

Travel letter from student exchange

Student exchange in Australia

Name: Simone Bjerregaard

E-mail: bjerrgaard-89@jubii.dk

Phone number: +45 20 15 38 07

Who did you travel with, if any:

Home institution (Denmark): Bornholms Sundheds og Sygeplejeskole (Nursing school of Bornholm)

Class number (Denmark): feb. 2010

Host institution/University (Australia): University of Tasmania

Hospital/Place of clinical placement (Australia): Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Speciality: Cardio vascular

Exchange period: 13/08/12 – 02/11/12

Before going abroad

- **Why did you decide to study in Australia?**

I always wanted to travel but haven't really got the opportunity before. I thought of the interchange programme as a good opportunity to see some of the world. I also thought that working at the hospital would give me a better impression of the culture than if I went as a tourist.

- **Why did you choose Australia?**

I wanted to go to Australia because I have heard so many good things about the country. Furthermore I wanted to go to an English speaking country because I think that would be a lot easier. Even though Australia is half way around the world the culture is not all that different from the western way of life. That was also one of the

things that got me to choose Australia. I wanted to go to a country where the nursing could be compared to the way we do nursing in Denmark.

- **How did you prepare for your stay abroad?**

Economy:

I only got in the programme because another girl changed her mind. When I was told that I could go, the deadlines for most of the big grants was already exceeded. I found it a bit difficult to find the smaller or more local grants, and instead I decided to focus on getting the other papers ready. I had savings that could cover the stay.

Travel:

My travel preparations started with getting a new passport because it have to be valid 6 months after leaving Australia.

I really wanted to travel with one of the other girls. I haven't travelled so far alone before and just felt better knowing that I had someone to turn to if something didn't go as planned. Because of the short notice, all the other girls had already ordered their tickets. I asked them when they were travelling and hooked up with one of the other girls. I had a relatively short journey with only one transfer in Dubai. It is definitely worth to consider how many transfers you are willing to have. The transfers and the waiting in the airports can make the journey very long.



Immunizations:

My GP knew what kind of vaccines I needed for travelling in Australia and made sure I got an international certificate of vaccination. I had some problems getting the right kind of proof saying that I got the vaccines. I thought that a signature from the GP would be proof

enough, but they wanted at blood sample. When the results finally came it was written in Danish, and all the papers sent to SWASS needed to be in English. I found it quite difficult to figure out what SWASS wanted from us. I wasn't the only one and several of us had to have additional vaccines when we came to the hospital.

Other preparations:

I read a bit about Sydney and what the city had to offer. Furthermore I started to think about what I wanted to see and do in my one week off.

In regards to the professional preparations I read up on the anatomy and tried to translate the most common terms in the field of cardiovascular.

Experiences and outcomes

Professional outcome:

- **How did you work with learning goals?**

It is your own job to make sure you reach the learning goals. I took out the list once in a while to make sure I completed the goals along the way. I found that just by being active and follow the routines on the ward, I could reach all of the learning goals.

- **How did you find the contact to supervisors/preceptors?**

On my word the educator was the one who welcomed the students, and planned visits to other wards to see procedures. Except from that I didn't have much contact with her. Each morning I was told which nurse I should go with, and I followed him or her all day. I didn't have a preceptor as I would have in Denmark. Instead I went with many different nurses during the stay.

- **How did you find the contact to the patients?**

In general I didn't like the way the nurses interacted with the patients. I found that many of the nurses were talking about the patients right in front of them like they weren't there and didn't include them in the treatment. They talked a lot about certain

patients when other patients could hear them. Sometimes I could wonder if they broke the vow of silence.

I found that the interaction with the patients was one of the best things of being on the ward. They were all very nice to me and very polite. They asked questions of my white uniform, my country and what I was going to do in Australia. Many of the patients was emigrants, and the ones who originated from Europe felt connected to me right away.

Cultural outcome:

- **Your experiences regarding the culture of the health care system?**

The first day we had a lecture about the structure of the Australian health care system. That gave a bit of an idea of how the hospitals operates and why they do things in certain ways. I found that the basic nursing was done very similar to how it's done in Denmark. Except from that their routines and structure of the ward was different from what I am used to. They had a flow nurse who took care of most of the paper work, so rest of the nurses were able to focus on the patients. I think that was a good idea. Except from that I would prefer the Danish way of nursing. I think the Danes are a lot better to take care of the patients with a holistic approach.



Main intrance at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital



The cardiovascular ward.

Social outcome:

- **How did you interact with your colleagues at the hospital and at the university?**
They were all very friendly to me and when they learned that I was going to be on the ward for three months they slowly started to include me in their conversations. I didn't socialize with them after hours but I probably could if I had been more proactive.
- **Did you interact with the local population?**
I didn't really interact with other locals than the ones I met at the hospital.
- **Which important experiences did you gain during your exchange?**
I have always imagined that I would travel a lot and live overseas for a longer period of time. I now know that I am too fond of Denmark to live in another country. Even though I only was away for 3 months I missed many Danish things.

SCHOOLS OF NURSING IN DENMARK



Callan Park Nurses Home. Home for students at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Anything else you think other students need to know about studying in Australia?

It is expensive to live in Australia, so you need to have grants or a lot of savings.