**Major/Minor:** Zoology

**Country:** Australia  
**Program:** Immersion  
**Term & Year Abroad:** Fall 2010

**Instructors**
- **What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?**
  The instructors at UQ were similar to UCSB instructors in that they were friendly, outgoing, loved teaching, and were easily approachable.

- **Could you call them by their first names?**
  Yes, depending on their preference.

- **Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?**
  No. In the particular classes I took, it was a bit less formal at UQ in that I spent more time with the instructors on field trips, and thus got to know them in a less formal and more personal setting. (I played water polo and snorkeled with some of my professors – so cool!)

- **Were they available for help during office hours?**
  Yes – drop in hours, or by appointment.

**Courses**
- **Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?**
  No. The classes I took were specific for international students, so I think they were purposely a bit easier than typical UQ classes.

- **Was the grading system similar to UCSB?**
  Yes, other than the fact that the grading scale was 7-1 instead of A-F.

- **How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?**
  They were relatively similar to UCSB course structures. We had an array of assignments, such as field trip assignments, papers, and occasionally quizzes. The breakdown of grades (for example, the final exam is worth around 30% of the final grade) was similar.

- **Did you have oral and/or written exams?**
  I only had written exams. In my Popular Music class, our mid-semester exam involved listening.

- **Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?**
  The final exam weeks are very structured and specific, leaving little room for flexibility.

- **What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?**
  I was able to have instructors proofread papers and clear up any questions through email or in-person contact.

- **Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?**
  Yes, but this was a good thing!

- **Was classroom participation expected?**
  One of my classes had a discussion section, and participation in this setting was expected and graded.
- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
  They were similar. There was no maximum number of students a class could have – if more students wanted to take a certain class, UQ would simply find a larger classroom to accommodate all the students. Also, a few instructors frequently brought in items to be passed around the class – Australian flora, crocodile leather, shark teeth…

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
  Yes, the classes were on the same days/times throughout the week, but in different classrooms each day. My classes ranged from 50 to 120 minutes.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
  Students were respectful in class, but it was a bit more informal at UQ (for example, there were more jokes made in lecture). It was polite to be punctual, but it wasn’t the end of the world if you were late. There were signs around the classrooms saying to not eat or drink, but everyone did anyway.

**Language**
- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
  English

- **What language did you take your courses in?**
  English

- **If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.**
  N/A

**Host University**
- **How large is the university? Student enrollment and approx campus size (smaller than UCSB)? Is it an urban campus with many tall buildings or just a few building?**
  The campus covers 280 acres (versus 1022 at UCSB), and around 30,000 undergraduates are enrolled (versus around 18,000 at UCSB). The campus is beautiful, centered around a lush Great Court, in a rather suburban area of Brisbane, just four miles from the city.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
  Local students live on campus, off campus, and at home. The majority of people I met lived on campus, in the University’s colleges (dorms).

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
    It is four miles to the city.
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
    Taking the bus or CityCat (ferry) are both possibilities. You can get a “Go Card” with student discounts to cover the costs of public transportation. A trip to the city will cost less than $2.
  - **Could students take cabs -cost?**
    Cabs are available mostly in the city (or by phone). To get from campus to the city costs about $20 (no tipping!).
  - **How long would it take to get to the city center?**
On a bus, it could take 15-20 minutes; on the CityCat, it would take about that or a little longer.

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
  There are over 120 student clubs for sports, academia, or common interests. UQ Union is a handy club that sets up all sorts of events, from hiking to bar hopping; UQ Sport has a “Come N Try Week” and offers free classes at the gym; and QUEST is a popular one for international students.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  There is a small bookstore on campus. I received an email early on in the semester suggesting the website <textbookexchange.com.au>, a way to buy and sell books. Fortunately I only needed one book, and bought it off of a student that I found on this site.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  There were a few computers available in the libraries, but it seemed they were always in use. For convenience, I would recommend bringing your own laptop.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  Everything! Cafes and restaurants, liquor stores, a gym and pool (on campus), and stores for general shopping (though there were more outside of UQ’s neighbourhood).

**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
  Living on campus at one of the colleges, or finding your own accommodation off campus.

- **How close are they to campus?**
  The colleges are very close to campus (only a few minutes’ walk). The off campus housing could as close as the colleges, or as far away as the city.

- **How did you find your housing?**
  I found my housing on the UQ website for International students – very helpful! <http://www.uq.edu.au/international/index.html?page=88976>

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
  I lived at Union College, with approximately 350 other students (mostly Australians).

