

Field report of my study abroad semester at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia

My journey of studying abroad at Macquarie University (MQU), Sydney started in mid-July. I did not apply for on campus accommodation prior to coming to Australia which meant I still had to look for a place to stay. Since I wasn't quite sure whether to fully commit to living close to the beach or next to campus, it took me about three weeks to find a suitable place. I ended up staying in a fairly big house close to university which I found through a private housing webpage provided by MQU. I shared this place with four other MQU students (two Aussies, one American and one Mexican). We got along well and even became good friends which is essential to a vital living atmosphere.

O-week started in late July. It is pretty similar to the O-week I know from back home. 'Mentors' guided new students around campus and introduced us to the most important things such as enrolling in units, creating your student ID and exploring surroundings. On top of that, there has also been evening activities like laser tag which was a great opportunity to meet other fellow students. Classes started a week after. A warm and welcoming introduction to the different units by different lecturers really made me feel comfortable and willing to actively participate.

My units were structured with weekly readings and assignments throughout the whole semester. Whereas in Germany the entire weighting of your grade is mostly depending on a final exam at the end of the semester, MQU splits up the weighting onto different submissions. Even though it was more labor intensive as opposed to what I am used to back home (particularly studying at the beginning of the semester), it was convenient chance to collect credits throughout the course of the term and not having to rely on your final exam only.

In terms of leisure, Sydney and MQU offer a great variety of things to do. Food markets, hidden festivals, hiking the Blue Mountains, exploring Australian wildlife and relaxing at one of many beaches are just a small number of activities that can be done outside of school. On the last day of O-week MQU presented its clubs and societies that students could join. I stumbled upon the MQU Rugby Club which I joined later on. It was really nice experience as I got an insight on one of the most typical Australian team sports. Apart from Rugby, I also tried to get involved in another common Australian sport – surfing. The surf culture in Australia is very big and spreads out a feeling of ease. Thus, I tried to get as much surfing done as possible. The only down point is Sydney traffic. Since MQU is situated in the north of Sydney, it usually takes

more than an hour to get to the closest beach/city by public transport. For that reason I always thought twice about taking that burden upon me.

In conclusion, I really enjoyed my stay at MQU and would recommend it at any time. It is a great place to grow intellectually and cross-culturally. Not only have I improved my language and teaching skills by a mile which will clearly benefit my future profession as a teacher but also made friends from all over the world. Last but not least, I am also quite happy to have chosen the Australian winter term as the weather was quite pleasant and not too hot.