

2012-2013

University Attended: University of New South Wales, Sydney

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

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

The orientation was called 'O-Week' and just involved some meetings and introductory talks like the ones at the start of Manchester Fresher's. They organised some activities for us but it was just a general overview for things we needed to do and information about potential trips away during our first semester.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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

The style of teaching is very similar to Manchester as it is a mix between lectures and tutorials. There are more regular assessments at UNSW of how you are graded for a subject, not just an essay and an exam at the end. I would definitely recommend trying to get approved for as many classes as possible before you got to UNSW. That was the only downside of things as in order to be enrolled in a class, you have to be accepted by the Programme Director which involves going around the campus and finding these people and on many occasions, they weren't available etc. It can be quite tedious so just apply for as many modules as possible as to ensure four modules are accepted.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

The International team which Sue leads, is fantastic. Everything is well organised from the application process, the selection and the ability to ask previous international students questions. They also kept in contact the whole period I've been away and they have always ensured us that they are there for us if needed.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

I think that the information provided as much it could. The rest you learn along the way to be honest as everyone seems to have come across different difficulties.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

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

The host international office has been really helpful. I only really needed them when choosing modules and trying to get enrolment sorted. They do organise an Aussiemate program which are available for help with anything related to UNSW and Sydney itself. Their social activities were really well organised and continued throughout the year ranging from visits to Taronga Zoo to boat parties on Sydney Harbour. They also help up students find places to stay if they chose not to stay in university accommodation.

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

There are a couple of health insurance companies which we were offered, though the first one mentioned and the one I bought was OHSC Worldcare. I can't remember the exact cost, I think it was a few hundred pounds

which honestly is the normal cost of travel insurance. It covers everything, I've had to visit the doctors for minor illnesses like chest infections and I haven't had to pay anything additional. You cannot apply for your Visa for Australia without your health insurance so make sure you get it in good time. You also need it to cover the full length of your visa which is usually up to and including the following September. You can claim these costs back however, from student finance. I did this before I went to Australia so it covered my flights there, my visa and my healthcare costs etc. You can wait until you return and be reimbursed then so it includes any other costs during your time e.g. return flights home. However, I was told reimbursement only happens once so be aware that once you apply, that's 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.

The major fees in Sydney are for accommodation and general living expenses. For books at university, check whether you can purchase the textbook online as it is considerably cheaper. If not and you need the book, buy second hand. There is plenty of advertisements for books on campus and online.

Be careful when enrolling in modules, read the module outline carefully as there can be costs for school trips or online software which you need. I had to pay \$300 for a weekend field trip which I wasn't aware of before enrolling. Though it was worth it, when you're lacking money, it can be sore on the bank account!

ACCOMMODATION

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

The first semester I stayed in an International student housing in Coogee, which is by the beach. Absolutely beautiful place, great people, safe area and surrounded by restaurants and bars. It is also 20 minutes walk from campus but there's also a good bus system. The house was advantageous in a sense that you are collected from the airport, amenities are available and there is immediately a house full of other students to go out and socialise with. My house held nearly 30 people, you have a roommate and in the house around 25 of them were American. No doubt it was very fun but it can be a bit much at times. Accommodation was also very expensive. Sydney is very expensive but if you want a cheaper place, I would suggest starting in a hostel, meet friends and move into your place in time when you've found other students and a place in your price range. I know people who did this and had a fantastic time in a place which was half the price of our international student house. It is just daunting moving out to Australia without accommodation organised, therefore the house was perfect for this and I did meet some great friends. However, I think the housing available for students is changing and people will now be living on campus as my house along with the other international student houses are up for sale at the moment.

If you choose to stay in university accommodation, we had to leave promptly after the semester ended in mid-November and therefore had to have an apartment ready to move into. Look online on Gumtree, it is where I always found an apartment. It can take time and can be very frustrating but estate agents housing is more expensive and often unfurnished. I lived in Bondi over the summer period and then moved back into the university area for the second semester. Myself and the other UNSW student from Manchester lived together rather than in university accommodation. Ensure when you're searching for accommodation you go for a viewing of the apartment and remember they most likely will not have internet installed. Just keep an open mind for living in Sydney, it is expensive but completely worth it!

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

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

Sydney's transport system is excellent. From the suburbs, you get buses but within the city centre, it's trains. You buy tickets on the buses but it's best to pre-pay for your tickets or passes which you get in supermarkets or corner shops.

Do as much travelling as you can. Sydney has lots of places to see and do like Manly, Palm Beach, the Blue Mountains, Hunter Valley. But make sure you travel around Australia especially up the East Coast, it was incredible. I also travelled to Melbourne and Perth which are beautiful and completely different cities again. However, a must is New Zealand. I spend 3 weeks there on a tour bus called the Kiwi Experience, amazing. Great craic, people and an amazing country. On my way home I'm travelling around South East Asia. That's the beauty of Australia, you've already gone that far so you have to see all around you and everyone is close and easy enough to get cheap flights domestically.

The social life in Sydney is brilliant. Kings Cross is the party area, loads of clubs, restaurants and bars though it is known to be quite rough. Darling Harbour is beautiful with more upmarket clubs and bars, similarly around the city centre there are huge clubs with pool parties and all sorts. Surry Hills and The Rocks are notorious for swanky bars and quirky boutique shops so really good for pub crawls. Bondi Beach is obviously amazing, so many bars with a great atmosphere and constant events on at the weekends. The social life is amazing especially in summertime across Sydney as there are festivals, markets and outdoor cinemas.

