

Travel Report

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Degree: Master of Business, Language and Culture; Business and Development

Home University: Copenhagen Business School

Host University: Macquarie University



*Macquarie University Campus
(photo: Milena Luis)*

My main motivation to go abroad during my master's degree was to improve my language skills while enjoying an international experience. Moreover, by undertaking courses at an overseas university, I would be able to see the difference in the teaching styles between a Danish and a foreign university. Also, I expected that a new learning environment sounded challenging not least considering the opportunity to study courses unavailable at CBS. Prior to this, I had contemplated whether I should pursue a whole Masters degree abroad but after realizing the effort and money it required, I decided to stay and continue my studies at CBS. The mere possibility to go abroad and be helped with the process by CBS was simply an opportunity I could not miss. Overall, I was quite satisfied with the service provided by the CBS International Office. I appreciated the information that was provided in respect of the codes and conducts for going abroad. The information meetings were helpful, especially

the presentations by returning CBS exchange students, who provided useful information and delivered interesting stories of their experiences.

I would rate the level of communication with the CBS Study Board as quite satisfactory as all we needed to know was sent by e-mails. Nevertheless, I would like to have been better informed about the Australian visa application process as the medical examination was expensive (around 3000 kr.) and I did not expect that a chest X-ray scan for tuberculosis was required.

Being a Greenlandic student, I was quite privileged to receive health insurance with Gouda Travel Insurance provided by the Greenland Self Government. When applying for an Australian Visa, the purchase of health insurance is a prerequisite: The Overseas Student Health Cover OSHC. The insurance is basic but may be sufficient as it covers doctor visits, some hospital treatments and certain types of medicine. For more information about the OSHC visit: <https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/global/live-in-australia/insurance>.

In the application process for my host university, the following 4 documents were to be submitted:

- Application form
- University transcripts (grades)
- Statement of purpose
- Proof of English language proficiency (Eg – TOEFL or IELTS).

Macquarie University requested a hard copy of the IELTS/TOEFL, so a certified copy or the original were to be sent by post to Australia.

As for the course enrolment process, it is recommended to get as many units pre-approved as possible by CBS and MQ and then choose the final 3-4 units upon arrival at MQ. This ensures that students do not enroll in courses that CBS do not acknowledge.

I selected 6 postgraduate units/master's courses from the following online handbook: <http://www.handbook.mq.edu.au/2014/Units/PGBByCode>. Since I attended the information days during the first week, I did not have any difficulties with my final course registration. My impression is that all the formal procedures are very well organized at MQ. The university has the financial means to employ enough staff and ensures that the students feel comfortable. If in doubt, help is always around. To illustrate, after the first week, I decided to change one of my courses and with a little

help it only took 5 minutes! I must say that I was left impressed with the flow of procedures at MQ. The service provided by the International Office at MQ was brilliant. The staff are very kind and helpful. I took the following three courses at MQ:

Communication and Power Paradigms (ICOM815)

This unit was taught by Dr. Sabine Krajewski, a highly competent and brilliant professor. In fact, some of the students had enrolled on the course just because she taught it. The unit looks at how power is exercised and communicated in different cultures. Despite having a strong theoretical emphasis, the teaching style was practical with strong interaction between the students and the professor. At Australian universities each unit is 3 hours in length per week - the first hour is dedicated to a presentation by the lecturer followed by two hours of tutorials. Thus the students gained a much better understanding of the concept of power and legitimacy in all of its manifestations. The class was predominantly international with only 3 Australian students, a few Europeans and the majority being of Asian origin from varying countries. The workload was quite equal to the workloads at CBS with around 100 pages to read for each lecture. A compilation with all the texts is to be bought for a round 400 kr. The assessment tasks included a mini essay 15%, an individual presentation 20%, a major essay 25%, class participation 10% and a test 30%. This teaching style made me realize that I prefer a method of ongoing assessments as a qualifier for a final grade as opposed to having one final exam at the end. Unlike at CBS, class attendance is mandatory at MQ. In this unit, students are expected to attend at least 80% of the lectures. This class was beneficial because I was forced to contribute in class, something I comfortably avoided at CBS. It helped me fight my shyness and overcome my fear of public speaking.

