice. I didn't join any clubs or sports, but I did go out with my housemates a few times and met a lot of people there.
- b. I didn't encounter many cultural differences or challenges.

#### 7) Financial

- a. I set up a free account with Commonwealth (they have a branch on campus) and then took out \$500 at a time from an ATM and then made cash deposits at my Commonwealth bank. This way, I avoided a wiring fee and had an Australian ATM card that I could use. Many places don't take international credit or debit cards for some reason.
- b. I spent \$1000 per month on rent, and then another \$400-500 a month on food. Transportation was maybe \$30-40 a month for the bus, but more if you take Taxis.
- c. I took a two-week trip with my boyfriend over my semester break and that was expensive. We traveled to Uluru, Port Douglas and Cairns and did activities in each. That was at least \$2,500 a person for the flights, accommodation and activities. It was WELL worth it, though. The traveling was my favorite part of the whole experience. Australia is so beautiful.
- d. I used financial aid from Veteran's Affairs and there were no complications. Since I was a full-time student earning UW credit, there were no issues.

#### 8) Program/Exchange Administration

- a. The IP&E accepted me into the program, and then let me do the rest. There wasn't a lot of hands-on interaction and it was a very independent program.
- b. The office in Sydney was a little slow sometimes, but very helpful.

9) Program/Student Type

This program is great for someone looking to spend some time on their own and act independently for a few months. It's a great time to grow and explore, but it's a lot of alone time and exploring the way you want to do it. You really have to reach out to make friendships. The ones you do make will probably last a long time, though.

10) Overall Experience

Academically, this was a rough time for me. The grading was so different and ineffective. I won't study abroad again. I love to travel and experience new things, but it was hard to do that with class everyday and homework to do. I love to travel (and I have a lot) but I'm done studying abroad now.

Personally, this was a great time for me to experience new things and be completely independent for a long time. I learned so much and very much appreciated the experience and trip, overall.



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MAR 12 2010

University of Sydney

Summer and Fall Quarters 2009 (Sydney Uni Semester 2)

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#### 1. ARRIVAL:

a. I took the same flight as another girl from UW. We were picked up from the airport by someone who had studied abroad at UW and went to Hunter Valley for a couple nights. When we returned we stayed in Billabong Gardens hostel by Sydney Uni (10 minute walk) while we looked for apartments. I ended up making friends there and really enjoyed my time there, but after about 2 weeks in the hostel I was glad to have my own room and apartment. During orientation if you are looking for a place to stay, I recommend Billabong Gardens because it is close to the uni and there will be other study abroad kids staying there too so it's easy to meet people.

b. Orientation was long and tedious. You should go though because you get your schedule and it's easy to meet people.

#### 2. ACADEMICS:

a. I took large lecture classes, similar to UW. It was weird because 2 psychology classes (Perception and Health Psych) I took had about 3 professors each. I didn't like that, but they claim it's because they teach what they're best at. Hmm... I have a feeling they're research professors and it's in their contract that they have to teach! Hah. Teachers were approachable, but it's easier to get in contact with your Tutor (ie TA). They grade much different so that an 85 is about a 98 here. Most people get between 50 and 75. UW will adjust your grade so don't worry about that. You probably don't want to get below a 60... (not as easy as it sounds). Classes were structured mostly around big papers and one final exam. I didn't like that structure because it puts a lot of pressure on you to perform very well only one or two times. Music in the 60s had 2 papers and class participation. Philosophy of Science had 3 essays. Perceptual Systems had 1 research project, 1 test, 1 quiz. Health Psychology had 1 test and 1 research paper. The libraries were nice, and you'll get a login like you have at UW, but they're not open 24hrs like Ode. Academics overall were probably more difficult than UW, so if you want to get good grades and relax and travel some you should probably take easier classes...

b. The instruction was mostly from professors with PhDs. I had one instructor from Harvard grad school who was still working on his PhD. Oddly I had 2 American professors.

c. There are some education classes that seemed fun and less work, but I didn't take them. They talked about them in orientation. You can learn about aboriginals and Torres Strait islanders, take a field class, sports in Australia, plays in Australia, etc etc. I wish I would have taken one to make my load a little easier.

