

The Education Abroad Program office wants to hear about your experience abroad! Tell us about your experience by filling out the *Return Student Report for Exchanges/Summer Programs*. Your feedback will be used to help improve programs and services for future students and be a valuable resource for future students who are interested in studying abroad.

The Return Student Report consists of two parts:

- Part A: Participant Information
- Part B: Internship Information

Part A will not be made public. Part B will be made public and available online to future students interested in learning more about the education abroad process and program. Education Abroad Program will preserve your anonymity by not revealing your name or any personal details.

## Part A

### Participant Information

Please provide the following information.

Name:			
Student Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Domestic <input type="checkbox"/> International	Home Institution:	University of Alberta
Faculty:	ALES	Degree Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate
Major/Minor:	ENCS/Land Reclamation		
Current Year of Study	<input type="checkbox"/> 1st <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2nd <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd <input type="checkbox"/> 4th <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		

## Part B

### Exchange/Summer Program Information

Please provide the following details related to your Education Abroad Program.

Host Institution:	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology		
City/Town:	Melbourne	Country:	Australia
Exchange/Summer Program Period:	From: 07/15/2013 (mm/dd/yyyy)	To: 12/15/2013 (mm/dd/yyyy)	
Did you participate on an internship during your exchange/summer program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
What immigration documents (e.g. study visa, residence permits etc.) are required to study at your host institution?	Study/travel visa		
What issues (if any) did you encounter while obtaining these immigration documents?	None. Obtaining the visa was very quick and the application was completed online.		
What tips would you give to future students regarding their student visa and other required immigration documents?	Don't leave it to the last minute even though the approval doesn't take very long.		

### Languages

What was the language(s) of instruction at your host institution? <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Were there any adequate course offerings taught in English for your field of study?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Prior to your departure, did you take any language courses at your home institution? If yes, what courses (e.g. FREN 111) did you take?	No
How did taking a class in another language (that was not your first language) impact your learning experience? Did you instructor make any accommodations?	All my classes were in English, which is my first language.

## Academia

What arrangements regarding pre-approval of credit transfer were you able to arrange with your faculty before leaving on your program?

None.

Please describe the course registration process at your host institution.

- Were you able to pre-register in Canada?
- Did you receive any assistance from your host institution?
- Did your course registration change upon arrival? If so, why?

I was not able to pre-register in Canada but part of the incoming orientation included course registration so there weren't any difficulties there. I changed one of my courses upon arrival due to interest in a different course and I was able to get special approval for a course for which I didn't have RMIT prerequisites for.

Please describe your academic plan (e.g. number of courses per term, course name etc.).

I took a full course load at RMIT which was 4 courses. As an exchange student, your visa allows you to take either 3 or 4 courses. At RMIT, you have the flexibility to choose how you want to organize your schedule and I ended up having no classes on Tuesdays.

Please describe the credit and grading system at your host institution.

How was your overall academic experience (e.g. teaching style, class structure and sizes, amount of coursework, assessment) in comparison to your home institution?

The grading system was similar to that at the U of A except instead of letters (A, B, etc) RMIT uses acronyms such as HD (high distinction - highest possible grade), D (distinction) and so on. Prior to receiving letter grades, assignments are typically graded using percents. The teaching style was also very similar, at times even less formal than we have here at the U of A because depending on the class you take, the class size is pretty small. Most professors are comfortable with you calling them by their first name. The expectations I found were less extensive than those at the U of A and generally more was asked of you during class versus outside of class (this is also course-dependent).

How did you obtain a transcript for coursework completed at your host institution?

The HUB at RMIT is where you can purchase a sealed transcript for \$20. They deal with fees, transcripts, and general inquiries.

## Student Services

Please describe the type of facilities (e.g. library, internet/Wi-Fi access, computer labs, bookstore, health clinic, counseling services) available at your host institution.

Swanston library is a great place to study and use computers. There are many student computer labs scattered across different buildings but it's easy to find yourself a quiet place to focus. Wi-Fi is available (though sketchy at times) and all typical U of A services (counselling, bookstore, clubs, etc.) are also available at RMIT.

To the best of your knowledge, what support and services are available at your host institution for:

- Students with disabilities or special needs
- Students identifying as LGBTQ
- Students of visible minorities

Many elevators operate in every building and wheelchair ramps are also very common. There are many student groups and lounges that are geared toward LGBTQ individuals. People are as open, accepting, and ethnically different as in Edmonton.

Please describe where you could find exchange student advising or receive academic counseling at your host institution.

There is an International Office in Building 15 and they have advisors willing to help you (except they're closed for lunch so check hours beforehand). The orientation for exchange students provided a lot of materials and contacts if counselling is needed at any time for any reason.