International Business Strategy (BUS804)

Taught by David Rooney. The unit of analysis was strategic decision-making in conducting business across international borders. Economic, cultural, political and technological dimensions were furthermore addressed. The assessment was based on the following: Individual assignment (essay) 30%, group assignment (report) 30% and a final major individual essay 40%. Having followed the courses of "International Business and Economic Development" and "Managing Foreign Direct Investment" at CBS, this course was not extremely challenging. With hindsight, I should probably have chosen another unit. The reason is not so much that I had undertaken a similar

course at CBS but that I did not find the professor engaging. Despite his extraordinary intellectual level, he lacked good communication skills and an ability to make his presentations and tutorials interesting. To give the course credits, there were no course fees as all the texts were uploaded onto the student university website iLearn.

International Political Economy (IRPE 849)

This unit was truly my favourite subject. The professor Dr. Noah Basil is a magnificent speaker who has the ability to capture the full attention of his students. Consequently, the lectures were followed by some useful interactive class discussions. The unit of analysis was examining the politics of the global economy to explain the nature of the international system. Themes and concepts analyzed included problem solving theories and critical theories of the global political economy, the international system from 1492- onwards, race and gender, debt and inequality, and crisis and reforms. The assessment tasks were divided in the following way: class participation 10%, writing reflective journals for each class based on the readings 25%, an in class writing test 20%, and a major essay 40%. I can personally only recommend this unit for future students interested in international economics and politics. That said, I am pleased with my choice of taking this unit since it truly broadened my horizon and gave me intellectual satisfaction. The working materials included a workbook, which was available for around 800 kr. supplemented by texts uploaded on iLearn.

When comparing the academic level of Macquarie University with that of CBS, I believe that CBS scores higher. A much higher level of self-study and group work is required at CBS in order to pass with good grades. At MQ on the other hand, it is not necessary to invest time on group work outside the university as the tutorials cover the need to discuss the learning outcomes. At both universities, the quality of the teaching varies according to the material and the professor. However, I would give extra credits to MQ for investing in tutorials. In my opinion, the interactive aspect of MQ is at a much higher level than that found at CBS. Moreover, I appreciated that the workload was distributed evenly at MQ since the pressure at the end of the courses was alleviated. This meant that although I experienced a very busy semester, there was not such a great exam pressure at the end.

Accommodation

Prior to my arrival I had found some potential homes via <https://flatmates.com.au>, other students found their rooms at www.gumtree.com.au. Macquarie University

also helps with finding accommodation but it is worth spending a little time doing it yourself because you can save a lot of money. An old dorm room with shared kitchen and bathrooms costs around 4300 kr. whereas a nice room in one of the newer dorms costs around 8000 kr. I recommend future students arrive at least a week before the semester starts and live at a hostel while searching for accommodation. A single room in a shared apartment in the city centre and nearby suburbs costs around 6000 kr. Per. month. The university campus is around 1 hour by train from the city centre and it is therefore an individual choice where to live. I personally prefer living close to the city or in between.

Accommodation wise, I have lived at in various different types of housing. In the beginning I made the mistake of moving into a shared house in Gladesville too quickly. The distance turned out to be an issue and after only one month I found another place to reside. The second apartment in Rhodes was great but after only two months the owners decided to sell the apartment and I had to move once again. Fortunately my last place was also enjoyable as it was close to Bondi Beach and has a laid-back atmosphere. In reflection I was happy I experienced living in different places and with different people as each place has contributed positively to my overall experience in Sydney.

Social Life

Macquarie University has a lot of student clubs: Los Latinos, Dance Academy, Christian Club, Chocolate lovers, Chess Club, Drama society, Chalk Art Society, to name but a few. All the societies can be found here:

https://www.mq.edu.au/on-campus/get_involved/student_groups/student_groups_a-i/.

Upon arrival it is possible to sign up for the societies of interests.



