

2012-2013

University Attended: University of Washington

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

The orientation was a week long, and involved a number of lectures all about living, working, travel, studying etc in Seattle and visa requirements, basically everything you need to know. Also they run a number of fun activities including a football tournament, pub quiz, boat tour around Seattle. These are all run by an organisation called FIUTS. All the lectures/activities are by no means compulsory (I only went to one or two) but they're fun, a good way to meet other international students, and you have to pay (\$70-\$100) for them whether you attend or not, so you might as well make the most of them. Some of the info lectures on visa requirements and travel were actually very helpful.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The classes here are very interactive, as I'm sure you've been reading in all the other feedback. Don't expect to sit there with your head down because you are likely to get called out. All the professors are friendly and like to get to know you personally, so it's very easy to ask for help if you're struggling with anything. In many classes homework is set and assessed on a regular basis - the work is more regular than Manchester, many smaller assessments contribute to your grade so you need to stay on top of it rather than skip class all year and then cram for the final exam.

Learn to love group work - you will be doing a lot of it. At first it was a pain, but you get used to it, and actually I now think that it's one of the most valuable skills I learned here. Participate in class - I know this might be counter intuitive, it certainly was for me - but in nearly all classes you get marked on your attendance and contributions to class discussions. At first this may be daunting but embrace it. It's easy to get participation marks because the professors will remember you, and American students love the English. Some of the best friends I made here approached me after class just because I was English. I know that sounds crazy, but they're just friendly like that.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

I didn't really need to contact them during my time here, but from what I've heard from others they are extremely helpful and effective. Any questions you have, you are likely to get a response quickly, so don't be shy about asking.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

These provide all the information you need so don't skip them. You don't want to be heading to a different country with gaps in your knowledge.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

The host office was excellent. Just like the MBS international team you probably won't have much contact with them, but they are there if you do need to, and they will probably contact you during the first week.

The whole system of registering for classes is different in the US, and difficult for international students, so I would definitely recommend speaking to them about it. Elaine Solomon is the person to speak to. Her email address is emiller@uw.edu.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

The University of Manchester's policy covers the health insurance costs for your time at the University of Washington. However, you do have to apply to have it covered at the start of each quarter (you will be shown how in the introductory lectures) and make sure that you do it. You only have a few weeks at the start of the quarter to waive these cost of the insurance, and if you miss the deadline, you'll be stuck with a rather large bill.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

The husky pass allows you to travel anywhere around Seattle on buses/light rail for free, which is a great resource if you take advantage of it, but you have to pay around \$70-\$80 for it at the start of each quarter whether you use it or not.

It's not likely that you will be able to get your course textbooks in the library here, so you may have to buy them. **Don't** buy them at the University Bookstore, where they can be up to \$200 per book. Be organised and get the same book on Amazon/ebay etc for around \$30. You can get away without having the book for the first week or so, so don't waste an incredible amount of money panic buying at the University Bookstore - they are the only place that sells books in the University District, and will rip you off accordingly.

ACCOMMODATION

The university's dorms can be expensive, not just for the rooms, but also for the meal plan that you have to buy. Many of Manchester's previous exchange students (myself included) have been staying in a place called Upstairs Downstairs Apartments. The building is one of the older ones, and by no means the nicest, but it is one of the cheapest places in the university district (around \$520/month), the apartments are furnished, which isn't all that common, you get your own room, and the location is amazing, literally a 2 minute walk to the business school. Alternatively, you can look on Craigslist for a room/apartment. It shouldn't be too hard to find one if you look early.

I'm not totally sure, but I don't think staying in a fraternity/sorority house is an option for international students in Seattle (although it is in other places including Champaign, Illinois) so research carefully before you decide to take that route.

If all else fails, there are rooms available to rent well into term time, so get a motel here, and look around if you're still stuck (although this is by no means the optimal choice).

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

University life in Seattle is very different to Manchester, and will take some getting used to, but embrace it. If you take advantage of the opportunities presented, I'm sure you will have an amazing time. Seattle is free and easy to explore on buses, and if you make friends with people who have cars (highly recommended) the places you can explore are endless. Vancouver and Portland are both very easy to get to, and well worth a visit.

There's a good selection of bars on the Ave (the university district's main street), although it's not worth trying to get in if you're not 21. Fortunately neither are most of the students here, so there are endless house parties/frat parties you can go to if that's your thing. There are loads clubs and activities you can take part in. The university has a lot of funding for clubs and activities, so the list is extensive, anything you want to take part in, academic, sporting or otherwise, you are likely to be able to find.