Local students tend to live at home and commute into the university and therefore meeting them can be difficult. Meeting Aussie students is mainly done within class but I've met most Australians through work. I've had to work almost the entire time of being here to be able to afford the Sydney lifestyle but from that I've met so many more friends so I would definitely recommend getting a job even if it isn't financially necessary.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

This year has been the best time of my life. Incredible. Don't waste a second.

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

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

UNSW had an 'Induction Week' for all exchange students and it is definitely worth getting to Sydney in time for this week. This involved talks from various members of staff regarding not just university life but also wider living in Sydney – so things like travel, emergency numbers etc. which was really helpful. The staff were welcoming to all new students and eager to help when questions were asked. This induction week also involved loads of typical Aussie barbeques on campus, which was a great way to get to know other exchange students.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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

The teaching style at UNSW is very similar to that of MBS – lectures and accompanying tutorials. UNSW often put more of a focus on class contribution through, with sometimes a certain mark percentage being based purely on contribution. The Business School is really good and there are lots of really interesting courses to choose from. As you are allowed to take one module non business related I would definitely recommend looking into UNSW's Indigenous Studies classes. In the first semester I took Cultural Heritage Management which gave a fantastic insight into Aboriginal Australia (something I previously knew very little about) and has a great weekend field trip! The only thing I would fault UNSW on regarding choosing your modules is enrolment into these particular modules. The International Office requires you gain the signature of the Course Director in order to enrol, as they want to see your home university transcript, and it is often very difficult to catch these people in their offices! Nonetheless after a mad rush around campus I successfully managed to enrol in all of the modules I wanted.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

I was very happy with the support and guidance I received from the MBS International Team. I do not know where I would be without my regular email reminders! The whole study abroad process can be quite daunting, especially moving as far away from home as Australia, but I knew I had the support and assistance of the team at MBS and Sue! This made the transition very smooth and I cannot be more grateful.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

These were very helpful and I feel all the information I needed was given to me - especially at the final meeting where we were given a copy of the PowerPoint presentation shown and checklists for leaving/upon arrival etc. The meeting set up with the student(s) who had undertaken the year abroad at your institution the year prior I felt was essential and highly beneficial! This was where I was really able to ask the majority of my questions knowing I would get an informative answer from someone who had been there and done it all before.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

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

UNSW's International Office was always there for me if I had any issues with courses, or needed something to be signed for MBS. They also ran a fantastic 'Aussie Mate' program at the beginning of the year, which organised day trips and nights out with local students, so those on exchange could meet others and enjoy Sydney. A few days after I arrived I went to Taronga Zoo with the 'Aussie Mate' program! I feel they could have given a little more guidance and support over course enrolment with regards to obtaining signatures from members of staff. For someone who is new and unfamiliar with the campus, this can be daunting and also highly time consuming. On the whole, the office is helpful and friendly, but other than enrolment you probably won't need to be there all that much.

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

UNSW will inform you during the acceptance process of which health insurance to obtain and this can be purchased online with ease. Upon arrival in Sydney you will receive your health insurance card which you just need to keep safe. The price for the year was roughly AU\$500 and this is not waived by the University of Manchester Insurance Policy.

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.

If you take any modules that involve field trips of course you have to pay for these e.g. my Indigenous class involved a weekend away which cost AU\$300. These additional costs for trips are stated on the course outline for each module, so definitely check the outline before enrolling in that class to avoid a nasty surprise! I also took a business module which involved an online simulation that cost AU\$60, but again this was stated on the course outline. Other than this there is just the standard cost of textbooks (which can be very high), travel etc.

ACCOMMODATION

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

I stayed in UNSW's Study Abroad accommodation which was arranged before I arrived in Sydney. This was confirmed for me for the first semester only (my first 5 months in Australia). Although this is costly, it gave me peace of mind that I had somewhere to live as soon as I arrived. I was also living with a number of other exchange

students, so it's a really easy way to make friends with people at the same university. After my first semester it was quite a struggle finding a new place to live – Gumtree is definitely the best place to look, as estate agents are typically looking for a 12 month lease. If you keep looking though something definitely comes up and I lived in a flat with some friends right next to uni for my second semester which was perfect. Another option is to live in the UNSW Village, which is currently being expanded to accommodate more students. I do not know anyone that did this, but it is more of a 'halls' type of living and I've heard it is quite costly as you are living on campus too.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

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

Sydney is literally the best place in the world and I would recommend anyone to go and visit! Transport is so easy – bus and train are the main travel methods. The social life is great, whether you want to lie on the beach all day or go shopping in the amazing boutiques, it really does have options for everyone. The nightlife is also great but be prepared for it to be a lot more costly than Manchester's nightlife! In fact, be prepared for everything to be more pricey than home, from food to public transport. I found a part-time job for some extra spending money and travel money, which I actually really enjoyed and I made so many more friends from doing this as well. My overall experience of the year has been fantastic and being in Australia means there are so many travel opportunities as well. In my first semester reading week we travelled the entire East Coast of Australia and did things like sail around the Whitsundays Islands and Scuba dive the Great Barrier Reef! Being in Australia also means you are there for their summer holidays – this means a four month break between your first semester and second!! We went to New Zealand for one of these months and travelled, which I can hands down say was one of the best months of my life! On my way home I have plans to travel South-East Asia too! It really is an amazing opportunity so definitely make the most of it and see as much as you can!

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

The best year of my life that I would do all over again in a heartbeat!