Study abroad experience: a student’s view

Rachael Bird, Global Engagement Manager (Study Abroad)
Programme

- Study abroad an overview
- Stories from our peer advisers
  - Aarti, Malaysia Campus
  - Reema, China Ningbo Campus
  - Edward Taylor, Monash University, Australia
  - Edward Millinger, University of Adelaide, Australia
  - Murray, Korea University
  - Kieran, University of South Florida, America
Opportunities

- University-wide exchange programme
- Inter-campus exchange programme
- Erasmus
- School exchanges
- Summer Schools
Where to go

- Study abroad website: www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad
- Partner profiles
- FAQ document
- Finance webpage
- Events webpage
- School academic adviser
- Peer Advisers
- Drop-in sessions
- Facebook and Instagram
Deadlines

• University-wide exchange programme: Friday 10 January 2020
• Inter-campus exchange programme: Friday 7 February 2020
• Erasmus and School exchanges: Check with your school/department
• Summer Schools: Friday 21 February 2020
How I made the decision to study where I did

- School factsheets
- Research the country / programme / university
- Climate
- Culture
- Travel
- Costs
Worries/fears and how I overcame them

- Going alone
- FOMO / JOMO
- Homesickness
- New teaching style
- Results / grade conversion
- Safety and wellbeing
1. It’s too expensive to study abroad  
   Save / budget / reduced fees

2. I won’t make friends  
   Lots of people in the same position so everyone wants to make friends!

3. University will be the same  
   No it won’t but this doesn’t have to be a bad thing!
Studying

- Different learning / teaching methods
- Continuous assessment
- Different support systems
Travelled during weekends, mid-semester breaks and during the 4 month summer break
- Australia and New Zealand
- Consider costs!
- Solo or group?
Don’t just take my word for it - See it for yourself!
Why the United States/USF?

- Location, Location, Location
  - Climate – Sunshine State
  - Disneyland, Busch Gardens
  - Orlando, Tallahassee, Florida Keys, Tampa, Clearwater

- Politics
  - THE Swing State
  - Mid-Term Election

- Career Goals
  - Bank Account
  - Social Security

- ‘I Just Knew’

- CAUTION! – explore all opportunities available, you might be pleasantly surprised!

- Travel can be expensive
Worries / Fears

1. Relationships
   Family
   Make Friends, ‘Lose’ them Twice

2. Personal Safety
   Gun Culture
   Hurricanes/Tornados

3. Healthcare
   Emergency Room

4. Sharing a Room/Bathroom

5. Local Laws – 21 alcohol
6. Being Responsible!

1. Facetime, Excuse for Holiday, Life Skill.

2. Study Abroad Team in Notts and Host

3. Insurance – free on campus

4. Part of experience, support available

5. Sensible and respectful

6. Learn by doing
1. Insta-Perfect, Best Time Ever – Amazing experience, it’s still normal life! Don’t get sucked in by marketing

2. Constant Ability to Travel – Some more expensive than others.

3. Being an inconvenience – always ask for help, use resources available to you.

4. Uni is Uni – class size, teaching style, assessment, formality, ability of class all vary depending upon the university.
Travel and Experience

- Most travel in-state
- Employment – Student Government Senator $9/h up to 20h week.
  - Representation, lobbying.
- Week at the United Nations in New York – paid for by Nottingham and USF
- Beach-Study
- Ice Hockey and Football
Reflections

- Reverse Culture Shock was, and is, the most difficult for me - You will be different
- Ask, Ask, Ask – Don’t and you don’t get.
- Trust yourself – flights, arranging travel, money, possessions
- Expect to mention references to studying abroad on a daily basis
Why South Korea?

• Relevance to my course
• A Universitas 21 group university
• A top 100 university
• Taking opportunities
• News and media
• The language and day to day living
What did I expect vs What did I experience?

- Drinking culture
- The food - too spicy?
- Very few foreigners
- Everything revolves around K-Pop
- Dog meat?
Studying in another country

- Manageable courses and opportunities to travel
- Different perspectives
- Beneficial for my degree
- 1st class teaching
Ed Millinger

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Why Australia—why Adelaide?

The ten most liveable cities in 2018

1. Vienna, Austria
2. Melbourne, Australia
3. Osaka, Japan
4. Calgary, Canada
5. Sydney, Australia
6. Vancouver, Canada
7. Tokyo, Japan
8. Toronto, Canada
9. Copenhagen, Denmark
10. Adelaide, Australia

- Location and travel opportunities:
  - Beaches, mountains, pubs, bars, universities.
- Different climate and culture
- Totally different lifestyle day-to-day
- Academic standard
  - High QS ranking
  - Different working method
  - More contact: lectures, tutes, labs, PASS sessions
  - Uni facilities
- Higher proportion of international students; more diverse friends
  - International accommodation
  - ESN trips and activities
    - Shark diving
    - Kayaking with dolphins
    - Buddy groups
    - Trips to Uluru, Kangaroo Island
It’ll be right mate, no bother— worries about studying abroad

- Being away for so long and leaving everyone
  • FaceTime, consider Travel Grant? Keep in touch!
- Sorting housing here and there.
  • Buy/Sell to sublet; sort accommodation abroad ASAP!
- Making friends
  • Everyone in same boat; all done freshers before.
- Costs
  • It won’t be cheap but you can budget and cost cut— start saving now!
It’ll be right mate, no bother— common misconceptions

- You’re on a constant high
  - Things will change and you have to adjust, *and* do uni work
  - Maintaining friendships, relationships back home
  - All part of development and adaptation—everyone has the same feelings!

