

My Journey To Macquarie University In Sydney Australia

One day I was randomly checking my student email and I received an email for student exchange by USP International. The partner universities names were listed in the information booklet. I made a choice to apply for a place at Macquarie University in Sydney Australia. I belong to the Faculty of science technology and environment. I browsed all the links provided and forwarded my application. I received response in terms of some information clarification. After sending my application I waited patiently.

After two weeks I received the good news that I was selected for the interview by Arcahana Priyadarshani. I was nervous about the interview, however I had a positive attitude and fortunately I passed the interview. After the interview I selected the units that matched with units offered at Macquarie University. It was the most difficult task but fortunately I was able to find 4 units. After matching the units I also had to seek approval from the course coordinators for special wavier which was granted. The time allocated by USP international in terms of preparing the students for exchange really helped me prepare myself for the future challengers.

I received the news on Friday by USP International. Since then all the help and assistance was provided by Arcahana Pridarshani. The next step was the signing of the USP contract. I travelled to Suva to sign my contract. I was so happy to meet the staff at USP international. I was warmly received by USP international staff.

In addition I had to prepare all the required documents for securing a student visa. My accommodation was provided by my family members. I also had to have my medical done in SUVA. The trip was paid by USP international as I was based at labasa campus. I was so thank full for the

financial assistance provided by USP International. After completing all the requirements of students visa my application was lodged on Wednesday and I received my visa on Friday the same week. All the visa application fees and my Air fare was paid by USP international which was about 3000 Fijian dollars.

I am married with one 4 year old son. I also made an application for my family's visa which was unfortunately refused. I was worried as I would be traveling alone without my family. I arrived in Sydney on the 19th of February 2016. I was received by my family member's in Australia .I was happy to finally reach my destination but at the same time I was sad as I left my 4 year old child behind.

I do believe that my passion to save the environment kept me going in my trying times. MY family who provided me with the accommodation letter did not want me at their place. I was in a situation which made so stressed out. The first day I travelled 2 hours to reach Macquarie University. I used to wake up at 4am and walk few miles to reach the bus stop to catch the bus. Nobody showed me how to reach Macquarie University which was so far away. I took the bus trip and asked Australians for help and they helped to reach Minto Train Station in Campelltown. It took me 1 hour to reach central I felt so lost and confused but I never lost hope and kept on going. I changed my train at central and travelled to Macquarie University. I was happy and excited to finally reach my destination. The first week was O week in which Orientation was held. I did attend the Orientation and also had a Campus tour. There was also free Lunch provided for International students. IT cost me 30 ASD for daily traveling expense.

After my day at Macquarie I travelled 2 hours again to return home. I was verbally abused everyday by my family members but I remained calm as I was there for a purpose and that was to get educated. It was so hard for me to concentrate when the living environment is so full of stress. I was so sad and lost. Fortunately I met my primary school friend. Her name is Fazilat Khan and her husband's name is Tazlim Khan. These two were my angels. AS soon as they found out that I was in Sydney they came to pick me and took me to their place. I was able to share my problems with them and they helped financially and psychologically. They made me realize that I was so fortunate to receive such an opportunity to study in the world class university.

I have learnt to use new Geographic information software and also used field data collection tools. The six months has been educational and success full for me.

My friends took me to so many places to visit and treated me with respect and dignity. I always spent my weekends at my friends place and I became so sad when I had to go back to my families place. I attended all my classes and met with fellow Australian students who made me feel equal and welcome. I made friends with Suriya Ammini and Stef Bagala. These two students really helped so much academically .Stef drove me to 2 field trips which was very expensive if I had to pay. I am so thank-full to these two students.

The Macquarie staff were also very help full in terms of assignment guidance and for general academic help. Even-though I was going through very hard time at home I did not let it affect my studies. It is so hard to keep up with studies in Sydney. It is a world class learning centre and

every aspect of learning is very different from Fiji. It was extremely challenging for me but I am thank-full to God that I passed my all four units.

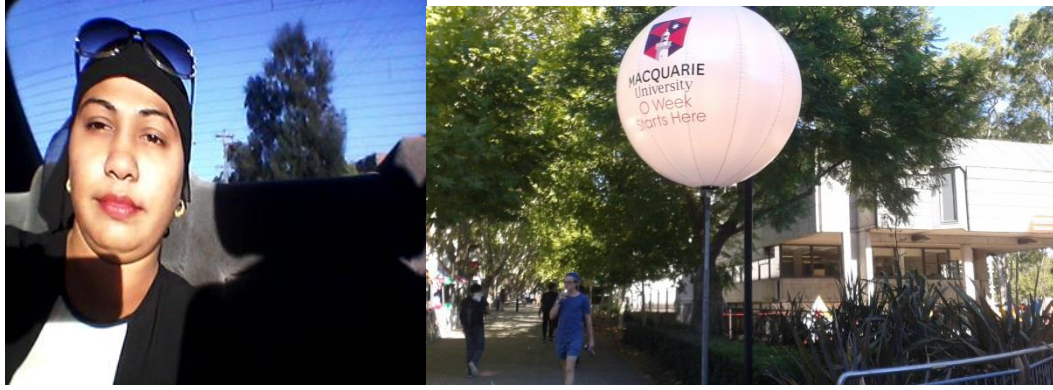
After completing my exam I was told to clean the whole house and the outside garden in freezing temperature. If for some reason I was not able to do any of the task, I was given the warning to be thrown out of the house. The main reason I changed my travelling dates was due to my accommodation issues. The biggest challenge that I faced was accommodation.

I am thank full to USP international for giving me once in a life time opportunity to be part of this academic journey. I have learnt so much academically. My message to future students is to make the most of exchange program if given the opportunity but secure a good accommodation. Accommodation plays an integral part in the learning environment as the normal weekly rent is 300 per week. I have been through a lot in these six months which I do believe will help me in future. Australia is a very beautiful country to study and learn new world class technology.

Fhereen Nisha

USP International 2016

Student



First day at Macquarie University



Field trip



lunch at Macquarie

University



Train ride to Macquarie University



Field trip To Smiths lake



Learning ARC GIS software at Macquarie University