

6 Months Down Unda

General Information

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University: The University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

Country: Australia

Period: Autumn Semester (July-December)

Preparation

Australia has a bit of a reputation that it requires a lot of work to get there, and anyone who's seen "Border Security: Australia" may be a bit worried, but it's really not bad. There are some important things to keep in mind though when you're preparing for your exchange:

- ➔ Visa: Any country outside of Europe requires a visa, but once you get into UTS it's really easy to apply. The university will send you instructions on how to apply for your student visa and the good thing is that you get it really fast (I applied in the evening and received it the next morning).
- ➔ Health Insurance: In order to apply for your student visa, you need student health coverage. Unfortunately, you need to get this on top of your Dutch coverage. UTS advertises Medibank but I got my insurance via Nib, which covered the same but was a lot cheaper.
- ➔ Room: I got a room at UTS Housing, and although there are cheaper rooms available I would truly recommend staying there. It's a great way to meet other (exchange) students and the people there really became my family away from home. If you want to apply, keep in mind that you need to register for UTS Housing at the beginning of April and rooms go fast.
- ➔ Courses: Given that Australian universities start earlier, the subscriptions for courses also open earlier. I would suggest to look up courses and sign up for classes and tutorials as soon as possible so you can register for the best time slots. Most of the Business courses should meet the ESE requirements but you still need to check this of course.
- ➔ Flight: Australia is far, so getting there is expensive. Luckily there are quite a few options for students to get cheap discounts. I got a student ticket via Kilroy which had a good connection with a great airline, but there's plenty of options out there.

Arrival

I arrived in Sydney two weeks before the move in date so I decided to grant myself a two week vacation during which I travelled up the East Coast. You can't move in to UTS before the move-in date but there are a lot of hostels close by and UTS Housing offers a shuttle bus service to pick you up from the airport. The fun thing is that nearly everyone moves in on the same day and the introduction activities start immediately. There's a 10 day Orientation period during which you get to know the other Housing members, settle in your room and explore Sydney. After Housing Orientation, UTS has its own introduction week so by the time classes actually start you've settled in quite nicely.

If you haven't found a room yet, then that's an obvious priority. A lot of rooms are posted on www.gumtree.com (the Australian eBay or Marktplaats). There are also Facebook groups for UTS students where people often post about rooms.

If you can't use your bank card abroad (for free), you may want to get an Australian bank account. You can settle this online but you will still need to stop by one of their offices once you arrive.

A room and access to cash are the most important things and UTS will inform you about all other things like sim cards, paperwork, etc. so there's nothing to worry about.

Courses

The workload in the Netherlands is considered to be quite high compared to that of other countries, and based on my experience in Sydney, I would agree. There was however a larger focus on assignments and projects. UTS offers an extremely diverse set of classes which is great and group work is an important part of course work. I took the following courses which will be incorporated in my elective space and minor.

- ➔ Consumer Behaviour (24202) (6 credits = 7.5 ECTS)
This subject covers the basics of consumer behaviour concepts. It develops an understanding of the overall consumer psychological processes and also develops a basic understanding of consumer decision making, consumer culture, and ethical and social responsibility issues within the consumer behaviour contexts.
- ➔ Managing People and Organisations (21129) (6 credits = 7.5 ECTS)
This subject introduces students to the fundamentals of management and organisational behaviour in the context of today's contemporary global business environment. It examines the major theories and models in areas of communication, group dynamics, individual behaviour and motivation, decision-making, leadership, power and politics, and ethics and social responsibility. It places particular emphasis on the application of theory to dilemmas and issues likely to confront managers today and in the future.
- ➔ Balancing Worldviews: Introduction to Aboriginal Cultures (58227) (8 credits = 10 ECTS)
This subject provides an introduction to Aboriginal beliefs, traditions and history. The various aspects of Indigenous cultures are discussed, as are the issues and difficulties which were faced the past and those which are still relevant today.

Finances

Australia is not the cheapest country in the world, but the better you know a place, the better you know where to get the good deals. Here's an approximation of my monthly expenditures. The exchange rate fluctuated quite a bit, but on average 1 AUD = 0.65 EUR.

Monthly Expenditures	
Rent	950 AUD
Phone Bill	30 AUD
Groceries	100 AUD
Social Life	150 AUD (I had a lot of free time)
Transport	10 AUD
One-Off Expenses	
Flight	1500 EUR
Insurance	230 AUD
Visa	365 AUD

Daily Life

I genuinely love Sydney and if you are going on exchange there you will have the most amazing time. Sydney has the perfect combination of city life, nature and entertainment. Moreover, it's beautiful. Of course moving to the other side of the world is scary, but that just adds to the experience. It also makes you that much closer to your fellow exchange students, because your friends and family are miles and miles and miles away. To start with I would therefore recommend to join as many of the introduction activities as you can because it helps to connect with people who are in the same situation.

The advantage of UTS is that it's in the heart of the city. It's only a 10 minute walk from Central Station and a 30 minute walk from the iconic Sydney Opera House, with the heart of Sydney's city centre in between. Aussies are extremely friendly, helpful and they love a bit of banter. Beaches are a 30 minute bus ride away, there are beautiful parks throughout the city and gorgeous mountains just outside the city's edges. I could list everything there is to see and do but then this report would be much too long, so if you're going and want some tips, just contact me.

Public transport is also quite cheap (you can get an Opal card for free at any convenience store) and on Sundays you can travel as much as you want for 2.50 AUD. There's also plenty of travel opportunities during your time there. There is a one week "Spring" break during the semester and exams end in November. During my first two weeks I went up the East Coast a bit, during Spring break I rented a van with 4 friends and we drove along the Great Ocean Road and explored the outback. After my exams I went to New Zealand for 10 days and then a few days later I went up the 2500 kilometres of East Coast with a group of friends. Australia is big, it's far but most importantly, it's breathtaking. There is so much to do, see and experience, so if you go to Sydney, really try to make the most of your time there. Either way, it's going to be awesome.

p.s not everything in Australia will try to kill you.