

2013-2014

University Attended: University of Massachusetts Amherst

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

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

I and the other international students arrived at UMass on Thursday August 29th and the rest of the students arrived that weekend or the following Monday and Tuesday. The orientation involved a few meetings, a disco/dance and raffle, a bowling trip and other trips throughout the first month of the semester like trips to Boston and skiing trips. During the first week there was also the opportunity to go to the nearby shopping mall and on hikes in the surrounding area.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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

The style of teaching is much more discussion based. Participation is very often a part of your grade which is great because everyone just loves hearing Brits talk. Signing up for courses is complicated because the online system doesn't recognise that international students do have the prerequisites required, but the staff in the International Programmes Office were helpful in enrolling me in my classes.

The method of assessment was mainly midterms which are often multiple choice tests. I also had a lot of weekly homeworks that counted towards my grade, which could include short online posts or analysing a case study and writing a summary every week. I have only had 2 final exams, one of which was a multiple choice test and the other we were given the exam a week before the test and then allowed to prepare before but not take any notes into the exam.

Teaching support was strong, all of my professors were very approachable and good at responding to emails, they also have weekly office hours and are usually available to make appointments outside of those hours if they don't work.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

Very helpful with paperwork and helping with the insurance and student finance aspect.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

The person studying at Manchester from UMass that came to my meeting wasn't very helpful in preparing me or giving any advice about the campus. His fault, not MBS.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

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

Helpful with enrolling for classes, but not really anything else.

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

UMass has it's own compulsory health insurance requirement which is very expensive and the Manchester policy does NOT waive this cost. However, I am applying for the Student Finance Bursary to reimburse this cost as well as the cost of my flights.

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. No additional costs that I'm aware of. Only the health insurance.

ACCOMMODATION

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

I was recommended to live in Southwest which is the most 'social' area, and known as the party scene, but that's just because it's full of Freshman who are all too excited to be at college. If you are an upperclassman, junior in this case, southwest is a difficult place to live because everyone living there is already with their friends and they don't really have any interest in making new friends, which is hard when you don't know anyone else on a campus of 40,000 students. I moved out of Southwest after a week so that I didn't lose all the money I had paid for the accommodation into private off-campus housing. If I had stayed on campus I would have wanted to live in Central. Central seems to have nicer dorms, nicer, more relaxed people but there is a huge hill to get to it. I didn't really venture to any of the other dorms because they are really far away from everything, particularly the School of Management where all of my classes were.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

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

Transport around campus is easy, there is a free bus system with your ucard (student id) and that takes you to nearby areas, around campus and the nearest shopping mall. Travelling is actually quite easy from UMass, there are 4 airports to choose from and transport back to UMass from those airports. Bradley International airport in Hartford, Connecticut, Boston Logan airport, and then Newark and JFK in New York. If you look around there are cheap flights to pretty much anywhere.

The Peter Pan Bus Company also has cheap buses to Boston, New York and many other places and leaves from the centre of campus so is really easy to use. I was lucky enough to go to Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington DC, New Hampshire and Florida while I was here.

Social life is difficult at first, especially because the International programmes office try to lump all the internationals together, who I didn't really have anything in common with, besides being from the same country, so I made an effort to get involved in other groups and to meet people in my classes, and I have met some amazing people, some of which I have stayed with over breaks and are already planning to visit me in London over the Christmas break this year!

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

The best and most transformative experience of my life, and one that I wish I could do over and over again!