



GOstralia!-GOzealand!

Erfahrungsbericht








zum PhD-Studium an der

Queensland University of Technology

Auf den folgenden Seiten findest du den Erfahrungsbericht einer Studentin, die mit unserem kostenlosen Service ihre Promotion in Australien realisiert hat – lass dich inspirieren und für eine bestimmte Universität oder Stadt begeistern.

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G'Day future PhD students.

I am writing here, to give you some insights and tips for commencing your PhD study in Australia. It will be in English, as this is one of the most important aspects here. If you don't like to speak, hear, and read English 24/7, then a PhD study abroad is not the best choice for you. Another aspect is the PhD study itself. Doesn't matter where you want to go, if you are not ready to work a lot and invest a lot of energy into it, you might want to consider. Nobody should do a PhD because they don't know what else they should do. Believe me...you will not enjoy the next years. 😊

If you are still interested, I can tell you how it is for me here in Australia. *Hoot Hoot*

Some short info about me: I am German and did my bachelor and master studies in Germany. However, from the beginning I tried to choose international study courses and went overseas for a study abroad semester and different internships. By coincidence I saw an opening for a PhD position in Australia. The project description in the field of biomedical research interested me and I continued to inform myself about my supervisor, PI, the research group, and institute. All together convinced me to apply and shortly after I got the position and was planning my journey.

In Australia, you do a PhD study while you are enrolled as a full-time student. That is the first difference to most PhD positions here in Germany. The PhD course is in a program, which dictates diverse milestones, you need to reach at specific time points throughout your PhD. This little extra work (and stress 😊) is sometimes annoying but helps you to stay on track and to be able to finish in 3 or maximum 4 years. You have no teaching obligation, so you can concentrate fully on your research. However, this might vary from institute to institute. There are possibilities to engage in teaching if you are interested. You will have to organise it in agreement with your supervisor.

All this means you need to enrol into your university of choice. In my case, I've got my PhD position in the laboratory first and then enrolled into the university with the support of my future research group. Another option is to apply to a PhD program at the university, and if they accept you, you will need to find a research group. Both ways are fine, but I believe my way was easier. Due to the support of my group, the university had no reason to decline my enrolment application and my position was somehow safe.

This is very important for your visa application, which you can start after everything is settled with your university. You will need your letter of confirmation from the university to apply for a student visa! Keep this in mind and start EARLY. It will take time!

