

Mobility Scholarship Questionnaire

My name is X and I am currently on exchange at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Monash University has several campuses. The main campus is Clayton campus. However, I have chosen to study at Caulfield campus as it is closer to downtown Melbourne, also referred to as CBD (Central Business District).

Section A:

I am here for one semester spanning 12 weeks of courses. My program of study is an Honors Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Finance. Exchange students at Monash must take four courses, no more no less. The courses I have chosen are Business Law (BTF1010), Investment Banking (BFF3351), Investments and Portfolio Management (BFF3121), and Personal Financial Planning (BFF3111), which total 7.5 hours and 4.5 hours of lecture and tutorials per week respectively, or 12 hours of educational obligations per week.

Business Law (BTF1010) has a 1.5-hour lecture and a 1.5-hour tutorial. Although this may seem light from the lecture perspective, Business law is a very heavy course load involving plenty of reading and writing. There are 2 within semester assessments, and one final examination in Business Law. The first assessment is a mid-semester exam, which comprises 30% of the final grade. The second assessment is a multiple-choice test weighted at 10% of the final grade. The final examination is worth the remaining 60% of the grade. However, there is a hurdle requirement with the final exam (45%), and if one fails to achieve the final hurdle, they fail the course.

Investment Banking (BFF3351) has a 2-hour lecture and 1-hour tutorial. There are within-semester assessments in Investment Banking. The first is a mid-semester test worth 10% while the second is a heavily weighted assignment worth 20% on a joint merger and acquisition case study where maximum group sizes of 2 must evaluate a particular M&A transaction from the perspective of the bidder and submit a bid for the target reflecting your group's DCF valuation of the target. Lastly, the final examination comprises the remaining 70% of the unit grade. There is a hurdle requirement of 50% for this course as well.

Investments and Portfolio Management (BFF3121) has a 2-hour lecture and a 1-hour tutorial. There are 5 different in-semester assessments in this unit. The first is a group assignment weighted at 30%. Next there are the tutorials, which require constant attendance and participation in addition to 1 presentation per person on a given topic. These tutorials are worth 4% total (2% for participation and attendance, 2% for the presentation). Third, there are 2 in-semester tests worth 4% total (2% per test). Lastly, there are in-semester quizzes spanning every lecture or

two throughout the semester. These comprise 2% of the final weighting. Altogether, in-semester assessments make up 40% of the final grade. The remaining 60% is covered by the final examination, which also has a 50% hurdle requirement.

Personal Financial Planning (BFF3111) has a 2-hour lecture and a 1-hour tutorial. There are 3 in-semester assessments and 1 final exam in this unit. The assessments are a 25% group assignment, lecture quizzes worth 7.5% total, tutorials worth 7.5% total (4.5% for participation, 3% for one presentation), and the final exam worth the remaining 60%. Again, there is a hurdle requirement for the final exam of 50%.

The courses I have chosen are all quite heavy course loads. Even though only 4 units are to be chosen by every exchange student, they easily take up much of my week in time. Monash University is also very generous with regards to attending lectures, as they are all filmed and can be accessed afterwards. However, in courses with quizzes, skipping classes is obviously not in your best interest.

Section B:

- February 14th to 15th – Monash Abroad Orientation (COMPULSORY)
- February 15th – Monash Abroad Registration (for exchange students)
- February 20th to 24th – Orientation Week (for all students, basically frosh week)
- February 27th – Semester begins
- March 13th – Labour day (Public holiday, however, all Monash activities continue as normal)
- April 14th – Good Friday (University closed)
- April 14th to 21st (23rd) – Mid-Semester break. (23rd includes the second weekend of the break, meaning the break from class activities is actually 9 days as opposed to 7 days)
- April 24th – Exam Timetable Published
- April 25th – Anzac Day (Public Holiday: University Closed)
- May 26th – Semester ends
- June 5th to June 23rd – Exam Period

Section C:

On arrival, Monash University offers a complimentary airport pickup from Melbourne Tullamarine airport exclusively. All that is needed is completion of a booking form at least 1 week prior to airport pickup. Furthermore, Monash University's welcoming of Monash Abroad students is quite extraordinary. The orientation on February 14th is very comprehensive, covering topics such as housing, clubs, banking, medical help, transportation, and even famous local bars to visit.

Moreover, there is the MOVE club (Monash Overseas + Exchange Club) that is fantastically welcoming for Monash Abroad students. They host a weekly coffee club on the Clayton campus and regular events and bar nights with generous bar tabs for

exchange students around the city. MOVE club even organize trips to attractions outside the city and provide free access to certain events inside the city. I was lucky enough to get a couple free tickets to the Formula 1 Grand Prix race in Melbourne, for example.

