



2016-2017 Student Mobility/Exchange Program Returning Undergraduate Student Report

Host University: Griffith University

Host Country: Australia

Faculty/Department at Host Institution: Filmmaking

Semester: Winter 2017

Date of Report: August 15, 2017

1. OVERALL EVALUATION

How would you rate your exchange experience overall?

Poor **Excellent**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 x 10

Why did you choose this host institution? What key factors or issues influenced your decision?

This was one of the only schools on the list that offered filmmaking.

Please share a few of your most positive experiences and a few of the biggest challenges you faced.

Applying through OCAD for the exchange was a straightforward process and went quite smoothly. Registering for courses at Griffith was a nightmare. Very disorganized and stressful to get into the courses I wanted. I had to write 2 letters of petition in order to get into the course that was basically the reason for doing the exchange. I was having to email the Griffith mobility exchange people and sometimes wait days for a response because of the time change.

2. PREPARATION

Please describe your preparation for the exchange, including banking, travel documents and student visa application. In retrospect, would you have done anything differently?

I didn't set up a bank account because for me it wasn't necessary (all my rent was pre-paid before I went over and I didn't get a job). The student visa application was straightforward and I got approved within a few days.

Are there any important items (e.g. art & design supplies, documents, specialty foods, health items) that a student should take to your host country?

Art supplies are extremely expensive in Australia. Take as much as you need over with you!

3. ARRIVAL

Was anyone at the airport, train station, etc. to meet you? Did you experience any difficulties upon arrival?

Griffith has pickup services for exchange students. Airport pickup was a breeze.

When should students plan to arrive at the host university? When did you arrive? Would you have benefited from arriving earlier?

I arrived almost 2 weeks before classes started. I feel like that was an appropriate amount of time to get adjusted to the time change and get settled in.

Was there an orientation session offered at your host university? If yes, did you attend and what did you learn?

Yes, I did attend (It's mandatory for your student visa to attend).

Is there a coordinating office for international students, including exchange students, at your host university? Is there a staff person you would recommend students approach with their questions?

Yes Griffith has an office for international students.

4. ACCOMMODATION

Where did you live during your exchange? Were you happy with your accommodation?

I lived at Urbanest in South Bank. I was extremely happy with my accommodation (although it's very expensive). For me it was worth the money because I knew I'd be living with people in the same situation as me (going to a foreign country and not knowing anyone).

Did you have any difficulties arranging accommodation yourself? Did the host institution assist you in finding accommodation?

No difficulties arranging accommodation and Griffith does not assist in finding accommodation for international students.

5. STUDIES AT HOST INSTITUTION

To better understand the similarities and differences between academic studies at OCAD U and at your host university, please comment on the following:

Level of academic difficulty and challenge:

I found the courses I was in to be very easy. Since the program I was doing an exchange for is only 3 years, I had to register in 2nd year courses. I did learn a lot but it wasn't as challenging as I would have liked.

Time spent in class (# of hours per week):

~8-10. Depended on the week. Not every course met every week during the allotted class time.

Time spent working on projects outside of class (# of hours per week):

~1-3. Very light course load.

Studio-based work:

Everything was done in teams, yet not quite collaborative. Everyone was sort of looking out for themselves when it comes to group projects.

Written assignments:

Only had about 1 formal writing assignment, whereas all the others were personal reflections.

Interaction between students and professors:

Quite similar to OCAD. Approachable professors who care about your learning.

6. SERVICES

Were there any extracurricular activities/events scheduled for exchange/international students at your host university (cultural visits, trips, workshops, etc.)? Which ones would you recommend?

The trip to Byron Bay before the semester starts is amazing! Would definitely recommend that one.

What were the library and computer facilities like?

Didn't visit those too often. Southbank is a very small campus so the library is very small, but there was always an available work space and computer when I needed one.

7. COST OF LIVING

How did you prepare yourself financially for your exchange? Did you pay for the experience entirely out of your own savings? Did you receive student or bank loans? Did you apply for / receive any financial awards (scholarships or bursaries)? Did you have help from parents / family / friends?

I saved for 2 years working almost fulltime while also doing fulltime at OCAD. The cost of living in Australia is very expensive. I received OSAP and bursaries through OCAD which really helped.

In general, was the cost of living in your host country higher, lower, or similar to that in Canada? Please explain.

Higher. Everything is just slightly more expensive in Australia.

8. EXPENSES

Exchange rate with host country:

Time spent in host country (month/year - month/year):

February 2017- July 2017

Would you estimate that you spent more, less, or the same amount as an average, local student attending your host institution?

Probably a little more just because my accommodation was so expensive.

Please complete the following budget to give other students an idea of what they can expect to spend in the host country.

Basic Expenses in Canadian Dollars:

1. **Tuition and general fees (paid to OCAD U):** \$3500
2. **School supplies:** \$0
3. **Rent or university residence:** \$ /month = \$ from mid-February to the beginning of July, I paid about \$8000.
4. **Rent-related expenses:** all included in my rent.
 - A) **Electricity/Water:** \$ /month
 - B) **Telephone:** \$ /month
 - C) **Cable:** \$ /month
 - D) **Other (specify)** \$ /month
5. **Groceries or Meal Plan:** \$ /month = \$ 200-300 depending on how much you eat out
6. **Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.):** \$ /month = \$10-20
7. **Laundry:** \$ /month = \$40
8. **Transportation:** \$ /month = \$30-40

9. **Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.):** \$

10. **Travel health insurance:** \$500

11. **Medical expenses in host country:** \$ none

12. **Round trip plane ticket:** \$1700

13. **Travel/trips during exchange:** Bali for 6 days cost just about \$1000 for everything. New Zealand for 8 days cost just under \$1800 (so expensive but so worth it). Renting a car to get around for day trips and weekend trips is also affordable. Flying domestic is also quite cheap.

14. **Student visa:** \$500

15. **Other expenses (please specify):** \$ 1000 on 4 tattoos I got while in Australia (not the most responsible way to spend your money while living on a tight budget but they have some really amazing artists!)

Estimated Total Expenses: \$ 19900

9. ADAPTING TO YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Did you experience any “culture shock” during your exchange? How did you deal with it? Do you have any advice for students on how to adapt to life in your host country?

Not really at all. Australia has a very similar feel to Canada. The people are pretty laid back and all around nice.

Was there a lot of interaction between local students and exchange/international students?

What is the best way to develop friendships with students from your host institution?

Don't be shy in class, that's how I made friends. The different accent is usually enough to start a conversation.

Did you have any unforeseen problems? Was there anything that you felt was strikingly different from what you expected?

Nope

10. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

I would definitely recommend going to Australia on an exchange. The people and the places were life changing. It's worth the money!

Please email your report to International Student Services at international@ocadu.ca.