*Sydney Opera House
(photo: Edita Bašová)*

I was part of “Los Latinos” and made some very good friends there. An exchange period is a very short time and in order to get the most out of it, open-mindedness is the key. I would say that developing friendships with different people from around the world has been the best experience that I have acquired from Sydney. I practiced

my English language skills while on exchange but I also practiced my Spanish language skills just as much because most of my friends were from Latin America. It is extremely common for students from CBS to socialise together because it is easier to find good friends from back home, however, this is not highly recommended for students wishing to get a truly international “Aussie” / international experience. In hindsight, I could have done more to make more local friends instead of mixing with my Spanish-speaking friends but I do not regret the enjoyable social moments I had with these people.

Travelling to Australia

I travelled with a good friend from CBS and we decided to do a fast track Asia trip before commencing our new life in Sydney. On our way to Sydney we made stops in Bangkok, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur and stayed for a few days in each place. The total cost of all our fly tickets was only 4900 kr. per person (www.momondo.com). We stayed at cheap hotels and bed and breakfast places in Asia and made some unforgettable shared memories. I would definitely recommend breaking up the long journey and staying a couple of days in the transit countries. Nevertheless, although it is easy to find cheap airline companies in Asia, I would recommend not opting for the cheapest fares and check the reviews of the airline companies in question. The standards and reliability of the companies vary substantially. The student visa permits working up to 20 hours per week. Depending on the workload of the university it might be manageable to work alongside studying.

Sydney is a vast city and getting from A to B can easily take an hour by train. I could not help being disappointed with the transportation system at first. Several times I waited for a bus that never arrived. Although they are more expensive, the trains are much more reliable. Being a university student allowed me to have a student concession card, which gives up to half price on some of the tickets. I roughly spent around 27 kr for a return ticket to almost anywhere in Sydney. In fact, without much trouble not to mention more expenses, some of the international students bought a cheap car and sold it again after the semester. For those daring to ride on the wrong side of the road, this could be an option.

It is strongly advisable to take a copy of important documents such as your passport, visa, insurance and tickets. Then scan them and save them on a file at Dropbox. This may save a lot of trouble in case of losing any of the documents.

The cost of living in Sydney is higher than in Copenhagen. I paid three times more in rent in Australia than I do at home. It is moreover common to pay the rent weekly. On the other hand, eating out is much more affordable in Sydney and due to an increasing Asian population; some food such as sushi is very cheap (35 kr for a box).

An exchange period in Sydney requires a sound funding. Travelling is expensive and living in Sydney only on SU is impossible. Although expenditures vary from person to person, 60.000 kr. along with a monthly SU is around the amount one will need to cover all expenses. It is on that ground that it is unquestionably worth spending some time applying for funds. Being sponsored by Ivalo og Minik Fonden, Aage V. Jensens Fond, Dudo og Povl Brandts Fond, and my bank Fanø Sparekasse I was one of the very lucky ones to get all of my expenses covered. I cannot thank these funds enough for their support. They have genuinely helped me realize my dream.

5 things I would like to have known before I left.

Unless you do not mind living in a shared room, be prepared to spend around 300 dollars per. week to live. Live close to a train station, preferably in the city, on campus or in between. If not one ends up spending too much time on travelling. The quality and cost of the Internet in Australia has been ranked nr. 44 in the world. When searching for accommodation, make sure there is Internet access. An exchange period is a very short period of time and suddenly the five months will be over. Enjoy it as much as you can. Be open-minded and jump into a new life. It will change you for the better and you will have an unforgettable time.

Concluding remarks

Despite acquiring most of my Australian experiences from Sydney, I also took the opportunity to visit some of the other regions of Australia. In that regard, I went to Victoria to visit Melbourne, Albury and Mount Beauty. Queensland was not to be missed and therefore I went to the Gold Coast and Byron Bay. Travelling around Australia with friends has been exceptionally fulfilling and I wish to come back one day to explore some of the parts that I regrettably missed. I must admit that studying a master's degree at CBS has changed my life. I could not have imagined I would grow so much both academically and personally and the best part has been this exchange period. I am now genuinely satisfied and ready to return to Denmark to commence

my master's thesis. My exchange experience would not have been achievable without the financial assistance provided by the following funds.



(photo: Edita Bašová)

I thank them all very much for their contribution.

- Ivalo og Minik Fonden,
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