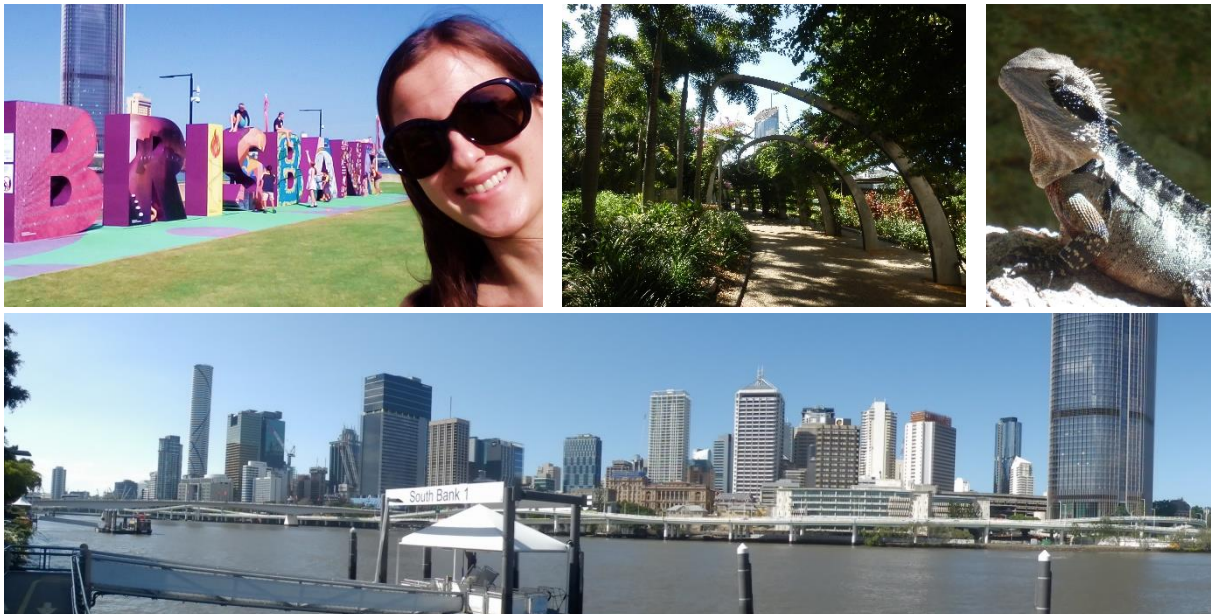
In my case: I started my enrolment process in August but had to wait until September for the annual scholarship round. The outcome of this application is given in December. You have to wait for the outcome before continuing the enrolment process. I was waiting patiently and then hurried to finish everything I could do before the Christmas break. Unfortunately, the university is closing during Christmas and my enrolment process continued until January. Finally, I could apply for my visa, but they needed some weeks as well. My official PhD start date given by the university was the 28th of February. I booked my flight 2 weeks earlier to my commencing date in order to settle down; look for shared flats; open a bank account; etc. A week before my departure, the Australian government asked for a medical certificate before I got my visa. You should be prepared, that they might ask you for it. However, they don't do it every time. So, I had to go from Hamburg to Frankfurt last minute, because

the only other clinic in Berlin was completely booked out. You see: It's a lot of work to go overseas to study, but it's worth it!

While I was preparing my enrolment application and collected all necessary documents, I noticed that I have to send them over as certified copies. To send them per post is very risky because they can go missing on their long journey or are getting damaged (happened before 😞). Also, the post takes times, especially in Australia! So, I came to GOstralia! and asked them for help. I was so glad, when they send my documents to the University on my behalf. As representatives they are allowed to send them per Email. The whole enrolment process takes so long, I was glad to save some time. Thank you GOstralia! Team. You are great! 😊



As students you will not get a salary and you have to pay tuition fees, which are expensive in Australia. Therefore, you need a scholarship for the tuition fee and one to finance your living costs. I am enrolled at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Queensland Australia.



Here, you can automatically apply for their annual scholarship round during your application to the university. However, this doesn't mean you will get it. If you have the possibility to get another funding, do it. I got the tuition waiver from QUT, but not the scholarship to finance my living costs. It is very competitive and there are more students applying than scholarships available. You should have a plan B. For example, I talked to my supervisors beforehand. Therefore, I did know in advance that I will be financed by a supervisor-bridge scholarship if I not receive the QUT scholarship. This way I could start on time. Nevertheless, I do try to find my own external scholarship ever since and apply regularly.

Another aspect of being a PhD student: You work much more than you earn and this is worldwide the case. A higher degree research student (HDR) is receiving here a tax-free scholarship to cover the living costs. The amount is indexed annually and will be \$27,596 in 2019, which is quite good.

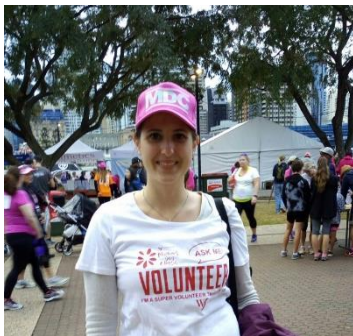
The scholarship payments are given fortnightly, and you will have to cover:

- ❖ rent (+ electricity bill + internet + bond)
- ❖ phone
- ❖ public transport or your own car (you should bring the money to buy one with you)
- ❖ food and beverages
- ❖ leisure time: shopping, dining, travel, tours, sport, etc...

In Australia, the rent is paid weekly or fortnightly and other bills monthly or quarterly.