### 3. HOUSING:

a. I lived with one girl from N.C. State and 2 Danish guys who were studying abroad at another college in the area. It was great, but I was jealous of the two guys because they didn't have as much work as we did so I think they had more fun! I lived in Glebe and it was a great location about 10mins walk from uni. I walked everywhere in Sydney, rarely took a bus. Look in Glebe, Newtown, CBD. Stay away from Redfern. There are also on-campus residence halls but you have to apply for them very very early. I wouldn't recommend the University Apartments because they are filled with Americans and study abroaders. I liked to be a little more immersed in the Aussie culture.

b. Glebe - really nice area, not as dangerous as other places closer to the uni, lots of restaurants, central location. I loved it there.

c. Recommendations are included in a.

### 4. PROGRAM SITE:

The campus is OK. It's nice and big, like UW, but some of the buildings are kind of run down, others are really nice. It's a good location and you can walk to the train stations and to the CBD (downtown) in about 20 minutes. Walking is great in syd because the weather is nice! Go to Newtown for lunch....\$6 Thai!

### 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Redfern and Newtown might be unsafe if you're walking alone at night. You'll see Sydney Uni police around, similar to UWPd. I never ran into any problems. I visited the Uni doctor's office and it was fine. They have good insurance there!

### 6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. Aussies are really friendly so it's easy to meet people. I joined unimates and met some cool study abroad folks. Also went to the activities during orientation. There are about 4 bars on campus so you can go there and meet people. I had connected with some people on facebook before I went so it was easy meeting them then going out and meeting more people! My friend played basketball on a kind of club team and met people that way.

b. Americans are stereotyped there, but if you go with the flow it's fine. They're casual and laidback so just take the jokes and shoot 'em right back! Sydney is pretty liberal and also full of Asian culture so it's actually kind of similar to Seattle. Sydney is wayyyy more awesome though!! :)

### 7. FINANCIAL

a. If you contact your bank and ask them there will probably be a partner bank in oz you can use free of charge. Bank of America partners with Westpac and I could withdraw money from my BOA account there free of charge. Also call them ahead of time and tell them you'll be using your card there. If you use debit/credit there are really small fees, I think the highest fee per transaction was like 50 cents.



b. everything is VERY expensive. I went way over my budget. Housing, about 200/week, food 100/week minimum, bus pass is about \$15 for 10 trips. You want to budget for about 800-1000/month for necessities. When I first got there the exchange rate was pretty good, but now it's horrible, so don't say no one warned you!

c. Everything I paid for I expected, it was just more expensive than I expected! Transportation is expensive if you're studying abroad but not if you're on exchange. Study abroad kids don't get the student discount.

#### 8. PROGRAM ADMIN:

a. IPE was pretty horrible. If you want to get help you need to be persistent. It was up to me to figure everything out, and they didn't help me with anything. They promised a meeting to help organize everything and to set me up with other students on the trip, they didn't follow through with this.

#### 9. STUDENT TYPE:

a. Do you like the city? Do you like the sun? Do you like the beach? Fashion? Food? Adventure? The list goes on! I think that most anyone can enjoy Sydney and Australia. School is tough, but people love to have fun. So if you like to balance fun/beach/bars with studying and school then this could be the right place for you. The number one reason I chose oz was because I could take the classes I wanted that would transfer without putting me behind a quarter (because they speak English!!!). I learned a lot about myself there, and learned a lot about aussie culture. If you're sick of Seattle but want to stay in a city environment with the beach close by Sydney could be the right place for you.

#### 10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

a. I definitely recommend this. It was the best choice I made in college.

Take the time for mid-semester break to travel up the coast, Melbourne or to the west coast. I've heard that the west coast is the most beautiful place in Australia, but I never got the chance to go there. I went to the Gold Coast, Brisbane, and the Great Barrier Reef. AMAZING. Also, got to New Zealand when Uni ended which was also incredible.

Get to Aus as soon as you can, and stay as long as you can after uni is done before coming back.

Crazy enough, I'm heading back to Sydney for Spring Break next week. I have a couple friends who decided to stay on working holiday visas, and also have an aussie boyfriend there who I'm visiting. When I graduate in the Spring I'm applying to dental school and then finishing up the year in Australia, moving back here to go to school and my boyfriend is coming with me. Crazy how stuff like that can happen. Some of my friends I met there I still consider my best friends even though we were only together about 6 months. Overall it was a great experience, I totally recommend USyd!!

Email me with any questions: [mdugoni@gmail.com](mailto:mdugoni@gmail.com)