

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Footscray Park Campus

Ballarat Road

Melbourne, VIC 3011

Hiermit erkläre ich mein Einverständnis über die Weitergabemeines Namens, meiner E-Mail-Adresse und meines Erfahrungsberichtes an potentielle Interessenten.

Hello everyone,

I'm writing my report in English as German isn't my first language and I haven't spoken it for the last 6 months. Therefore, it will be easier for me to share my experience with you in English. :)

1). Tips on preparation

a). Arrival

I arrived in Melbourne on February 9th, - about two weeks in advance. The orientation session was on February 21st and the classes started the week later - on February 27th. I'd recommend coming beforehand as you need time to find a room for living or a job if needed. Some other students even made some trips before their semester. I think it might be a great beginning of your semester. All depends only on your time availability. Anyway, come as soon as you can. Melbourne is a great city and there is always something to do there.

I bought my flight tickets about 10 days before departure and paid for both ways about 1100 Euros. I got them at the STA travel agency as they have good discounts for the students. It was about 400 Euros cheaper than buying them directly on the website of "Qatar" airlines. It is definitely cheaper to get a return ticket in one package. By the STA agency, you can also get a return ticket with a flexible date that gives you a possibility to change the return dates up to three times, but not the destination. So it's not for you if you are planning to travel around Asia afterward.

b). Visa

There are two types of visa- Student Visa and Working Holiday Visa. Student visa allows you to work 20 hours a week and unlimited hours after your semester. By student visa you can travel one more month after your semester will be finished. And you are not allowed to work before your semester will start. Working Holiday visa is for young people who want to holiday and work in Australia for up to a year. This visa allows you to stay in Australia for up to 12 months, study for up to four months, leave and re-enter Australia any number of times while the visa is valid and work in Australia, generally for up to six months with each employer. The Working Holiday Visa is cheaper but you are allowed to get it only once a life. Due to my different citizenship the Visa requirements and applying processes might be different. So I'd suggest you to read other reports in order to get more information about Visa application.

c). Luggage

I flew with "Qatar" airlines and I had a baggage allowance of 30 kg plus 7kg for a hand luggage (laptop is not incl.). I was totally enough for me. As a hand baggage, I'd recommend taking a backpack as it was very useful for me traveling around Australia, especially for the little 5-10 days trips. Definitely, take warm clothes with you! It's a big delusion that it is Australia and it can't be cold. It might be very windy in Melbourne even on a hot summer day and the wind is pretty cold there as it comes from Antarctica. So take care of it in advance if you don't want to have extra expenses on clothes. For the case, if you underestimated Melbourne's weather conditions and you needed to buy something cheap that you can throw away after then I'd recommend you going to Camberwell Market. It's like a "Flohmarkt" for locals. People in Melbourne really love it. I went there a couple of times and got so much stuff so that I ended

up selling it at the same market with my flatmates. Actually, it was a great experience when I fully felt like a "local" and could watch how "Melbournians" spend their Sunday mornings.

d). Documents

I've got two credit cards with me, one - from Deutsche Bank and another from Commdirect Bank. It is recommended to have one extra card in case you lose or block your first one. I know that with DKB Bank you can withdraw money by any automate worldwide and charge free.

Buying the tickets by STA agency, you might be offered to get an ISIC card. It's like an international Student ID that allows you to get some student discounts. You don't really need it in Australia as you will have your Australian student card for a semester.

If you are a member of Study Abroad Program, you can apply for a concession card. Take two pass photos for it. Like this, you don't need to look for a photo studio in Melbourne and apply for a card immediately after departure.

e) Insurance.

As I've got a student Visa, I had to apply for an OSHC Insurance. Victoria University will recommend you to get insurance by Alliance. If you don't want to follow the recommendation as I did, you can compare all the OSHC insurance providers on that website:

<https://oshcaustralia.com.au/en>

f). Searching for apartments.

The easiest but the most expensive way to find a room is to get a room at the UniLonge. The prices there are about 300-350 Dollars a week. It's a nice, modern apartment at the city center or close to the Victoria University Footscray Campus. It's good but expensive.

If you want to save some money then you need to spend more time to find a good room in a good place. The difficulty you might face is that usually it's preferred to rent a room for a longer period - at least one year. Due to high demand on an apartment in Melbourne, it often happens that people just don't answer you as they've got over hundred requests. There isn't any best way to find it. My recommendation is just trying as many as you can and it's better to start doing it from Germany. I mostly used Facebook groups:

- "Melbourne - Houseshare / Flatshare / Room for Rent by Roompik"
- "Fairy Floss Real Estate"
- "Melbourne Rooms For Rent"

Writing the people whose ad you liked, don't forget to comment this ad, saying that you wrote them. Otherwise your message risks staying unopened in spam box. Some students write about themselves in the same groups. It was actually the way I found my room. I also tried the websites as:

- AirBnB
- Flatmates.com.au
- Sharehouses.com.au

I don't have good experience using "Gum tree" website. At least be careful using it and don't leave your phone numbers, writing your ads.

g). Jobs

Hospitality is the fastest and easiest job that you can find in Australia. For example, I was working as a waitress in one of the Yarraville restaurants. It is easy to get a job if you have an experience of working in hospitality. To find a job you just need to print out your resumes and leave them in as many restaurants and bars as you can. It is better to look for a job close to your home. First of all it will save your own time. Secondly, the restaurants' managers prefer to hire people who live nearby. Asking if they are hiring you might get an answer that they are not hiring at the moment but you can leave your resume and they might call you later. Don't believe it. Usually it's just the polite way of rejection. Don't leave your resumes to the waitresses in a hope that they will pass it on to a manager. I'd rather come later and talk to the manager personally. In my case it worked better. To apply for a job in hospitality you need RSA certificate – it is an online training of Responsible Service of Alcohol. Average wage is 18-22 dollar an hour. No one will pay you double wage on weekend as I thought before coming to Australia. Maximum wage might be 25 dollars an hour on Sundays. Restaurants with Australian owners usually pay more than others. The most in-demand jobs are in CBD. Therefore, don't expect to get more than 20 dollars an hour working there. I've heard there some well-paid jobs in Williamstown.

Information about Melbourne and Australia.

Melbourne has been ranked as the world's most livable city in the world. Many Australians also migrate to Melbourne from other cities in Australia such as Sydney, in recognition of Melbourne's livability. Melbourne is also an educational hub and the destination of many thousands of Australian and International students. In Melbourne you can meet a lot of artists, musicians and creative people. Melbourne is also one of the most multicultural cities in the world. You can literally meet people from all over the world. Melbourne is also famous for its coffee. So if you are a coffee lover that's city is definitely for you. A cup of coffee costs about 3,5-4 dollars. It's an expensive city but as any big city it has a lot to offer. Exploring Melbourne, you can find a lot of great food offers. It's easy to find good lunch for just 10 dollars. Especially for the students who are going to study at the Footscray campus it is recommended to get food not only at the campus. Footscray is a great area where you can find international, delicious and cheap food. For example, Vietnamese soup Pho is a must – try dish. Melbourne is also famous for its breakfast or as Australians like to say «Breaky». I and some other students even had a tradition to go out every Friday morning and try a new breakfast in Melbourne. Here are some recommendations:

- Higher Ground (650 Little Bourke St, Melbourne VIC 3000)
- SOS Café (5/177 Toorak Rd, South Yarra VIC 3141)
- The Corner Shop (9 Ballarat St, Yarraville VIC 3013)

If you want to get to know more about best food and drinks deals in Melbourne, then apply for «Aussie Mate» program at the VU. This program helps you get to know more about Victoria University and Melbourne. They can give you the best tips and tricks and tell you about all the possibilities at the University and in Melbourne. Apply in advance for it. I regret I didn't do it. I could save a lot of money if I could get to know them before. More information you can find here: <https://www.vu.edu.au/study-at-vu/study-abroad-exchange-in-melbourne/studying-at-vu-on-exchange/aussie-mates-at-victoria-university>.

Places to visit in Melbourne:

Eureka Tower

It is the highest public viewing platform in the Southern Hemisphere (300 meters), the tower is also the world's tallest residential structure. Eureka Skydeck is open from 10am – 10pm every day. Entry fee for students is 15 dollars. I would recommend you visiting this tower about 1 hour before the sunset, like this you can see Melbourne above in day and night light. Make sure you are not hungry. Unfortunately you won't find any nice café on the top.

Yarra River Cruise

It is the perfect way to see Melbourne. Don't book any river trips before semester will start. Victoria University will organize a Cruise for exchange students in the beginning or in the end of semester. It's beautiful, specially the sunset!

Etihad Stadium is domed and comfortable stadium for concerts and football games. I went there to watch a game between Kangaroos (Melbourne) and Swans (Sydney). All exchange students got complimentary tickets from VU International Office. It was a lot of fun! Definitely go there if you have a chance.

Immigration Museum

I'd recommend you to go there if you want to get to know more about history of Australia. Visiting this museum you might find the answers to the questions as «Why do people leave their countries of birth to live here?», « What is their experience in their new country?» and « How do communities adapt to new arrivals?» One day wasn't enough for me to visit all presented exhibitions. Unfortunately, I didn't find time to come back there again. It was really interesting and it helped me understand better an Australian culture.

Information about University

Victoria University has a lot to offer. There is always something to do on campus; different festivals, contests, events. Almost every time coming there I could find students selling international food, for example Chinese or Greek specialties for charity purposes. I'd recommend you living not far away from campus. First of all, because you will have a lot of group assignments and a library on campus is a favorite place among local students for catching up and discusses their assignments. Secondly, during your exams you can find a lot of support at the Victoria University. For example, writing mentors who are located at the Footscray library from 1 pm to 4 pm. So it's very practical to live not far from the campus. I was living, for example, in Yarraville, only two stations further from Footscray.

