

2013-2014

University Attended: UNSW

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

The university provides a number of events over the year to help integrate exchange students.

Start of the year in 'O – Week' there are a number of get to know events and fairs so that you can join societies etc..

Everyone is very friendly and this is a great way to meet people.

Other events involved a few nights out that had been organised and other trips such as going to the aquarium and the zoo and some scenic walks.

There is a facebook group where the "Aussie mates" (the students who organise all these events post about them, and other students exchange students tend to post about things such as when they are going to the beach, or having a bbq, or going on nights etc...

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

As at Manchester, when choosing a course you can see the method and weighting of the different assessments. Saying that, generally speaking the courses here tend to have on-going assessment, such as mid-term tests, presentations, marks for attendance and participation. You get to do quite a bit of group work, so if this is something you are not too keen on, check the courses assessment before choosing it! This makes it important focus on your classes throughout the semester, but ensures that there is not too much pressure on you for any one given assignment.

I have found the courses to be very interesting here, there are a number of courses with very practical implementation and I would recommend Personal Finance – the course is very useful and helps you look at budgeting, mortgages and how to take care of your finances in the real world.

Aboriginal Sydney, and other such courses seem to be recommended to students to take for their non-business module. My personal opinion was that it was not very interesting and didn't really give a rounded view of aboriginal Australia, it is a pretty easy option to take but not very interesting unless you are very interested in anthropology etc.

A class that is very in demand and very good is negotiation skills – it is definitely not an easy class and there is quite a bit of work for it, but once again it really offers you implementable skills, if you are serious about pursuing a career in business, take this course.

A tip that I would give is looking for courses with field trips, myself and others made some good friends that way and found a cool group of people who we later went traveling with through meeting up on field trips.

Teachers are usually very approachable and you often have your seminar with your lecturer.

As you are at a new university it can obviously take a bit of time to find your way around, but it is not that difficult and people are pretty helpful.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

The MBS international team have been great and if you have any problems they get back to you quickly and help to get them sorted out. Make sure you check your emails to keep up to date with things. Thankfully I haven't had any issues here so I have not needed much support – however it is nice to know that it is there should I have a problem.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

The best information was giving us some contact details of people who had already done their year abroad, often it is easiest to just have a chat with someone rather than take in huge amounts of information at a meeting.

Everyone I know on exchange has had one of the best years of their lives so I'm sure they will all be pretty happy to talk about it.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

International office at UNSW has been great, when it comes to choosing and changing modules and getting them to fit in with your schedule. Make sure that you go and speak to them face to face and get everything sorted out with regards to your classes. I have not had any issues with them and they have been very helpful, for example I took a course that I didn't really like and they helped me get it changed as soon as possible.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

You have to purchase additional OSHC health cover to come to Australia, if I remember rightly it costs about £500/600. You can buy it through a number of different providers and once you are in Australia you need to go into the office of the provider you have chosen and get your medicare card. If you need to go to the doctor or anything you will have to pay for it and then claim it back.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

Some courses have extra charges for field trips etc... they are not too expensive and you can find out about them before committing to the course.

The gym is pretty expensive here, but it is cheaper if you live in uni halls, or if you find someone who looks similar to you that lives in uni halls..

Most clubs and societies will charge some sort of fee, some are very expensive (such as football) and some are pretty reasonable. Windsurfing and wakeboarding seem to be very reasonable and provide a number of trips which are good value and fun, you get to meet people etc..

Books are really expensive here, but you can get most out from the library – just make sure you don't keep them too long as there are pretty serious library charges over here.

If you are good at a sport (actually you don't even have to be that good for some things) there is an event each semester called uni games, pretty self explanatory you go and compete against all the other universities in Australia. Depending on where it is held it can be very expensive to attend, about \$1000 (£550) so keep it in mind, but it is not essential.

ACCOMMODATION

This purely comes down to how much cash you have to splash. Accommodation is significantly more expensive than Manchester and there is less supply of student accommodation. Like most other English people, we decided that we wanted to live by the beach, If you are going to UNSW Coogee is a great place to live as you are close to the Beach and close to uni and not too far from the city. You're looking from about \$190 – 250 a week for decent private accommodation, the lower range of which will require you sharing a room. I was pretty against sharing a room, but sucked it up and it has been absolutely fine. A lot of people we have met here, both student and people on a working holiday, share a room. Good places to look for property are Gumtree (actually anything you want to buy here, just look on gumtree), When you meet a landlord, check the house out properly and ask to have a good look through the contract. We met a guy who seemed very intent on us giving him our deposit as soon as possible. He finally sent me a contract and it was a load of rubbish. As the Eastern suburbs have a pretty high turnover of exchange students and foreigners working, there are a few bad landlords out there. Our landlord is good and has a few properties so I would be happy to recommend them.