There are many different clubs offered at Monash University. If one intends to join many clubs, it could be worthwhile to purchase a Monash Student Association club membership (MSA) for \$25, as this provides a \$5 discount to join every club. MOVE club costs \$10 without MSA membership, and many other clubs cost only \$5 to join without MSA membership, effectively making them free to join with MSA membership.

Section D:

Given Melbourne is on the opposite side of the world from Ottawa, it's a given flight costs will be a fairly significant expense. Obviously costs vary, but at least \$1500 should be accounted for a return flight. However, it is possible to find flights for around \$1000 if one searches diligently enough. I flew to Singapore and traveled around the Malaysian peninsula for 5 weeks preceding the compulsory orientation at Monash University so my flight costs were a little different as they were two one way tickets towards Melbourne (1 to Singapore, then 1 from Singapore to Melbourne. This cost me around \$1700 total)

Prior to arriving in Melbourne, students must choose whether they would like to live on-campus or off-campus. This is because on-campus residences are allocated quickly and it would already be too late to choose on arrival. I opted for off-campus after speaking with a friend who had previously attended Monash on Exchange on the basis of cheaper living costs and better location. It should be noted that off-campus residence is only offered at Clayton Campus, which is twice as far away from Melbourne CBD as Caulfield Campus (25km vs 12km respectively). Also, living on campus is around \$1000 per month for just rent for a small dormitory room, where I'm currently paying \$695 per month to stay off-campus at location closer to CBD with much better transit options and better living conditions. For \$1000 off-campus, you can easily have rent and food as I do, or a much nicer flatshare/houseshare closer to the interesting parts of the city.

Despite off-campus being a relatively obvious choice in my opinion, where on-campus students have a major advantage is in omitting the challenge of finding a place to stay off-campus. They arrive straight from the airport and have housing already arranged. It's admittedly more stressful to have an uncertain housing situation and to be staying in a hostel/airbnb/hotel while searching for a place on arrival. This is partly due to the fact that finding housing in Melbourne is very challenging. It's outrageously competitive as there are far more people looking for homes than there are homes available. In other words, there is an undersupply of places to stay, and it takes work to secure a home. Most flatshares have several interested parties, and what basically occurs is an interview process for the current leasers to select a potential flatmate/housemate (You, as a prospective exchange

student). Additional factors working against you when finding off-campus accommodation are the fact that leasers generally prefer their potential housemate to be long(er) term (6+ months), which is a big disadvantage as most exchange students are here for no more than 5 months.

It can be quite stressful to find a place as a result of the competitiveness, but it is worthwhile when you consider the cost-savings, location advantage, and potential of meeting interesting flatmates who might be both locals that can show you around or other internationals. On campus, you are mainly limited to meeting other international students and being subject to moderately stringent residence hall regulations. However, there are lots of activities happening on-campus organized by both residence halls and school clubs. Off-campus takes more work both in finding a place and in finding social groups to be with, but it is worthwhile in the autonomy it affords you. Also, there is a clear division in on-campus and off-campus exchange students, and they tend to spend time with their respective groups. Chances are that you'd be in one of the two groups, both filled with interesting people.

Vacation and daily travel costs are reasonable. Domestic flights are significantly cheaper than in Canada. It costs \$150 round trip to fly from Melbourne to Sydney for example. To compare, a similar flight in Canada from Ottawa to Toronto might cost over \$250. Road trips are quite affordable within a reasonable distance of Melbourne. There is the Great Ocean Road, which can cost \$200-\$400 all expenses per person for a 4 person split car. This includes gas, hostel, and meals for 4-5 days.

Transportation costs in Melbourne are quite reasonable. Exchange students are eligible for a concession transport card (called a MyKi in Melbourne). This allows you 50% off the regular fees. You can either charge the MyKi with money, where transport on busses, trams, and trains is \$2.05 for the first 2 hours of transport, then an additional \$2.05 for the rest of the day for a total of \$4.10 per day. Or, you can charge the MyKi with a weekly pass costing \$20.50, which is prorated to \$2.93 a day if you intend on using the public transport options. Biking is much cheaper if you buy a used bike and choose to use that to commute everywhere. Although it is still worthwhile to apply for the concession MyKi and load it with money so you may use it on the foul days.

Textbooks are on par with the University of Ottawa, with costs around \$150 per book. However, textbooks are available in the library for overnight or weeklong loans. Some courses suggest not even bothering with a textbook.