Some living costs are higher than in Germany, but with a scholarship it is possible to cover all and have some extra for some nice trips around here. However, you have to look after it and should be money-conscious! Otherwise you have nothing left to travel and discover this amazing country.

You are allowed to have a student job but be aware of the scholarship rules. The better question is, if you have TIME for a student job...I don't 😊. Tip: You can do a lot of small volunteering jobs here in Australia. You don't get money for them, but they look good on your CV and might help with scholarship applications or others. Also, they are fun and you meet a lot of new people.



Mother's Day Classic Run

My research group is located at the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation. I am very happy with my supervisors! They are great, patient and always have time for their students. They give good feedback and are making sure you don't do useless things. They support you if you want to go to a conference or if you have new ideas. However, I think this is nothing Australian. You can have luck or not wherever you go. A great supervisor is the most important thing about your PhD and makes this time enjoyable or not.

IHBI is a collaborative medical research institute, which is well connected to other institutes and hospitals in the city. Great location for research. You are collaborating with partners, interacting with group members and get regularly a feedback or new input.

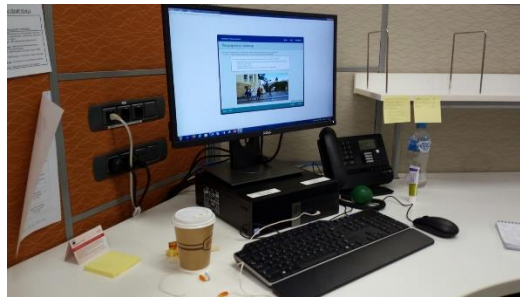


www.qut.edu.au/institute-of-health-and-biomedical-innovation

Typically, you aim for a PhD thesis by publication. This means, you have to publish papers and use them for your final thesis. This way you have to write an induction and discussion, but your result part consists of your published data. The number of paper required are defined by the faculty and can vary. It might be a bit more pressure but benefits your later job applications!

The work load is normal to high. You have your normal working hours, similar to Germany. However, as PhD student, you often do extra hours and work on weekends or evenings to keep up with everything. You are still a student 😊. In my group they have high expectations, but nothing impossible. They will push you to be your best.

However, the daily workload is dependent on your research field. I know PhD students from art or social sciences, who are mainly in the library. They don't have a works space like me in a laboratory or my office spot. They are more independent and organise their working times them self, as long as they have everything ready on their due dates.