- Everyone does everything, everywhere
  - Some travel less—that’s fine. Loads to do locally—its all new anyway!
  - Can be selective with where you travel, consider cheap airlines and rentals
  - Need work-life balance but that means work too!
Opening doors—travel opportunities

- Can travel at weekends, during midterms and after exams:
  - **Australia:**
    - Great Ocean Road
    - Sydney
    - Melbourne
    - Brisbane
  - **New Zealand:**
    - North and South Islands
  - **Asia:**
    - Bali
    - Thailand
    - Cambodia
    - Vietnam
    - Laos
    - Singapore
Studying and living abroad

- Depends on how much you embrace it!
- Aussie method same but different. Lectures, tutes but maybe in different proportions, intensity. Then weekly quizzes, courseworks, midterms and end of semester exams.
  - Difference in way people teach, layouts of rooms, sizes of class etc.
- You’ll take on personality traits and start to act and sound different based on who you’re around...
Reflections

- Personality and outlook different
- Academic working methods changed
  - Higher mark average!
- Keener to try new stuff, meet people
- Allows for lots of self-reflection
  - Good for interviews!
- Career opportunities benefit!
- Realise how big a move it really is
Why UNM?

- Guaranteed high standard of teaching/learning
- Sharing the experience with fellow UoN students
- Less competitive application
- Increasing cultural awareness
- Hub in Southeast Asia
  - never explored
  - travel opportunities
- Low cost of living
Overcoming worries/challenges

- Smaller cohort/lecture size
  - More one on one time, teamwork
- Arriving solo
  - Communication with fellow students
  - Organised group transportation to campus
- Organising travel (flights, accommodation etc)
  - Plan in advance but also allow time to be spontaneous
  - Use specific websites (e.g. Air Asia)
Common misconceptions vs reality

• **Strict rules and regulations**
  • Relaxed, nightlife, culturally rich

• **Appearance**
  • Ultimately your decision, be respectful

• **Most well known areas aren’t always the best for travel**
  • Most are overrated, explore Malaysia itself, go to less well known tourist spots (keep safe!)
Travelling opportunities

- 8 countries in total
- Singapore, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia, Cambodia, Vietnam
- With fellow students, friends from home, solo
- Malaysia itself is diverse
  - Cameron Highlands
  - Islands
- Highlights include:
  - Angkor Wat, Garden by the Bay, Surfers Paradise and all the food!
- Must be organised, use your initiative, be outside your comfort zone
- Confidence and independence will grow
Studying in another country

- Unique academic opportunities
  - Public Health Stand
- Global outlook on your degree
- Meet like-minded people
Reflections/Looking back...

- Wish I went for a year!
- Never regret your experiences
  - Even the challenges are a learning curve/beneficial
- More confident, independent, greater perspective
- Friends for life
Reema Sandhu

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How did I make the decision to study where I did?

- To improve my language skills
- Asked peer advisors
- Attended study abroad fairs and events on campus
- Researched about the country
- Found out about the modules available
- The financial incentives
- Gaining independence and travelling experiences
- Researched online- youtube videos, documentaries, blogs etc.
- Asked myself questions- will I use the experience to shape me academically, professionally and/or personally?
Worries and fears of studying abroad

- Safety, health issues and wellness
- Finance
- Access to the internet
- Making friends and feeling homesick
- Culture shock
Common misconceptions vs. actual experience

**Misconception 1. China is backward**
- The urban areas - rapid development.
- Transport - bullet trains, planes, cars, taxis, buses etc.
- Phones - WeChat, Alipay and Taobao.
- Environmentally friendly - e-bikes and clean streets.

**Misconception 2. Language barrier**
- Opportunity to learn Mandarin whilst you are there
- Teaching is in English
- Making friends with the locals.

**Misconception 3. I can’t buy things in China that I can in the UK**
- Many shopping malls and supermarkets
- Mini high street on campus - the Food Basket - sells international products

**Misconception 4. I can’t survive eating Chinese food everyday!**
- Fast food chains and restaurants.
- Variety of cuisine on campus - Korean, Japanese, Italian, Indian, Western etc.
Having the money and time to travel

- Planned trips by the university - look out for emails which offer free trips for the weekend
- Travelling during the national holidays - Golden week
- Planning and scheduling trips with a group of friends
- Bursaries, scholarships, student finance and family
- Travelling around China is relatively cheap
- Organizing time around your studies - plan ahead
What is it like to study in another country/ in another education system?

- Gaining the opportunity to spend my degree in a different country- to enhance my global perspective.
- Classes with mainly Chinese students- Chinese education system vs. Western education system.
- Smaller class sizes- closer interaction with the professor.
- Smaller campus- the convenience of walking to the teaching buildings, canteens and the gym.
- Using Wechat Pay everywhere.
- Gained more confidence speaking to new people of different backgrounds and asking for help.
Reflections and outcomes of my study abroad experience

• Made a lot of international friends.
  - Stayed at my Chinese friends' house-host family.
• Helped me to find out what I want to do after I graduate - career prospects and internships.
• Improved my Mandarin drastically.
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Facebook: www.facebook.com/uonstudyabroad
Instagram: www.instagram.com/uonstudyabroad

email: studyabroad@nottingham.ac.uk

Drop-ins: Tuesdays, Thursdays, 2pm - 3.30pm

www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad
www.nottingham.ac.uk/go/studyabroadevents
Events

Is studying abroad right for you
Wednesday 20 November
2pm
B01, ESLC

Global Opportunities presentation
Wednesday 27 November
2pm
B01 ESLC

The Practicalities presentation
Wednesday 4 December
2pm
B14 ESLC