

2012-2013

University Attended: University of Florida

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

We had a general international centre meeting which was really beneficial and informative about getting started, traveling and visa info among other important topics. We also had a welcome meeting with the Warrington School of Business about classes and schedules.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

During the fall semester I did online classes which was really helpful because I could watch lecturers online I had the opportunity to travel over the weekends and do more things during the week. All the exams were multiple choice and you have the option to buy class notes and lecture summaries before each midterm and exam which helped. I took classroom based lectures in the Spring semester which involved a lot of teamwork and presentations and attendance was taken at each class. The midterms and finals were once again multiple choice.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

The MBS international team was great throughout my whole experience and all my emails were answered within 24 hours or less. I received all the information and help I needed and knew I could always contact Sue if the need occurred.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

I think the second year meetings were really useful and we received all the necessary help and assistance throughout the application and pre-departure stages. I think the meeting with the students who had returned from the exchange university was especially helpful because they answered a lot of questions and provided a lot of info that only a past exchange student could answer and this provided another point of contact if the need occurred also.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

UF provided two points of contact, one with the international centre for all general exchange assistance and Jason Ward within the Business school. Jason was really helpful throughout especially with picking the right classes and signing all the necessary paperwork. It was always really easy to get any questions answered quickly and to get a reply from both departments.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

UF have quite strict insurance and immunization requirements so double check with UF to see if your insurance plan will meet the requirements before purchasing it. I bought ISO Platinum Select Insurance plan which cost around £780 for the year. I would advise emailing the international centre at UF and asking for a list of accepted insurance plans and then go through the list until you find the cheapest one. Florida is also one of the strictest when it comes to immunization. I had to have a Mantoux test to check for TB even though I've already had the BCG vaccination. I had to do this privately which cost £75 at Same Day Doctor which is located in Manchester City centre. However I believe that University of Manchester Occupational Health services can provide this for cheaper or maybe even free. I just was unable to get an appointment in time so try and organise this as early as possible. I believe that you can claim back all these expenses through Student Finance also.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

I don't believe you have any extra costs except for maybe getting your student card printed which is either \$10 or free. Also Weaver Hall sell an activity card for \$10 so you can attend all their events for free during the year. This is useful as they have a lot of events with lots of free food and organise Mud Fest, which is essentially a week long interhall competition playing games in a huge mud pit.

ACCOMMODATION

I stayed in Weaver Hall which is the only dorm that international students can apply for. All exchange students are paired with an American roommate unless you are lucky enough to get a private room. Weaver Hall is really fun because a lot of exchange students from all over the world stay here as well. Although I had the intention on meeting more Americans, it was good having so many exchange students in the exact same position as I found that they were more likeminded when it came to making the most of the exchange experience and there was always someone in Weaver to do stuff with. It's a really social environment and easy to make friends. It's on campus, in a great location beside the Football stadium, Basketball Arena and Gator Dining Hall, should you choose to get a meal plan. Classes are a 15min walk to the Business area on Campus and Midtown, where a lot of restaurants, bars and clubs are located is within a 15min walk also. If you are really hesitant about sharing a room and really don't want to share with a roommate I know a few exchange students that lived off campus in apartment complexes, however this involves getting a bus to and from campus and midtown/downtown for nightlife. Although buses are completely free with a student card in Gainesville, they can be quite slow and unreliable especially at night and on the weekend.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Gainesville is essentially a college town with the majority of the population being students which is good because everything is geared towards students. It's a huge university with around 50,000 students. There is a small regional airport, however they only run flights to bigger hub airports such as Miami, Atlanta and Charlotte. So when I flew to the States and when I travelled during the year, most of my flights were from Orlando, which is around a two hour bus away. The university offers lots of things to see and do. All the sports events are free with a student card except the football games. I highly recommend attending as many sports events as you can, out of all the MBS partner unis in the States I believe UF is one of the best in terms of Sports especially Basketball. This year the Volleyball and Gymnastics teams became National champs ranked number 1 in the country. Football is like a religion here and the stadium holds over 90,000 with every seat filled during game days. I've never experienced anything like it and the scale of the whole atmosphere is incredible. It literally felt like a movie. I also got to see Michelle Obama give a speech as it happened to be an election year. There is a free cinema in the Union and a games room including a bowling alley and pool tables which is free during exams to relieve stress. Living expenses are really cheap here also, I spent less than \$10 on most nights out and restaurants offer student friendly prices.

I had a meal plan during the first semester which was really handy as you can go as many times a day as you want and it's essentially all you can eat. Although the menu does become quite repetitive and I found I had become sick of the same food for the end of the semester so I opted out of it for 2nd semester and decided to cook instead.

UF also has an international organisation called the NaviGators which pairs all exchange students with an American who wants to be your mentor. This is really helpful as my Navigator collected me from the bus stop when I first arrived and took me to Wal-Mart so I could get everything I needed for my room straight away. The organisation also organises trips throughout the semester to Universal Studios in Orlando and many others. It so useful and helpful and an easy way to meet more Americans and Exchange students.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

The craziest, most fun and carefree year of my life, an unforgettable experience!

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

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

The induction/ orientation programme consisted of a large group meeting/ presentation, all aspects of the university were discussed, from its online eLearning program, to course choices and credits. It was useful and was a good starting point to integrate and meet new international students in the fall semester.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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

Style of teaching is very similar to that of Manchester. Mostly lecture based with some seminars and tutorial type sessions. Most of the courses had good textbooks and the online learning system is easy to use. For the majority of the business courses the assessments are mostly multiple choice exams. However, a few of the courses contained essays as a form of assessment also.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

The level of support was clearly high. I only sent a few emails to MBS but all were responded to very quickly and efficiently.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

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

The host international office was also very helpful. The international office seems to have extensive opening hours, where at least two or more people would be in the office area to help the international students.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

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

The University of Florida doesn't accept the Manchester insurance policy so students going to this institution are required to get separate insurance. The final insurance policy I purchased cost around one thousand pounds, but was necessary to cover the different aspects required by the university. A list of medical jabs and vaccinations will also be required. However, there is a health centre at the University which can give students any vaccinations once they arrive.

ACCOMMODATION

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

The accommodation the students who attend University of Florida will stay at is called Weaver Hall. I would definitely recommend this accommodation. It is a half international students and half American students accommodation. It was a good place to meet new international students and current American students.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

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

Generally the main form of transport for the students is buses. The bus system at the university is frequent and regular. Moreover, the student id (gator id) allows students to use the buses and sports facilities on campus for free. The social life in Gainesville is something I really enjoyed, cheap deals for students and very close to campus.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

An unbelievable experience which I will never forget.