

**2013-2014**

**University Attended: University of Florida**

## **FEEDBACK 1**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

The orientation lasted 3 hours and happened the first day before class. It gave an overview of how to select classes, what the University had to offer and gave us an opportunity to meet our fellow exchange partners from across the world. After we completed the presentation we had a tour of the campus and from there had the opportunity for Q&A. It provided a lot of information and was sometimes a little cheesy with the singing of the 'Go Gators song' but you might as well get used to it; that's America! The international office are pretty helpful but Jason Ward in particular is a great person. Anything academic related, he is most certainly the first man to visit and is easy to approach and talk to.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The style of teaching varies from course to course but on the whole I found it to be more practical. In my first semester I specialised in Sales and Marketing courses, the workload had a lot of outside commitment but I felt that I learnt a huge amount. Americans certainly have a more developed view of Sales and Marketing and the style of teaching and classes that are given will certainly help. The Sales Management class had a lot of outside commitment; you have to raise \$1,500 in your free time within 10 weeks; it's not for everyone but it will develop skills. I thoroughly recommend Marketing Management to anybody who took Principles of Marketing in Manchester. Marketing Management helps you think in a more structured way and will develop your analytical, presentation and financial skills.

In the second semester I took 4 classes as I felt I wanted to challenge myself; turned out that the workload was quite a lot more than I had deemed at first. Business Plan Lab was the most interesting of the classes I took, but I warn people that it is a LOT of work. The idea is to write a fully functioning business plan for the Gator Big Idea Competition; first prize is \$25,000! If you commit yourself to it you will learn a lot. I recommend it for anyone who intends to set up or is interesting in starting a business, however, it really does take a lot of time, particularly if you do not have any team mates.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

I felt that the MBS international team had covered more or less everything I felt I needed to know before I arrived at Florida. Nothing seemed to startle me so on the whole a great job!

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

Nothing in particular, they all happened a while back. But it wasn't as if I was constantly on the phone to Manchester during the Summer or once I had arrived in America so no problems really. Just make sure you attend the meetings, get your US visa done early and sort out the paperwork.

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

Your DS2019 form is provided by your American University and is needed to be shown then entering and leaving the US. If you are going on a trip out of Florida, which is most likely the case because a lot of people hop over to

the Caribbean at some point for a cruise (it's pretty cheap too - \$200 for 3 days). You will need to go to the International Office to get the admin team to approve your request to travel. It takes around 2 days for them to log it into the computer and give you your form back, but it something to remember so there is no hassle on the border when you re-enter the US. Also remember to check your Gator email more often, something that is easier said than done but a lot of information gets passed through there.

### **INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance i.e. costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

The US does not have the NHS and hospitals take you to the cleaners if you don't have health insurance. There are a myriad of policies out there but you do not need to settle for the most expensive one that UF recommends you to buy. Read the small print and see what is necessary from UF for yourself but in particular look at the excess costs. It may seem like a hassle at first but buying the correct insurance can save you \$500+. So do your homework if you want to save money, the extra cash can be spent on a trip to Las Vegas – something that I wholly recommend.

### **INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS AND FINANCIAL CERTIFICATION**

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc. Any information that you had to provide on financial certificate would be helpful.

Nothing comes to mind

### **ACCOMMODATION**

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

Live in Weaver Hall – simple. Its right on campus, so you are next to a 90,000 seater stadium, food court, student union, frat houses and all the sport facilities including tennis courts and swimming pools. All the facilities are free so why live anywhere else (besides the food obviously). You can live off campus but it is a nightmare trying to get back home after a night out. Even though Gainesville is not a big city, but it is very spread out so if you are living off campus you might as well have a car/scooter to make yourself save time and driving home drunk is obviously a no-no because the cops in America are everywhere and lay the law to the full degree. Besides convenience, living in a dorm environment is good fun. I lived in Owens Parks in first year and it has a similar feel to Weaver but it is a lot cleaner and less dingy. The only drawback for some people will be having a roommate, I was lucky my roommate and I got on like a house on fire but occasionally you might get someone not to your liking. But it is part of the 'College' experience and Weaver has a great environment to kick start your year abroad.