If you want to find part time work here you can, although you are only allowed to work for the university in some capacity. I worked in a pizza restaurant during my time here, and if you are organised and look for work at the start of the quarter, it's really very easy to find. There is a lecture on how to go about finding work in the orientation meetings.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

I finished uni 2 months ago and I'm still here, it's an amazing experience and if I didn't have to leave the country (visa expiring) I wouldn't be.

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

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

Very useful, although we had to pay \$70 for this, and I don't feel it was worth that much. There was a week of induction and talks, but some of them I did not attend as they were not relevant to me. I went to three inductions which were very useful, but apart from this, nothing else was relevant.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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

Style of teaching was fantastic; I definitely felt that it was more productive than in England! All of the courses I did were interesting and I feel like I learnt a lot. The expectation to participate in lectures was scary at first but I got used to it and feel like I got a lot more out of each module by doing so. Our academic advisor took down what we wanted to do, and registered us into courses which made it so much easier than having to do this ourselves, as the choice of courses was overwhelming at first! But all my lecturers were great: having a lecturer know me personally was a first, and I feel like it contributed to my learning and enjoyment of each course. The methods of assessment was mainly based on exams and group work. In the first quarter we had one individual piece of coursework, but apart from that we were in groups completing group papers or making presentations. None of this work was overwhelming as it was shared, which I somewhat prefer to working individually. Having to complete so many presentations I feel is very useful, and I got very comfortable presenting to the class after my time in UW. The end of quarter exams were mainly multiple choice: which I found a lot less stressful than our exams here. Although some of them required short essay answers, the more relaxed environment of exams made it easier to focus and therefore I feel like I did better than I do in Manchester as exams usually get to me, and sometimes impact my performance. The teaching support was fantastic; lecturers were always available via emails, or we could meet them whenever we had any queries.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

I feel like the international team gave us all the information we needed. However, when it came to getting visas sorted it was a bit stressful as we did not get a lot of information regarding this. But all the information received was very useful and the level of support was great. *(MBS comment: MBS is not able to give specific information on visa applications as this may change and we are instructed to refer students to the websites for the appropriate countries.)*

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

Second year meetings were fantastic; the meetings with the students who had already been to Seattle were really useful, as getting to hear about their experiences was helpful in knowing what to expect when arriving.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

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

The international office in UW was good, although I didn't seem to have much contact with them during my time there. Kathleen Hatch, who was my main point of contact with the international office for the business school was great: whenever I inquired about anything she was happy to help, and met me on a number of occasions.

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

I was very confused about health insurance at first. However, we had to submit an insurance waiver online (on the UW website) which meant that we did not have to pay these extra costs- as it would have been a lot! Health insurance is expensive there so it was a bit of a shock seeing this come up on my balance of what was owed to the university: however, this will return back to zero once an insurance waiver is submitted. Having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy was the only reason for being able to get the fee waived- so obviously this was very very useful!

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

The only additional costs was the fee to FIUTS when we arrived for the induction- this seemed a bit pointless.

ACCOMMODATION

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

I stayed in Upstairs Downstairs Apartments. This block of apartments was really close to the university, it took about two minutes to get to uni every day which was great. It's also right in the middle of the Greek System (where all the fraternities and sororities are) so is a very social area to be in. although the building is quite old, and the apartments are not exactly modern, they are homely and spacious. The rooms come fully furnished and most things you will need in the kitchen will already be there, as some people live there all year round. I was put in a flat with all American students which was great. Originally I was planning on living on my own but I am so happy that I changed my mind! I would definitely recommend it. Just be sure to make it clear to the landlady when you're leaving: I had to break my contract as our visa ran out so make sure you discuss this first! (email me for contact details).

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

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

Transport in Seattle is brilliant. Our student card was also a bus pass, which also works on the trains (lightrail) to and from the airport, all the buses in Seattle, as well as the metro link. Taxis are not too expensive, but the drivers expect a hefty tip so I would advise people to use the public transport as much as possible! We had to pay \$76 per term for the U-Pass, but this is required so I would make the most of it. Social life was great, although I was not 21 throughout my time there it didn't seem to make a difference, there was a lot of stuff going on around where I lived, and once I met people and made friends it was so much fun.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE: I WANT TO GO BACK