Uni accommodation and colleges. There are a few different types of uni accommodation and some provide food, so if you can't cook this would probably be a good shout. However, they are very expensive. Because Sydney is quite spread out you can find that you do not live very close to all of your friends. However if you live in either Coogee or Bondi you would be pretty close to a lot of people. Living in uni accommodation could be a good way of meeting people if you are worried about that and they put on events etc... however, quite a few people have pre-drinks so just make a bit of an effort and it will all be fine. They don't really do house parties very well in Sydney –

we have been to quite a few but only 1 didn't get closed down, so go early it'll probably get shut down by about half midnight.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

There is no doubt about it Sydney is an amazing place to live, and also an expensive place to live. Make sure you save a decent bit of money saved as there are a lot of opportunities but they will also cost you. Unless you are either doing very well or your parents are going to throw a considerable amount of cash at you, you're going to need to get a job.

Apply at Nosh, (basically waiting/waitressing work) and type in promotional work Sydney into google. Some of them will require you to get an ABN Australian business number – it is not difficult and will allow you to work more jobs. I would recommend this sort of work because it is flexible and will mean you have a job to come back to after you go traveling or if you have a heavy week of assignments you don't have to work. If you work at a café or bar they will probably fire you if you say, can I have 3 months off to go an travel?

Bus travel is probably the best way to get around Sydney, and it is not too cheap, it is definitely not magic bus prices! However, train travel is cheaper than in England. If you book in advance you can get cheap flights to Brisbane and Melbourne etc..

I have made a few good Australian friends here, I made one by joining a language exchange and I don't know how I met the other but he had a house in the Blue Mountains and invited me and some friends out there! Just speak to people, the Aussies are pretty friendly and like to have a good time. Going out in Sydney is ok, not as good as Manchester as everything and everyone is a bit spread out. There are a few good nights like SASH if you like house, and Ivy is free on a Thursday where there is a pool bar.

To get to north Sydney one option is to get the ferry to a place like Manly, you can time on the way back to be at sunset then the sun is setting behind the bridge and it is pretty cool.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

An unbelievable year than went very fast.

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

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

I arrived early and went looking for induction activities on the exchange website and found a 3 day induction programme that was for the most part irrelevant to me as it was all about how to write essays in proper English. But the first day was full of exercises to help you get to know and meet the people there who were also on exchange. It was on this first day that I met my closest friends in Sydney. There was also an exchange students afternoon tea which was pretty good for meeting people too.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support
The teaching is based on doing more assessments worth less marks. So you usually have a mid-term exam and an end of year exam with smaller essays and presentations throughout the semester. In pretty much all classes about 10% of the marks are based on class participation which means turning up to seminars and engaging in discussions.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

The MBS international office was great. I had a few problems with the University out here giving me the wrong grade accidentally and I therefore spent about 2 weeks emailing MBS with panic messages which they responded to immediately and were exceptionally reassuring and helpful.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

Australia is expensive!! Your student loan will not go very far and it is really common for people to get apartments out here where they share a bedroom with another person so be surprised if you struggle finding accommodation for a reasonable price where you will have your own bedroom.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

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

The team out here are great and they are happy to help you and let you off when you make mistakes with the system and deadlines, which you will do.

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 don't know much about this as I haven't had to claim mine at all but with Health cover out here be sure to apply for a medicare card as soon as you get out here because you need it.

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.

Visa and insurance are obvious extra costs. You need to be aware that buses here are fairly pricey and the best way to minimise that is to buy a my bus card which gives you ten rides and is marginally cheaper. Don't live on the north shore of Sydney as you will have to get the ferry to Uni and that is really expensive. Fresh food such as vegetables and fruit are surprisingly expensive but to be honest Sydney in general is very expensive so just be prepared for the hit to your bank account.

ACCOMMODATION

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

We were recommended not to live on campus and that was good advice as it turned out I lived with the 3 other people from Manchester who were coming out to Sydney. It took us 2 weeks of living in a hostel to find anywhere but once we did it was about 2 days before we moved in. We lived in a 3 bed apartment in Coogee which is a great place to live as you are right next to the beach and really close to Uni. Honestly if you can live near the beach. We were paying \$840 a week between the four of us and two of the guys were sharing a room. That was a good deal for a three bedroom apartment but on Gumtree you can find loads of house shares that are a fair bit cheaper at about \$180 per person per week for a shared room.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

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

Sydney is amazing!!! The transport is really reliable but expensive. It is a great base for travel as you can fly pretty much anywhere from Sydney airport and there are trains and buses that leave from here all to go everywhere around Australia. There are loads of things to do in your free time, especially the beach!! It is hard in Australia to meet local students as it is common for people to travel 2 hours to and from Uni everyday as most people continue to love at home throughout their degree. However, joining uni clubs introduced me to loads of Australian students. I took up a tonne of university sports and would highly recommend looking into it yourself as it was really social and made me make the most of the weather as I was constantly outside doing some sport or another.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

The most unbelievably exciting, freeing and relaxing experience I could possibly have had, that still looks great on my CV.