

EXCHANGE REPORT DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

TRIMESTER 2 - JULY TO OCTOBER

JANNE KROOT
KØBENHAVNS ERHVERVSAKADEMI
jann4577@stud.kea.dk

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Introduction

I chose to do my exchange at Deakin University for my 5th semester 2018. I was interested in learning how things are done in different ways than what we learn in Denmark, for example which materials are preferred, how is the work planned and how is the architecture different.

Besides that, I also wished to improve my English, both daily English but also building professional English, to improve my resume and help me work on an international level when I am done with my studies.

I chose Australia because I only heard good recommendations from other students who had attended a semester at Deakin University. I knew that in many ways Australia is different from Denmark, but I love to experience new cultures and I was looking forward to new experiences and meeting new people.

Practical experiences

Before leaving

The first thing you do, is to talk to your exchange coordinator at KEA, to find out where you want to go. If you want to go to Australia you have to take an English test, because this is a requirement from Deakin University. Your coordinator will afterwards nominate you for a spot as an exchange student. Once Deakin University accepts this, you start choosing your units, so you can send in your final application. After receiving your finally acceptance letter, you can start planning your trip.

Insurance

To study in Australia you need an OSHC Insurance before you arrive. The acceptance email from the university, will have a detailed description on how to get this. The insurance covers emergency, doctor and hospital visits. It cost me almost 1.500 kr.

You would also need a regular travel insurance, because most normal travel insurances will not cover travels longer than 60 days. So, look up some different once that cover your travel plans, remember to think where else than Australia you might go: Indonesia, New Zealand etc. I paid 3.200 kr. to be covered in Australia and New Zealand for 5 months.

Visa

You need to think about your student visa as one of the first things, because you could be unlucky and the acceptance process would take you longer than expected. It will take you some time to fill in the application. Apply after you get your insurance, because you need your OSHC insurance police letter in your visa application and your English test. I paid 2.800 kr. for my student (subclass 500) visa.

Airplane tickets

As soon as you receive the acceptance letter, start looking for your flight tickets. The earlier you book them, the cheaper they would be. I booked a one-way ticket for 4.900 kr. because I was not sure of when and from where I wanted to leave.

Housing

I decided to live at the Waterfront Residence for my time at Deakin University. I liked that I had somewhere to go when I arrived, because you can expect to be tired after a 25-hour plane travel.

The Waterfront Residence is a new build with a view over the water from some of the bedrooms and common living rooms and kitchens. You live in a shared apartment, with a common living room and kitchen, and your own bedroom. In your bedroom you have a bed, a desk, shelves and a closet. You have to buy sheets, pillows and kitchen stuff by yourself. The residence has some very nice common rooms: On every floor there are study rooms and on level 11 there is a very nice rooftop terrace, and a room with kitchen, tv's and games.

The residence is an expensive accommodation, but I really enjoyed it. It is only for 4 months, and a lot of your classmates and other students are staying there as well. It is nice to live so close with others, you always have somebody close by, but you also have your own room to relax in. Even though it is kind of expensive they also plan activities you can join, such as: A Great Ocean Road overnight trip, Bubble Soccer, dinners, bowling, yoga etc. So, I would definitely recommend a stay at the Waterfront residence.



1. Picture of a bedroom at the Waterfront Residence. See more pictures at: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/life-atdeakin/accommodation/on-campus/geelong-waterfront-campus-accommodation>

Airport pick up

In your acceptance email you find the way to apply for the free Airport pick up that Deakin University provides.

Beach welcome trip

In the acceptance email is also the program for the Beach welcome trip, that you can join in Trimester 1 and 2. I liked the trip because it was at the beach in Lorne, with all the exchange students from all four Deakin campuses and it was nice to start the adventure in Australia with all these other people in the same situation.

Grants and budget

Apply for grants and make a budget early, so you get an overview of how your economic situation is. Many grants close for applications early on, so be fast.

International driver license

Think about getting an international driver license. If you get it while you are still in Denmark, it will cost you about 25 kr. and you get it right away. If you decide to wait till you are in Australia, you must pay at least 500 kr. and wait for the consulate in Melbourne to send it back and forth to Denmark and you.

After arrival

Mobile phone and bank

Think about if you can keep your Danish phone company for your time in Australia, or if you need to get an Australian SIM-card.

The same applies for your bank, maybe you need to open an Australian account to make it easier and save money on transfers.

Student card

Get your Deakin student card at the student desk at school. You will put money on this and then use it for printing and paying in the café or bookstore. It can also give you access to the school building after hours, this might come in handy if you need to use the computer lab or the library.

Public transport

It is a good idea to get a Myki card and as an exchange student you can get a 50% discount, you just have to fill out a form and take it to the train station.

Deakin University

Geelong

Deakin University has four campuses in and around Melbourne, when studying architecture and construction management, you will be at the Geelong Waterfront Campus. Geelong is a suburb about one hour from Melbourne center. Geelong is a very nice city with everything you will need and a beach. I very much enjoyed living there, it is a beautiful calm place, and it is easy to do a weekend trip to Melbourne with the train.



2. The big white building is the Waterfront Residence and the red building to the right is the University. Both with a view over the water.

