



# ExchangeReport

Deakin University – Melbourne Burwood Campus

July 2016 – October 2016

Contact person - [x.liu@deakin.edu.au](mailto:x.liu@deakin.edu.au)

## Preface

The following reflection is dedicated to the 5th semester of my studies at KEA, where I took an advantage to study abroad. It aims to share my experience with the KEA students considering taking an exchange in the future.

The challenges I have faced together with the moments I cherished will draw a picture of how life on the other side of the world is. Especially from academic, practical, but also cultural and personal side.

I would like to thank everybody who contributed to this experience of mine and were very helpful during the process of applying, as well as during my stay.

## Contents

Preface.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Academic Experience .....	5
Social, Cultural and Personal Experience .....	8
Practical Experience .....	12
Conclusion .....	15

## Introduction

Already being an international student in Denmark, the whole stay in the different country seemed to me as one long exchange. The programme of Business Economics and IT has given me a lot of opportunities to improve myself as well as it has allowed me to continually search for the goals in my life and career. Realizing how enriching it has been to me I have decided to take it one step further. With 5th semester opportunity to study abroad I have chosen Australia as my home for a few months. From the study at Deakin University in Melbourne I expected a lot as it is in the top 50 of the world universities younger than 50 years (2016 Times Higher Education Top 150 under 50 Rankings). Apart from that, I knew that it is going to be a great opportunity to meet plenty of new people even outside my specialization and a chance to travel and see more of this beautiful world. As I truly consider myself a global citizen, I aim to learn and work in as many countries as I can before I ultimately settle, as I believe that many global businesses' problems have to be looked upon from many angles and to live and work in the different cultures is a perfect way to broaden the view at the problems.



*Picture 1 Melbourne Skyline*

## Academic Experience

The transition to a new life at another university was quite smooth. Deakin provided me an accomodation, made sure the exchange students can contact each other even before moving to Australia. Also it organized welcome trip for all the exchange students and had tours to help us orientate around the campus.



*Picture 2 Deakin Melbourne Burwood Campus<sup>i</sup>*

There was a need from my side to leave KEA for another university also from the side of the subjects offered. The most recent semesters at KEA were starting to focus more on data and it sounded like something I could imagine myself doing in the future. That is why I have chosen to study subjects Business Analytics and Making Sense of Information at Deakin. Both of these subjects were held in a way known from regular universities where the classes were divided to lectures and seminars. Business Analytics comprised the basic statistics, data visualization and interpreting the data while working in Microsoft Excel to perform the analysis. Making Sense of Information was a subject intended to help students deal with the massive amounts of information we receive everyday in order to perform more efficiently. It included assessment that put student in front of quite complex problem needed to be solved in 48

hours, to test how the student performs under information overload. Also it offered additional knowledge to information security and trends such as big data.

The third subject, Business Process Management, was offered by KEA too. I would have studied it if I stayed in Denmark, so I have chosen it at Deakin as well. Deakin offered only half the value of credits that I would receive at KEA, but this subject was great from many points of view. It was very practically oriented subject led by a very professional teacher with a lot of experience inspite of relatively young age. During this class we have focused on three business processes – Procurement, Fullfilment and Production and managed the various steps of these processes first during the class with physical examples and the following class in SAP ERP system. During every class we have been given a task based on which we have been assessed, with marks counting into our final evaluation. So both during group and individual assignments the students had to give their best to ensure the passing grade even before the exams.

The last subject was something I did not plan on before my arrival in Australia. As my last subject I have chosen Accounting for decision making, but after first class I was not content with the outline of the semester as it seemed to be something I have done before. As exchange students are able to change the subjects in the first two weeks of the semester, I withdrew from this one and chose Treasury Operations – a subject that was certainly the most enjoyable out of all. Applying knowledge of the economics to the market based on economic scenarios and news. The whole class was divided into groups – banks - of three students. Each week the members were supposed to rotate the roles in the banks - Dealer, Risk manager and Position Keeper. The banks competed against each other in trading AUD/USD and making profits for their bank while each week there were added new options to trade. The banks were required to follow a code of conduct and write reports from all the trading sessions. Classes were very intense, as all the banks were trying to make as much money as they could, by contacting the representatives of other banks and buying or selling the currency. Even though we did not have too much of the economics at KEA, I have managed to lead my bank to the commendable second place in the class full of finance students even without the groupmates, which left the class during the semester and I had to perform most of the task by myself.



