GOstralia!-GOzealand!

Erfahrungsbericht zum Master an der Macquarie University

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www.gostralia.de/infomaterial
Sabine Keller recently completed her Master of International Communication at Macquarie University and is now living and working in Sydney. Here she shares her journey and why she is glad she chose to study in Australia.

Seeking a career change

After completing my bachelor degree in Germany, I was lucky enough to get a marketing/sales position with a well-known company.

I had always wanted to work in marketing, but my new job was not at all what I thought it would be. After the first couple of months I knew it was not my cup of tea. Friends told me to stay with the company for two years as it would open doors to me later, but I thought, ‘what’s the point of pursuing a career you dislike’?

Australia – a country of opportunities?

By chance, I came across a stall of people from Gostralia – a German organisation who helps students to study abroad in Australia.

I suspected that Australia was too expensive for my family, with my two brothers also attending uni. But Gostralia convinced me there was financial aid out there that would enable me to do my masters.
Discovering Macquarie

Gostralia recommended Macquarie for its generous scholarships. I checked Macquarie's website, and was quite surprised that it was very well designed (which is rare for universities in Germany!)

Looking through the degrees I was especially enchanted by the Master of International Communication, which offers interesting core subjects like Public Diplomacy and International Public Relations and elective subjects such as Corporate Writing. I was surprised how applied the entire course was.

I also discovered that with my GPA, I was eligible to apply for the Macquarie University International Scholarship.

The idea was sparked and with every miserable day in the office, it built up… until finally I decided to apply.

“We are happy to advise you….”

It was stressful to get my application together, since it was close to the application deadline. I have one or two stories to tell about German bureaucrazy (misspelling intended!), unsupportive translation offices and writer’s block on my scholarship application.

But all the stress paid off in the end. Just before Christmas, I received an email: “Dear Sabine, we are happy to advise you…”

I couldn’t believe it. I had to read the beginning of the email a couple of times, for it seemed so surreal to me: I would receive a scholarship to cover my entire degree? I would be offered a second chance to find a career path to suit me?

It felt like 50 Christmas presents at the same time.

Making the move to Sydney

Once I had been accepted to Macquarie, the realisation hit – I wouldn’t see my friends and family for a year. This bit was hard to take. But this was the chance of a lifetime, an opportunity I had to seize.
So in early January, I told MQ I would be happy to accept, and quit my job. There were a lot of last-minute arrangements to be made, like vacating my apartment and finding new tenants. I traded in a life of securities for a life of uncertainties.

In February I boarded my flight out of minus 20°C Germany to land in 27°C degree Sydney. For some reason it felt like coming home.

**First impressions**

The first time I arrived on the Macquarie campus I couldn’t stop being amazed at how green it was. It is very peaceful. Sometimes it’s hard to believe that there are actually 37,000 students studying there.

**Making friends**

The highlight of my time at Macquarie was all the amazing people I met and friends I made. Macquarie offered a wide range of events to help us new students to get to know each other.

I loved the harbour cruise at the beginning of my first semester. Cruising on a boat through majestic Sydney Harbour while the moon rises over the Sydney Harbour Bridge…it’s an experience you can’t describe.

Last semester’s foam party at Ubar was amazing, too. And the bouncing castle at Conception Day finally fulfilled a childish dream of mine.

Through all these events I met people from countries, which a couple of months before I wouldn’t even been able to point out on a map. We learnt from each other and got to know each other’s cultures. One of my favourite memories is playing ukulele with my friends from Latvia and Fiji.

Also, group work in one particular class introduced me to an awesome Chinese girl who has opened a whole new world to me by explaining Chinese customs and cultures (and food!). And I don’t know what I would have done without my regular Vietnamese-German-Norwegian-Danish-Chinese library study group who helped me throughout the semester.
Life as an Australian university student

Classes at Macquarie were smaller and less formal than at home, with my smallest class having only 11 students. But with a large number of weekly readings and assessments, my workload was pretty immense. If you decide to study in Australia, you shouldn’t be fooled by its reputation as a laidback country!

I think this intensive workload helped me pick up a crucial skill: deliver work on time. I had to become a lot more efficient in my research.

Also the number of group assignments taught me valuable skills. Most of us will work as part of a team in our career. The group assignments enhanced my skills in problem solving and negotiating.

An internship opens a door…

Like many postgraduate students at Macquarie, I could complete an internship unit for academic credit as part of my International Communications degree.

The course convener helped me find an internship to suit me at Janssen-Cilag (a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson) whose Australian headquarters are located near the Macquarie campus.

… to a new life in Australia

I believe my Macquarie degree will open doors for me, and it already has. After graduation, Janssen offered me a position as a Corporate and Government affairs associate.
My job tasks so far actually resemble some of the assignments I had to complete at Macquarie, which shows how practical the courses at Macquarie really are. And sometimes I can’t help but hear my Corporate Writing teacher telling me ‘Sabine, no more than 23 words in a sentence!’

I love living in Australia, living where my fellow countrymen go for a holiday! I love the diversity of people, cultures, and food, and Australia’s beautiful nature, big cities, and sunshine.

The one thing I will say is that Sydney is very expensive. I expected it to be dear, but I was quite shocked at how much things cost in Sydney. You definitely need an income of some kind.

But at the end of the day I believe people are right when they call Australia ‘the lucky country’. Just watch an average family going for a Sunday BBQ at Manly Beach. They know how to enjoy life. I believe that’s something we Germans still have to learn: to appreciate what we have more often.

The Master of International Communication is also available as a double degree with the Master of International Business (2 years total duration) or Master of International Relations (1.5 years total duration)
Gerne verwirklichen wir auch deinen Traum von einem Studium in Australien, Neuseeland oder Asien!

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