### **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

UF is one of the best if not the best Sports Colleges in the US; so the 'school spirit' will shock you at first as being fake, cheesy and over commercialised. However, once you go to the games and start seeing your College own other teams on the field, the feeling around campus is infectious and you magically become quite loyal to the Gators. Gainesville has a regional airport which can be quite pricey to fly out of but there are plenty of bus routes leaving the town going to all over Florida and Georgia. I travelled a lot during my first semester, you are around 6 hours from Miami, 2 from Orlando, 8 from Georgia and 9 from New Orleans. Go to as many places as you can and organise trips with like minded internationals who want to see the country. All you need to do is hire a car out for the weekend and hit the road. Living in Florida is a pleasure, it's a state that has a lot happening and a lot to do; beach life plays a large part in your time here if you want it to. The weather allows you to enjoy your year abroad fully whilst everyone else in the States is freezing their backsides off between November til February.

Local students will flock to you and if are mildly social then you instantly have friends; initially they don't want to know you as a person they just want to hear you speak and have a "British Friend"! The myth/legend of having a

British accent is true and people will tend to gravitate towards you. To the gents out there who are single you will be pleased to know that life in Florida is kind to you; so go ahead and milk it ;)

## **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

I would like to give a sentence of advice for the next student at UF: "the year will go in a flash, so hit the road running and don't waste time thinking about whether you should do something; go for it. If you genuinely try everything at your disposal, you will develop as a person and by the end have a sense of fulfilment which is priceless"

## **FEEDBACK 2**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

Jason Ward was more than helpful with assisting me with all the documentation.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

I am more than pleased with the education system in the US. Classes are smaller so each student gets individual attention. There are assignments and exams all the time, however, they do not cover as much material as the exams in the UK, which makes it easier to get an A. All professors are accessible and are always willing to talk to you about the classes, your career etc. Attendance is part of your grade, therefore I would not recommend you to skip classes. For the exams there are the so called Smokin Notes, which are basically what you need to read to get a B in the class. If you are aiming higher, you need to read the books too.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

MBS International team were always quick to respond when I emailed them about questions I had. There were emails reminding us about the documentation that we need to do, which I found quite helpful.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

I believe the second year meetings were comprehensive enough. Moreover, the meetings with previous exchange students added to the information already available about the University of Florida.

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students  
Jason Ward was always helpful and willing to discuss whatever was on my mind. At the actual international office, I found that most of the people who worked there were always grumpy and not really of much help. I avoided going there and communicated by email instead. However, there are plenty of other people who are always willing to help so an issue rarely was left unresolved.

### **INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

I did my research and decided not to go for the health insurance offered by UF as I found it too expensive. Instead, I purchased ISO Med 1 insurance and I emailed back and forth with the health insurance department to make sure it is approved by the university. It turned out to be about \$300-400 in contrast with the UF \$1,200 one.

### **INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS AND FINANCIAL CERTIFICATION**

I provided two bank statements from two separate bank accounts for my financial certification and the University still approved it. As long as you keep in touch with them and provide all the information, asking them if it is okay,

you shouldn't have a problem with this document. As for any additional costs and fees, I don't think I had to pay anything extra. There is a free 200 pages printing per semester so that was a plus. The gym is included in the tuition too, so I didn't have to pay for it.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

As I am more price conscious, I decided to live off campus. I did my research prior to coming to the US and chose two or three apartment complexes. I ended up staying at Gateway at Glades, which was \$330 utilities included, half of what I would have paid if I chose university accommodation. The apartment was a 4/2, so four bedrooms and two bathrooms. The complex has a pool, a hot tub, a free tanning machine and a game room with a pool table inside. I would definitely say I got much more than I paid for. The place was about 20 minutes away from campus.

### **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Buses in Gainesville are free so I did not have to pay for transportation. Travelling in Florida can be really cheap if you carpool, split gas with a few other students. If you are going with friends it will be cheap and convenient to rent a car. The clubbing and bar scene in Gainesville is pretty big. There is something going on every day of the week. There are many places that offer free bar from 10-12 and reduced cover fee if you get on a promoter's list. The best way to mingle with local students is to join some of the numerous clubs and societies that UF has to offer. There is a club literally for everything, not only for your professional interests but also things like food clubs, knitting clubs etc. They organise various meetings and get-togethers which are often sponsored by the University.

### **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

**An eye opening experience that taught me a lot about myself and my capabilities.**