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
  N/A

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
  The rooms at college were relatively similar to UCSB’s dorms, except that everybody at UQ got a single.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
  Living in college was somewhat expensive (with a meal plan, the whole semester cost over $7000 USD). There was a $300 AUD deposit that had to be paid at the beginning of the semester.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
  I paid for housing upfront, directly to the college.
Food
- **What was the food like?**
The food in College was decent, as any dorm food can be. They offered a few main meal options, plus white rice, steamed veggies, a salad bar, and dessert. The food in restaurants was for the most part great (Sydney is an excellent place to visit if you want to try all sorts of foods – I went to a bar that offered pizza with kangaroo, crocodile, and emu!). A kebab store that’s a few minutes from College was a popular spot for students.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
Since I was living at College, I ate most of my meals at the dining facilities. My friends and I would sometimes eat our meals at restaurants around College – Thai, Italian, Indian, sushi, fish ‘n chips, ice cream…

- **How much was an average meal?**
A meal could be between $10 and $25. The food is a bit more expensive (there aren’t any $5 footlongs!), but it’s good food. You can get a cheap kebab on the street for $7, a discounted Thai dinner for $10, or go all out for an Indian meal.

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
Lunch was eaten between 12 and 1, and dinner was eaten between 6 and 8 (pretty much the same times as in America).

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
Nope! I’m a strict vegetarian and it was easy to find veggie meals for every cuisine. Restaurants are usually willing to not include meat in a dish or switch meat for tofu, if available.

Travel/Safety
- **If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?**
There are buses, trains, and the CityCat ferry that run throughout the city. As a student, you can get a GoCard that can be applied to any of these forms of public transportant (and you get a discount as a student!). Transportation is relatively quick, easy, and cheap, and is a reliable source of getting to the coast.

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**
I definitely felt safe in Brisbane, but I still didn’t do much traveling around at night by myself. It’s always better to have a buddy, even if the city has a low-crime rate.

- **Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?**
It wasn’t particularly difficult to travel to neighbouring countries, but these countries aren’t very close in proximity. However, there are many airlines that fly to Asia and New Zealand that give student discounts (Qantas, Virgin Blue, Tiger Airways, etc.)

Host City/Country
- **What was the weather like?**
It was wonderful in winter, and even better in summer (average high of 80º F and low of 60º F). The summers can be pretty humid, and sometimes thunderstorms take over that can last for days.
- **Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**
Brisbane is lovely. It is built around a river, and offers many attractions for tourists and residents.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
There are numerous tea/coffee shops and restaurants to be enjoyed; South Bank offers the artificial beach, ferris wheel, and weekend markets; movie theaters give student discounts; a fashion exhibit came through Brisbane for a month or so; museums; sporting events (rugby and cricket!).

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
Since Brisbane is the capital of Queensland, it caters well to tourists. There are many experiences a person can enjoy in Brisbane (shopping, eating, markets, site-seeing, etc. (see above)). SE Asia is a big influence on the culinary culture. The great thing about Australia is that everyone is willing to help a lost or confused tourist!

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    No differences. Australian culture is a bit more laid back, but everyone still seemed to abide by time constraints.
  - **Eye contact & staring**
    No differences. (My Australian friend said “I'm pretty sure in terms of eye contact though Australians look people in the eyes. Americans on the other hand look people STRAIGHT in the eyes.”)
  - **Relationships**
    Australians commonly “pay people out”, which simply means they tease you a lot. But don’t take offense to this – the more someone pays you out, the more they like you.
  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
    People dress up more for uni in the sense that they don’t wear their pajamas to class, as is so common in IV. Everyone in the city dresses quite smart.
  - **Alcohol consumption**
    Alcohol consumption is quite the popular pastime in Australia. If you’re from IV, you should be well prepared for this.
  - **What culture shock did you go through?**
    It took awhile to adjust to Australians paying me out so much – I thought they were just constantly making fun of me. It’s important to remember this sort of behaviour is reflective of love!
  - **Other?**
    The people aren’t lying – Australians are so friendly and everyone is always smiling. It’s a great culture to be immersed it, and everyone indeed follows the phrase “no worries.”

**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  Yes. You may experience some extra charges on credit or debit cards, but generally all credit card companies are widely accepted (Visa and MasterCard were probably the most prominent companies).

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  No.
- If you did not open a local bank account, was it easy to withdraw money from the ATM? Which banks were popular & had low ATM fees?
   It was very easy to withdraw money from any ATM in Australia. I opened up a Charles Schwab bank account in America specifically for Australia because they refund any ATM or international fees.

- Were there ATMs on campus?
   Yes.