Campus

The campus is just 5 minutes' walk from the Waterfront Residence. The school has good facilities: Printers, computer labs, cafés, library, bookstore, architectural studio and a medical center. It is a nice place to study, with nice rooms and lecture halls.



3. Deakin University



Teaching methods

The teaching method is different from the one at KEA. Most units at Deakin University are split in two parts: a lecture and a seminar. The lectures are mostly one-hour presentations made by the unit chair teacher, about this week's topic. The seminars are different from unit to unit, but mainly they are smaller groups of the class, with 20-30 people at one seminar, whereas the lecture will have more than 100 students at once. This small amount of time with a teacher means a lot of self-studying and meeting with your groups to do your assignments. So, even though you might only have school three days a week, you would still spend the other days there. Another thing is that each unit will have assignments throughout the trimester and not only at the end as an exam, and because the units have individual assignments, you sometimes need to work at two different assignments at a time, because the deadlines will be close to each other.

As an exchange student you can choose different units both from architecture and construction management. Talk with your exchange coordinator about the amount of points you need and make this fit the units you choose. Most units are worth 1 point, while some are worth 2.

SRT151 - Construction and Structure 1

In this unit you get the basic knowledge about residential buildings. You could say that it would be easy after doing a few semesters at KEA, but it is a good opportunity to learn all the terms in English. With that said, it is still challenging, because Australia has some different issues to deal with compared to Denmark, so there would still be some new things you learn.

This unit has a closed book exam in the end, quizzes, a group report with a presentation and a portfolio.

SRC221 - Modelling studio

This unit is more architectural and thinking about how you create a building with different shapes and inspiration of daily day objects. You learn to work with either MicroStation or Rhino. You also learn to work with a 3D printer and a laser cutter. This unit has two assignments throughout the trimester, where assignment two is a development of assignment one. Both submissions have a progress portfolio, a presentation poster and a digital file, besides this assignment two also has a digitally fabricated model.

SRA224 - Austral-Asia Architecture

This unit is a follow-up of another unit in an earlier trimester. You learn about the significance of architectural heritage, the relationship between architecture and culture, the role of architectural history in contemporary societies, architectural connections between Australia and its broader region. The unit has a group speed debate, a model building assignment and an essay.

Social and cultural experiences

The Australian people are very friendly and outgoing, most people, when they find out you are from overseas, will try to help you in the best way they can, generally will people just talk to you wherever you go. I really enjoyed that people will just randomly strike up a conversation with you or ask you a question and just be interested in who you are. Actually, there are not many cultural differences, at least not really any big ones: The food, prices, clothes etc. are mostly the same. The biggest difference, that takes some time to adjust to, is that in Australia they drive on the left side of the road.

There are a lot of opportunities to be social, especially when you live at the Residence, since they arrange different activities. But also, at school, you can sign up to DUSA which arrange trips, or the Deakin Study Abroad Club (DSAC), which is a club for all the exchange students. These events and trips are a great way to meet new people. Besides this, the "uni-bar" (The Deck), where a lot of students go, especially the students that live on the Residence, is right across the road from school. This is a nice down to earth place, where they play music you know, they serve food and it is 5 minutes from the Residence, so you can just walk home after a night out with your friends.

Australia is also a very different country compared to landscape and nature, so you should take every opportunity you get, to travel and explore, it is worth it!

Conclusion

In conclusion I can say that an exchange semester in Australia definitely meet my expectations. I gained a lot of experience, personal and academic, and it was such a good experience to try to work with people from other countries and backgrounds.

If you have the opportunity, take a change and do it! Even though it will be hard sometimes and it is difficult leaving everything at home behind, I did not regret going and the amazing experience I made.



4. Dinner at the residence



5. Color run, organized by the Waterfront Residence



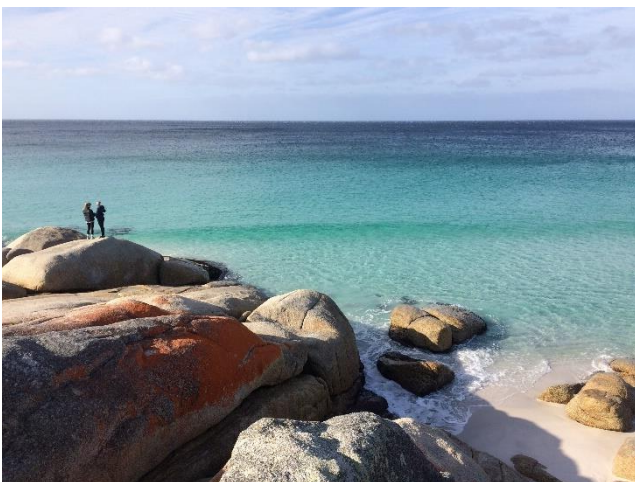
6. The waterfront and the pier



7. Cake date with the other exchange girls



8. The twelve apostles on the Great Ocean Road



9. In the mid-trimester break i took a trip to Tasmania. This is the Bay of Fires



10. After exams I started my travels with a trip in a campervan to the Red Center and Uluru - It is beautiful!