Meals are generally a bit more expensive than in Canada. Groceries run me around \$30-\$70 a week for a healthy, protein based diet to complement my gym routine. It can be on the lower end for a very budget-conscious diet. Alcohol is more expensive than in Ottawa as well, so it could be worthwhile to tone that down if you are looking to be more frugal. A 6-pack of beer is usually at least \$15.99, and even that's rare. If you do choose to drink, cheap Australian wine is the more budget-friendly approach.

Dining out is generally more expensive than in Ottawa. Think \$12-\$20 for meals that in Ottawa might be \$7-\$15. Melbourne is a huge place for coffee too, so if you intend on trying all the different kinds and going to local cafés, you should expect to pay \$4 per coffee. Going out to bars and clubs even more so with bar prices. It is easy to spend over a couple hundred dollars over a weekend on various activities and outings.

Other costs associated with the exchange have to do with registration to Monash University. Overseas Health Cover cost me \$376 prorated for 7 months, while the student visa was \$550.

If you intend on staying in Melbourne for one semester and spending liberally, I would suggest a budget of \$15,000 for all expenses including flights, trips and campus activities, bar nights, coffees, and the like. Bare minimum, I still think at least \$7,000 should be budgeted. However, much more fun would be had if you had that extra spending money that any amount over \$10,000 would give you.

Section E:

The very first application procedure following your exchange university selection is Monash Abroad Application form, where you fill in personal details and your course selection. This form needed to be delivered to the University of Ottawa exchange office by **September 23rd** after receiving preliminary instructions on September 14th.

After Monash University confirms your course selection and your required prerequisites, they provide you with an Exchange Offer Letter. I received this on **November 16th**. This offer letter must be completed, signed, and delivered **within 7 days of receiving it, that meant November 23rd** for me. From this point, communication regarding your exchange is primarily with Monash University. To complete your offer letter, you must purchase overseas health cover (OSHC, \$376 as mentioned in section D), and submit both completed offer letter and OSHC payment to Monash. Only then can they issue your health insurance policy number and Certificate of Enrolment (CoE) necessary to apply for your student visa.

My CoE was issued to me **November 24th**, after which it was recommended I complete the rather extended ~35 page visa application on the Australian immigration website as soon as possible as some visa applications take 8 weeks to be processed. There is no strict deadline for your application as it depends on your arrival date, but it is worthwhile to take care of it as soon as possible to not put yourself in a stressful position. Mine was processed within 2 weeks of submitting the application.

Section F:

My address is 641 Waverley Road, Malvern East, 3145. It is 15 minutes walk from Chadstone shopping center, from which plenty of transportation options are

available. It's 15 minute bike and 20-40min bus to Caulfield Campus. The house itself is a 4 private room house share. It is an aged home and needs certain repairs, but it also has its charm and it's on a nice property. I am sharing with 3 other people and pay \$695 a month for rent as mentioned in section D.

Section G:

I am currently not working, but I do intend on finding a job as I am a person who enjoys having routine and responsibilities to fill up time. Students are allowed to work no more than 40 hours per fortnight (20 hours every week) on a student visa. My work term, provided I find work, will be from this instance, April 4th, to my departure from Australia near the end of June once exams are finished.

Section H

Have fun! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Melbourne is a stunning city with so much to offer. Music events and shows here are off the hook, and there are plenty of amazing rooftop bars, sporting events, and beaches nearby to enjoy. Not to mention the fantastic international cuisine and emerging vegetarian/vegan food scene. Also, the coffee is bloody fantastic! Try as much as you can here.

One easy way to find out what's happening near you or in Melbourne in general is to browse Facebook under the "events near you" tab and toggle 'interested' on anything you might be interested in. That way you're always in the loop with what's happening and can choose to go or not go. In other words, you'll never be bored!

Also, it's imperative to go out and meet other exchange students and other people during the first few weeks of bar nights hosted by MOVE and other clubs. This is when people are most open and great friendships and cliques are formed. It's the smartest thing you can do to establish a great friend group that you can keep in touch with even after your exchange elapses. I'm beyond glad I did this.

Lastly, for off campus accommodation, there are various websites such as flatmatefinders, flatmates, gumtree, and there are Facebook groups you can join like Fairy Floss Real Estate and some others. Be persistent if you choose to live off campus!

Section I:

I am having an absolute blast here in Melbourne. It is such a vibrant city with so many interesting neighborhoods to see and activities to do. It's impossible to be bored here. I've met so many amazing people that I am proud to call my friends, and I've gone on some spectacular trips with many of them. There is something here for everyone, all you need to do is GO!