*Picture 3 Specialized trading room for Treasury Operations*

I rate my selection of subject as very convenient mix of practical and theoretical knowledge with a high degree of enjoyability, while with a great potential for a career I would love to achieve. I would suggest both Treasury Operations and Business Process Management to students thinking about studying at Deakin. For those with interest in mathematics and statistics the Business Analytics can be a good fit. I would probably choose the subject Making Sense of Information again, but it seemed a bit dull after some point where it stopped dealing with information overload and we started to look at Australian information security laws.



## Social, Cultural and Personal Experience

Coming to a different country without anybody you know is never easy. First encounter with a fellow exchange student was on the plane to Melbourne, as I usually do not talk with people on the plane I did not talk with her at all, apart from asking for a space so I can have a walk during more than 13 hours flight. It was funny at the arrival the driver waited for both of us to drive us to the places we were supposed to live with about 7 more students. Everybody was excited about the welcome trip we were supposed to absolve the next day. However good everything seemed, my luggage have not arrived with me and therefore I was left in Melbourne with only a backpack with laptop, a book and a jacket. From the fatigue I even managed to forget the backpack in the car and was left with absolutely nothing but almost drained phone. At least I could help girls with heavy suitcases and make some more friends. The good thing is that the driver was willing to drive my backpack to me in a few hours.



*Picture 4 Some of my housemates tasting a traditional Slovak dish*

At the place I was supposed to live with 9 other people was still nobody there as most of them were domestic students. I have found out that there is literally no supermarket in close distance to the campus, so I have to take a bus or a tram. The Melbourne public transport is working purely on the Myki cards, which cannot be purchased at the buses or trams and the outlet at school was closed because it was Sunday, I had to walk tired about 50 minutes to the closest train station. Fortunately there was a supermarket as well, so I was able to buy



underwear and some hygiene that were left in my suitcase. Anyway I did not have any choice but go to the trip with only one set of clothes with which I have arrived. After I said my story to the school, they have provided some T-shirt and a hoodie (which was extremely oversized) to me, for which I am very thankful. The day of the trip was the one where I have met the people I have held up with for my whole stay in Australia. I have met several people from Denmark about the same amount of people from USA and Netherlands. We have played socializing games on the way to Lorne – a small town on the coast lying on the iconic Great Ocean Road. After arrival we have been split to the very comfortable apartments with a great view at the sea. After finding out that we have been given one of the best apartments at the hotel, it was a great place to throw a party and get to know some more people. The activities at the trip consisted of a surfing school (in a rainy weather and about 13 degrees), hiking trip (in the most intensive rain I have ever encountered), biking (in the same conditions) and some morning yoga (which most of us have overslept because of the intense party the night before). After the hike, where I could have as well jump into the sea, because I was completely soaked it was a pleasant surprise to find out that the airline have delivered my suitcase to the hotel we stayed at and I could finally change my clothes.



*Picture 5 Birthday celebration at a rooftop bar*

At the trip we were also introduced to various clubs we could join at the university with many fun activities to do. First of all Study abroad club made sure we get to know Australian culture which seemed to be related mostly to partying and footy (Australian version of football – also called Aussie Rules). Me and my new friends also joined an Outdoors club, which promised to show us the natural beauties around Melbourne and offered an opportunity to meet some more people enthusiastic about the nature. At student residences we have had plenty of block functions to get to know better the people we were living with. In addition there was a big tournament in netball (another popular sport in Australia) in between all the blocks and floors at the Deakin residences. I have represented my block in a sport I have never played before and did not even understand the rules. Eventually we managed to finish second (from the bottom) and I have played (un)important role in our team, anyway it was a lot of fun. In overall social life was spectacular at Deakin and they take care of their as well as international students very well.