I was attending only three units, as I have already completed my AW Faecher at the MUAS. It was «International Human Relations», «Entrepreneurial Issues» and «Business Ethics». «International Human Relations» was more about psychology. To complete this unit I had to write two reflective journals, one research and make a group presentation. I liked this subject because it's very applicable to real life and future career. It develops a lot your interpersonal and soft skills that are very important for any aspects of our life. «Entrepreneurial Issues» consisted of only group assignments and one exam in the end. Groups' assignments can be very easy and difficult in the same time. A lot depends on your group. I've noticed that Australian students like to do everything at the last moment due to their busy

life style. Don't expect that they will be willing to catch up with you very often for making an assignment together. Usually they are very busy as they work a lot, - more than 20 hours a week. The third unit «Business Ethics» was about moral issues in business. It was very interesting for me as we discussed a lot about actual topics as globalization, capitalism, child labor, problems in garment industry etc. For this unit I've got two tests, group report, one reflective journal and an individual report. Generally, I would say that study in Australia is easier than in Germany. It's happened to me when I've got a much better mark than I expected. The biggest difficulty for me was the writing assignments. I've never wrote that much in English before. But in the same time it was an amazing exercise for improving my English skills. As I mentioned before you can also find writing mentors that can help you with it. Choosing the units I'd recommend you getting the subjects with different types of assignments. It should include tests, reports, journals and group reports. It will be more interesting, effective and easier for you. If you want to be free as soon as you can and travel afterwards than select the units without any exams in the end.

International Office at the VU organizes a lot of events for exchange students. I would recommend you attending every of them. It's so much fun and it's a great opportunity to get to know other international students. Most of them were from Germany, Mexico, USA, Canada and Colombia. Try to communicate with students from different countries. It is a great opportunity for an international networking. In the end you might make good friends from different parts of the world. It's a great way to get to know different cultures as well. Most of the students have the same purposes and problems as you. Attending these events you might find your future travel mates and organize some trips together. I've noticed that the closest friends I've made were the friends who I traveled together with. International Office of VU will notify you per e-mail about these events. There is also a Facebook group where international students communicate with each other.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/exchangevu/>

Conclusion

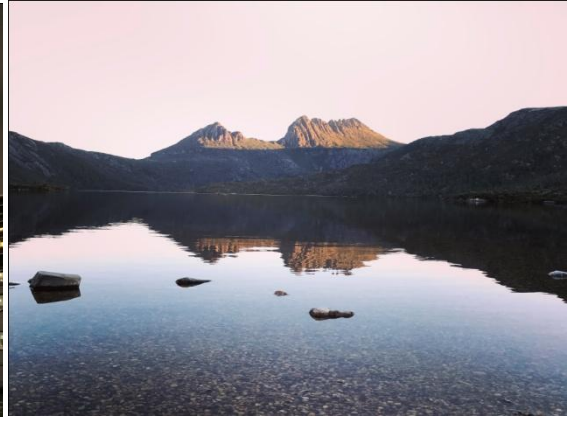
Australia was my dream! And now writing this report I can't still believe that it happened with me. I know it's not easy to make this dream come true, but all the efforts were definitely worthy. It is a great experience that expands your view on the world and makes you grow up. It is a possibility to get to know not only Australian culture but also other different cultures of people who you studied or traveled with. I've met amazing, fascinating people with different backgrounds, values and interests. I think, Australia teaches you a lot to collaborate with any type of personality and it is useful experience for the life.

Semester in Australia also helped me improve my English skills. People are very open and friendly there so I wasn't shy to talk, even if I knew it wasn't said perfectly or I could ask for a help and say freely that don't know or don't understand something. I loved Australia for it's « easy-going». 😊

I think, the best tip that I could give to someone who is going to study abroad is just to stay open minded. Don't stay at home, be active and encouraged, and take the best from this opportunity that life might give you only once.



Melbourne, CBD



Tasmania, Cradle Mountain



Frazer Island, Champagne Pools



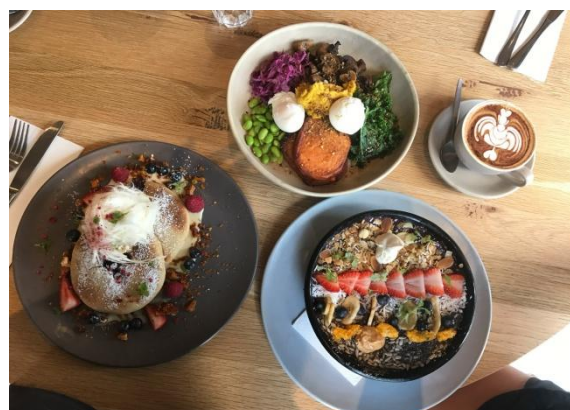
Whitsunday Island



Fraser Island



Sydney, Opera House



Melbourne's Breakfast