## Housing Information

To the best of your knowledge, what housing options are available to students?	There is no student accommodation provided by RMIT but there are many student lodging in the CBD (Central Business District) area.
What type of housing did you stay in?	<input type="checkbox"/> On-campus residences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Off-campus housing <input type="checkbox"/> With a host family <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
How satisfied were you with your housing choice?	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 1 = Not at all satisfied</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 2</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 3</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 5 = Very satisfied</div> </div>
What should future students be aware of when choosing on-campus residences? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Application process for housing</i></li> <li>• <i>Utilities and furniture</i></li> <li>• <i>Meal plans, cooking facilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Housing rules (e.g. curfew, how early can you move in, closure during major holidays etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Assistance from host institution staff (e.g. airport pick-up, orientation)</i></li> </ul>	Look for housing before arriving. It saves you time and stress upon arrival. Gumtree is like craigslist or kijiji and you can buy a lot of appliances cheap online. Check with whatever housing you book whether they have certain appliances which can save you money. I stayed at RMIT Village on Flemington Rd and it was the best decision I made. It was expensive, and things malfunctioned sometimes but the people that I met and the atmosphere at the Village was super worth it. You find yourself a replacement family since everyone is in the same boat. People at the Village like to have a great time. Turf (the pub next door) is a must on Mondays. Little Richard's (the café next door) is also a must. You'll become best friends with the owners and the whole Little Richard's family. Say hi to Carl and Darren from Neetsman.
What should future students be aware of when choosing off-campus housing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lease agreements, deposits, tenant rights</i></li> <li>• <i>Utilities and furniture</i></li> <li>• <i>Location and neighbourhoods</i></li> <li>• <i>Safety and security</i></li> <li>• <i>Type of resources available to look for housing (eg: Craigslist)</i></li> </ul>	Take care of your apartment. If you do, you'll have no problem in getting your bond back within a month of your return but if anything is left damaged then they have the right to charge whatever they deem appropriate. RMIT Village has a security team and try not to get on their bad side (it's easy not to). They'll give you a breakdown of the rules so ignorance doesn't ever fly with Adrian.

## Student Life

What would you recommend to future students who are looking to meet other students at your host institution? (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as student groups, intramurals, residence events and activities, volunteering opportunities, etc.)

I didn't participate in any student groups because I had such a great community at the Village but some of my friends who did had a great time and met even more great people. Join clubs or societies that interest you and you'll meet fun, interesting people.

What work or internship opportunities are available for students on and/or off campus?

I didn't work while abroad but there are many opportunities for part time employment at restaurants or cafés. If you want to work in the service industry you'll have to get a Victorian certification (it differs by state) and that costs roughly \$50. Minimum wage is very high though (\$16/hr I think) so you'll earn it back very quickly. It is not customary to tip though!

## Health and Safety

Are there any specific health/safety issues that future students should be made aware of? What precautions can you recommend to mitigate or eliminate these issues?

Check with your doctor if he/she recommends you take any shots but if you have your basic immunizations that you get as a baby and don't plan on spending much time in the Outback, then you don't need any extra vaccinations.

Did your host institution require a mandatory travel/health insurance plan for exchange students? How did you arrange this?

There is a mandatory insurance plan that you have to purchase as part of your visa application. It is clearly described in the application process but does cost roughly \$250 I think.

## Cultural Adaptation

What cultural differences (if any) did you find particularly challenging?

I didn't encounter too many cultural differences while there. People tend to walk on the left side of the sidewalk and stairs but most people are friendly, helpful, and open.

What parts of your host country's culture did you most appreciate?

I loved Melbourne's street life. There is so much going on every day that you don't ever have to be bored. The coffee in any little café was amazing (skip the chains - Starbucks isn't the place to be) and side streets were covered in amazing graffiti. Especially in the CBD you'll find crowds huddled around a group of dancers or musicians doing their thing. I loved the nightlife which was as diverse as the people. Bars are just as busy during the week as they are on weekends (and open just as late).

## Costs and Budgeting

Please describe your basic costs in Canadian dollars. This will help future exchange/summer program students plan their own budgets.

Airfare to host country	\$ 2000	Brief Description	Funded by parents.
Visa fees	\$ 250	Brief Description	Not sure of amount
Books/term	\$ 200	Brief Description	Some textbooks can be loaned from the library.
Accommodation/month	\$ 1500	Brief Description	RMIT Village. Worth the money if you can afford it.
Meals/month	\$ 160	Brief Description	Rough estimate. Didn't eat out much. Food is more expensive in Melbourne than in Edmonton.
Health insurance/month	\$	Brief Description	Under my dad's coverage
Local transportation/month	\$ 15	Brief Description	You need to top up a Myki which acts as your bus pass.
Personal spending/month	\$ 50	Brief Description	Bought mostly presents for family.
Communications/month (e.g. phone)	\$ 30	Brief Description	Go for the pre paid plan at Optus. Gives you everything you need for a reasonable price. Unlock your phone!
Other travel	\$ 500	Brief Description	Trips to New Zealand, Great Ocean Road, Cairns and Sydney.
What unexpected costs did you encounter?	Medical costs. I got an infection and needed antibiotics. Trip to the doctor cost \$70/visit which I was reimbursed for later.		

## Funding your International Experience

Please indicate how you financed your program. This will help future students plan their own budgets. <i>Check all that apply.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scholarships from UAlberta <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships from Host Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Student loans <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family contributions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal savings <input type="checkbox"/> Employment while in host country <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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## Final Thoughts

What were some highlights of your experience abroad?

The people and the travels. I have met life long friends and seen many beautiful, beautiful things.

Would you recommend your internship program to other students? Why or why not?

YES. You'll come back with so many stories and fantastic memories. I still miss it so much. It may be cliched, but it really was the best 5 months of my life (so far).

Please provide any final information/tips for students interested in studying abroad that you would like to share.

Don't hold back! Try things you wouldn't necessarily do at home. This will make the experience so much more worthwhile and it'll show you what you're capable of.