*Picture 6 Gigantic oval pitch of Aussie Rules*

Even during the trimester there is a one week break allowing the students to relax and most of the internationals took an advantage of it to travel. Me and my friend flew to Brisbane and drove back to Melbourne in a caravan, stopping at many of the notorious places in Australia such as Byron Bay, Blue Mountains and Sydney. As the trimester finished in the end of October many of us had an opportunity to travel even more across Australia.



*Picture 7 A trip to 12 Apostles*



## Practical Experience

First time when I glimpsed the offer to study abroad in Australia I knew I want to do it. However it was in category of schools where the payment was required. I did not want to reconcile as the Deakin had KEA as a partner university at their website and therefore the exchange seemed possible. So for future students I would recommend to look beyond the provided spreadsheets and not to give up in case they want to fulfill their dreams. The communication with both schools was without any bigger problem and even though the international coordinator was leaving for a maternity leave, no complications arised.

Costs before arriving to Australia can be higher than they seem at first and go well beyond the flight tickets. Students coming to Australia are of course obliged to receive student visa, costing about 300\$(AUD). In addition they are required to have a health cover during their stay which costs about the same as visa. Flight tickets can after that cost about 1000\$ with the premium airlines. For the adventurers I would recommend stopping on the way in some of the Asian cities on the way, the price of the flight tickets with low cost airlines can go down more than 200\$ altogether. And expenses in Asia are much more favourable than the ones in Australia.



*Picture 8 Last European sunset in Rome before my exchange*

Apart from having to take a tram to do a basic shopping in supermarket and no train station in a walking distance, living in Melbourne was superb. At first I had to get used to look to the

different side while crossing the road, but fortunately I successfully avoided emergency situations. I have no experience with the hospital or dentist.

Accommodation provided by Deakin was great if a person looks for a great social life. Residences are very lively during the semesters. They are expensive too. For about 300\$ per week! In the price there is a cleaning service and unlimited fun though. If you are looking for a cheaper housing, there are houses around the school offering rooms for under 200\$ per month. And if you make friends at residences, you are not missing out on too much.



*Picture 9 A stormy weather is a common sight in Melbourne*

My budgeting in Australia was very loose as I wanted to take from it as much as possible. At first I planned on spending less, but with all the opportunities in Melbourne it is very hard to save money. While transportation around Melbourne can cost you about 50\$ per month with the student concession, mobile subscription starting at around 30\$ per month, bank account about the same. The food cost about the same as in Denmark and I usually cooked food on my own. It is possible to work on student visa up to 20 hours per week. Usually some of the students find jobs where they offer them to work more, which should not be legal, but it is

a possibility. These jobs are usually underpaid too as they are mostly performed by foreigners. I think that it would be manageable to work and carry the workload at school, but I was not dedicated enough to find a job after I have been rejected by some of the potential employers.



## Conclusion

Usually I do not like to have expectations, but making a dream come true surely falls into some category of expectations. I have to say they were easily met already the first week of my stay. Exchange students in Australia are taken care of brilliantly. I have grown my professional network as well as found friends that are more than just some exchange mates and all of us are trying to figure out ways to get back together even though we are spread throughout the different continents.

Deakin is a very modern university with features of the traditional universities in Europe as well as the progressive methods of Danish academies. This environment is not going to shock the students from Denmark, but it will not make them feel like in Denmark either.

Melbourne is a great multicultural city and truly everyone can find something to do there. From surfing to not very distant mountain resorts. Melbourne is also considered one of the most liveable cities in the world. <sup>ii</sup>

The impression Australia has left in me from all aspects - cultural, personal, professional – makes me want to return there and recall all the great moments I had experiences when I went to exchange there.

---

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.justinteriorideas.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/333fc\\_\\_140514\\_Deakin1.aspx](http://www.justinteriorideas.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/333fc__140514_Deakin1.aspx)

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/eglg45fkfdk/the-most-livable-city-is/#27bc6b512f31>