

## **Exchange experience report, University of Sydney, Australia, Fall 2019**

### **1. Your study programme or your internship programme**

The University of Sydney is home to one of the leading law schools in the world and my learning experience in Sydney definitely lived up to my expectations. In order to attain 30 ECTS, we are required to choose four courses (of 6 Australian credit points each) from a broad range of options. Of the courses I took, I would highly recommend Race and the Law and International Law & China. These two classes gave me so much perspective and understanding on highly relevant and interesting topics that are quite different from the focus areas in Groningen. I also took Media Law and Anti-Discrimination Law which were based on the domestic legal system and yet quite easy to follow. At the end of the semester, I had a take home exam, a research essay, and two open book exams with sufficient time to prepare.

Few things to keep in mind while choosing your courses; a) some courses are entirely based on Australian law (as will be mentioned in the course description) and can be a bit difficult to navigate given that it is a common law system b) courses have different modes of assessment and I would suggest choosing some essay based and other exam based courses to avoid a single week crammed with deadlines c) there are no resit opportunities except in cases of force majeure.

Overall, I was highly satisfied with the quality of teaching, learning resources and methods of assessment at USYD.

### **2. Language**

It was great in terms of language, as there was no difficulty getting around or figuring things out as everything is in English! As our LLB is fully English taught, there was no trouble with adapting to their learning environment and legal terminology. It was also easy to find a part time job as there is no additional language requirement.

### **3. Finance and other conditions**

Before you leave: All students will have to apply for a student visa in order to commence studies at USYD, which costs approx. EUR 380 (AUD 620). I was also required to take a medical insurance which cost approx. EUR 200 (AUD 330) for my whole stay in Australia. In addition, as my IELTS validity had expired, I had to retake the test for around EUR 240.

During your stay: Accommodation is quite expensive in Sydney, especially if you choose to live close to the campus or within the city. The University provides accommodation for decent prices (according to local standards) to exchange students, although it is not 100% guaranteed. It can range between AUD 300-600/week depending on your living situation. Groceries, eating out and shopping costs about the same as in Groningen, and would vary according to your personal choices. Public transport is cheap with the concession card that is made available for students. Personally, I spent most of my money on travel as there is so much to see and do in and around Australia.

#### 4. **Preparation and contacts with the faculty before, during and after your stay**

The USYD exchange office was so accessible and helpful, throughout the process and ensured a smooth transition. I was provided with all the required information regarding visa procedures, enrollment, orientation, social events, local know-how, support facilities, and everything else that may have been a concern. We started off with a two-day orientation and weeklong activities, including a surf camp and city tours. Personally, the orientation was not very helpful for me as there were a lot of incoming students and not enough local guides. However, it is a great way to get a campus tour and meet other exchange students. During the semester, many more fun trips and on-campus events are organized for students and it's an amazing way to experience Sydney and make a lot of friends!

There were no surprises in terms of the study program, as we received comprehensive information about the courses and also had a workshop introducing the domestic legal system. Workshops also run through the semester to guide students on academic writing and research skills.

Other facilities like banking, insurance and medcare are also located on campus. If required, the exchange officer was always available and accessible.

#### 5. **Housing**

I found my apartment on Airbnb and was sharing with one other person. I lived in Redfern and it was very convenient as it was right by the train station and only a short walk away from the campus. It was a bit expensive, but I was super satisfied with my living situation. I would recommend living close to the campus and within the city in neighbourhoods like Redfern, Newtown, Darlington and Chippendale. If you prefer to be closer to the beach, Coogee and Bondi are the places to be.

## 6. Culture

There's never a boring day in Sydney, with so many museums, libraries, arts events and a hundred other things to immerse yourself in the local culture and aboriginal history. There's a historical island just a ferry away from the Circular Quay, magnificent shows at the Opera House and futuristic art festivals at the Carriageworks. You will never be short of things to do and will have the opportunity to explore and enjoy the local culture.

## 7. Free time

As I have just mentioned above, there is a lot to explore in Sydney and that took most of my time while I was not travelling. Along with University, I was also working part-time and doing a voluntary legal internship. I am very happy with how I was able to make the most of my time in Sydney.

## 8. Travelling

Travel was the best part of my exchange and I definitely want to go back and see the rest of the country. I loved every single trip, from day trips to Jervis Bay to road tripping in Tasmania. Plan your travels ahead and you'll save a lot of money and get to cover a lot. If you have the time and money, I would definitely recommend travelling to New Zealand, Fiji and nearby Asian countries. I had the best time travelling with some amazing people, and it's the highlight of my semester abroad.

## 9. Other

Tip: Try the ice cream at Gelato Messina and Mapo!!