

## **SEMESTER ABROAD AT SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA**



BY:

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HOME UNIVERSITY: DUALE HOCHSCHULE BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

COURSE: INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT 2009

DEGREE: BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

4<sup>TH</sup> SEMESTER

TIME PERIOD: FEBRUARY – JUNE 2011

## PREPARATION:

### MAY

1. External application to Swinburne University of Technology
  - a. Motivational letter
  - b. Application form
  - c. CV
  - d. Copy of passport
  - e. DAAD certification
2. If you plan to study in Australia, the DHBW usually cooperates with Go!Stralia, which also requires a separate application form

AFTER YOU RECEIVE YOUR LETTER OF OFFER (-> TO CERTIFY THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED) –

### APPROX. SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

1. Application for "Auslandsbafög"
2. Application for scholarships
3. Book your flight as soon as you receive the letter of offer and make sure you arrive at least one week before the actual semester starts (usually a compulsory orientation takes place, which is important to attend, because you have several information sessions for your faculty and will get to know the other students)
4. Accommodation:
  - a. Unilodge @ Swinburne Place  
[http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/swinburne\\_place/index.html](http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/swinburne_place/index.html)
  - b. Swinburne Residential College (Hawthorn) <http://www.swin.edu.au/stuserv/residential/>
  - c. Homestay  
<http://www.international.swinburne.edu.au/arrival/accommodation/homestay/index.html>

AFTER YOU RECEIVE THE COE (CONFIRMATION OF ENROLMENT) – DECEMBER/ JANUARY

1. Apply for your Visa <http://www.eta.immi.gov.au/>
  - a. Usually takes 2-3 days
2. Get additional health insurance. Due to government regulations you have to pay approximately \$200 (which is included in the fee for the university) for overseas health insurance, but this doesn't cover all of your costs → therefore, it's appropriate to get extra insurance

### AFTER MY ARRIVAL IN MELBOURNE – FEBRUARY - JUNE

I arrived on the 13th of February after a long 28 hour flight, ready for the adventure at Swinburne. Swinburne University of Technology is based in Hawthorn, a nice leafy part of Melbourne only about 15 minutes from



the city. Set amongst the cafes, boutiques and bookshops of Glenferrie Road, and with the convenience of a supermarket and railway station practically on campus, it offers a desirable student lifestyle.



Swinburne offers several on-campus accommodation options or students can choose to live nearby and walk to class. I chose to stay in Unilodge at Swinburne Place for the semester, because it is hard to find an off campus apartment while you are still in Germany. But I really enjoyed Unilodge, because it's right on campus and almost every international student lived there, which makes it easy to find new friends and experience many different cultures. I was living there with two girls from the U.S. and one from England. Everyone had their own bedroom and we shared a living room, kitchen and bathroom. Unfortunately the accommodation isn't very cheap, but it is worth it, for the sheer convenience of having your bedroom next door to your classes and to share your flat with other international students, who are in the same position as you are. Swinburne University of Technology also provides a library, sports complex, wireless network coverage across the campus and many other specialized facilities.

As an international student at Swinburne the semester begins earlier than it does for local students. Swinburne University organizes a welcome week especially for non-citizens. During this week, students can visit the Swinburne Abroad Office and meet other exchange/study abroad students. Students also receive a "Crazy Croc" Survival Pack at the beginning of the welcome week that contains a lot of great booklets/coupons/pocket map guides and information to make the time in Melbourne convenient and exciting.



The following week, Swinburne hosted a compulsory orientation program, which is mandatory for all students who start studying at this university. During this week there were many information sessions on campus, which provided you with all the tools you need during your first week of classes. On Friday the International students went on an excursion to Healesville Sanctuary, where we got the chance to get close to some of Australia's unique animals such as kangaroos and koalas. After seeing all the animals we went to the Yarra Valley to taste some wine.



After two welcome weeks and a lot of new experiences it was time to attend my lectures for the first time. My subjects were really fascinating, but also challenging. I was enrolled in units such as Web Programming, Information Systems Project Management, Marketing and Database Systems.

The teaching standard was very high as every lecture has an accompanying lab or tutorial. This was very helpful as you are able to apply the knowledge you have gained in the lectures beforehand. The lecturers and assistants were always available to assist students and invited questions, emails, and visits etc.



A huge difference between university here and in Germany was that there are very few contact hours. However most spare time during the week is spent on self study and preparing for my classes or assignments, because the system there was quite different from what I was used to. In Germany the main focus is usually on the final exam which is a substantial part of your final

grade. At Swinburne there was a much greater focus on presentations and assignments throughout the semester. Assignments were part of the final grade and lecturers mostly put emphasis on a lot of research, as well as a lot of further reading and creativity.

All in all it's been fantastic. I've been really impressed by the excellent level of Swinburne's teaching standards for this course and the people were great. That's why I honestly recommend everyone to do their study abroad at Swinburne!

## FURTHER TIPS:

1. Think about the trips you want to do beforehand, because time flies by really fast. Keep in mind that it is difficult to reach places because of long distances.
  - a. Cheap flights within Australia:
    - i. Virgin Australia  
<http://www.virginaustralia.com/>
    - ii. Jetstar <http://www.jetstar.com/>
    - iii. Tiger Airways (cheap, but cancel a lot of flights)
2. Taking the Train into the city can be confusing sometimes, as there are express trains etc. - To check the schedule: <http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com/>
3. Australia is very expensive. At the Queen Victoria Market in Melbourne Central you can buy almost everything from food to souvenirs at a much cheaper price than regular supermarkets or souvenir shops (especially 10-15min before it closes) (<http://www.qvm.com.au/>)
4. Weather
  - a. Do not underestimate the winter in Australia! It's not comparable to the winter in Germany, but it often reaches temperatures at night close to 0-5°C, so do not only take beach clothes with you!
  - b. Melbourne has four seasons a day – always take a jacket with you, even if there are no clouds in the sky!
5. Organizing a phone contract:
  - a. There are several different companies to choose from. I chose Optus, because they offer a TurboCapPlus Plan (prepaid) that costs \$30 a month. This plan allows you to make calls and send text messages for a value of \$300, which was always enough for my usage. Other companies are Vodafone, Libara and Telstra, which offer special international contracts, but as I had Skype and e-mail access, I didn't need extra conditions for calling international.
6. Organizing your required books:
  - a. Books are very expensive in Australia. Therefore you should visit the "Book Shop" on campus, which sells used books from earlier semesters that are usually sold at a discount. However, these books are very popular and may sell out fast – be quick! After your studies you can also sell your books back to the Book Shop (used books and new books!!).