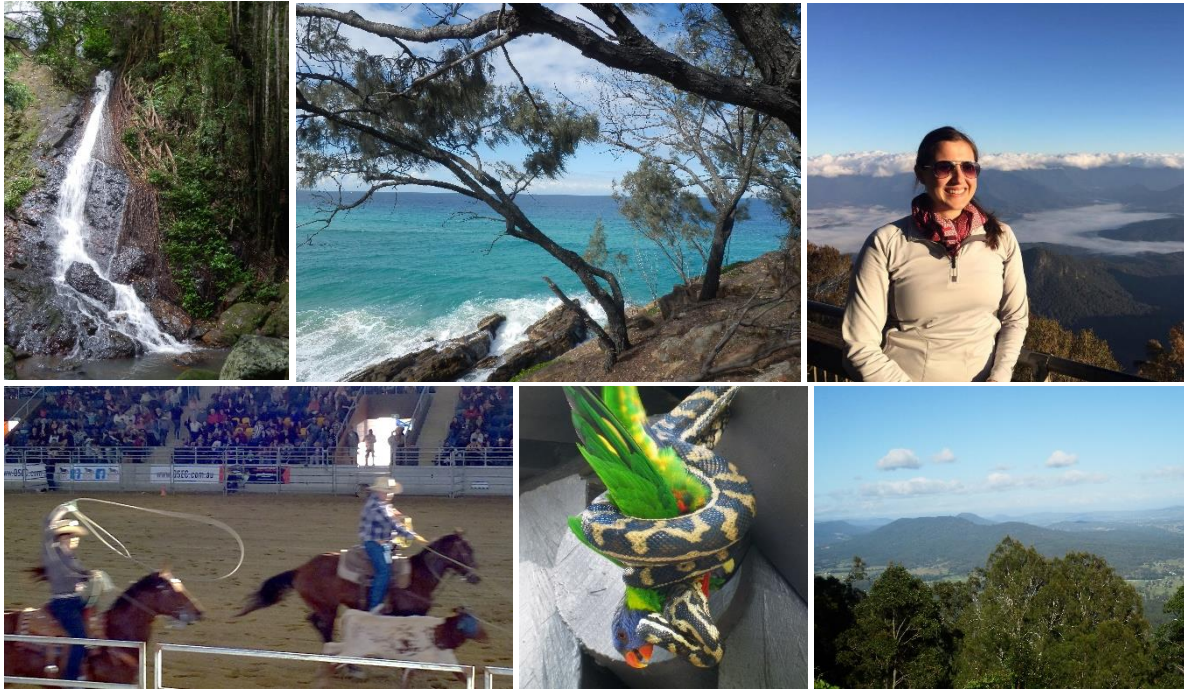


Now I have said a lot about the PhD study and how much work it is. Please, don't be frustrated, but motivated. I wanted to be honest, so you will know what is coming for you. Hopefully it is less overwhelming now.

- Single**
- Married**
- It's complicated**
- In a Relationship**
- In Ph D**

It is a lot of work, but you also have a lot of freedom you will not have again and with nice colleagues and some new friends you can have a wonderful time in a new country.

Of course, I don't do as much travelling I would love to. This is a fantasy, because you should know, that you will move here for your job and this is priority number one. You will have a daily routine, as you know it from home. From time to time you WILL do a nice trip to a new place; a beach or city and these are breath taking. THAT is what it makes special to study here and rewards you for all the hard work! You will take the time to drive 1-2 hours to the next beach, village or national park, because it will be new and amazing. Things you could do in Germany, too, but often we don't do. We stay in our city.



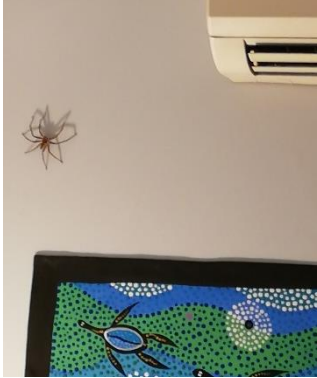
If you want to come to Australia, the city you choose will be cool anyway. I came for the job and are living in Brisbane. The city might not have as many and spectacular tourist attractions as Sydney, but to live here is great. Regularly, the city organises street markets, street festivals and other public activities. It's a great location to visit national parks in the hinterlands, or to go to the beaches at the Gold Coast (south) or Sunshine Coast (north).

The atmosphere is relaxed, the bus drivers are greeting you and shops are open 7 days long. You can choose to live in the CBD or in the Fortitude Valley, a suburb that never sleeps. Or you decide to live in some quite but beautiful suburbs like Paddington. With all the Queenslander houses, you don't feel the big city anymore, although you are so close that you can see the CBD. Rent is high in Brisbane, but cheaper in comparison with other big cities in Australia. The more you move away from the city centre, the cheaper it gets, but it takes forever to get into the city. I would not recommend it as a student, especially without a car.

The cheapest option is to move into a shared flat, which you can find through flatshare.com.au; Facebook or occasionally gumtree. The next option would be student accommodation, which you can already organise from Germany. However, they offer smaller single rooms, have a lot of rules and flatmates are coming and going.

I would recommend a PhD overseas to everyone, who wants to experience something new for the next years. Keep in mind that your family and friends are far away if you move to Australia! However, home sickness can be cured with regular phone calls via skype, which cost nothing and you can see each other. Otherwise, you have to convince everybody to visit you 😊.

Good luck for you future PhD experience, wherever that will be.





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





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