

Report on completion of the short-stay study abroad program

I hereby report completion of my study granted by the program and a final report.

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|---------------------------|---|
| School and Dept. | School of Multidisciplinary Sciences, Department of Informatics |
| Name | KUGAMOORTHY GAJANANAN |
| Destination country | Australia |
| Receiving univ./institute | Queensland University of Technology, |
| Period of study | 12/01/2012 ~ 02/03/2012 |
| Date of report | 02/04/2012 * A final report must be submitted within a one (1) month after your return. |
| Contact in Japan | Mobile: e-mail: |

Final Report for short-stay study abroad program

2. A general description of the receiving university:

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is a major Australian university with a strong focus on applied courses and research. Located in Brisbane, east coast of Australia, QUT has about 40,000 students, including 6,000 international students, with over 4,000 staff members. QUT's main research and teaching fields are Sciences, Engineering, Health & Biomedicine, Business, the Creative Industries, Education, and Law & Justice. The university is located on two campuses, Gardens Point in the center of the city on the Brisbane River, and Kelvin Grove, also in Central Brisbane.

The university's motto is "A university for the real world". QUT is a member of the Australian Technology Network, a network of Australian universities strongly focused on technological research.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queensland_University_of_Technology

3. Preparation before leaving Japan:

I started my short stay at QUT, the end of my second year in PhD research. For my PhD work, I have been collaborating with the researchers (transportation domain) from the QUT. Therefore, I chose to visit them during my short stay program. It turned out to be a great opportunity to participate in the research that would have a great impact on my PhD thesis. The short stay program helped me to make a significant progress in my PhD research, as I was able to conduct an evaluation study and collect data, which would now help me to write a possible publication in near future. This would help me complete my PhD research in time.

I learned about the short stay program from the emails sent by SOKENDAI administration as well as from my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Helmut Prendinger. Since my collaborating researchers agreed to host me at their institute (QUT) as a part of the short stay program, I was able to successfully apply for the short stay program with the strong recommendation from my supervisor as well as the hosting researchers. Due to the fact the Australian visa requirements were rigorous, the application for the visa consumed a great effort, time and money. QUT supported with the application process by nominating me for the visa required.

4. Study and/or research during the stay:

My research work involve developing a novel framework for the creation and execution of complex traffic scenarios for the purpose of conducting behavioural studies in computer-generated environments, such as networked multi-user three-dimensional (3D) virtual worlds. While the foundation of this work is in informatics, the validation of the development requires the collaboration with researchers from traffic and urban engineering. The users of this work from the engineering field will have an important role to advance the development of the framework. Therefore my stay at the Smart Transport Research Centre at QUT was critical to the evaluation of my Ph.D. work.

During my stay at the above centre, I could demonstrate the use of the framework I was developing, to our collaborating researchers. I also received a lot feedback and suggestion from the collaborating researchers, regarding the improvement of the framework.

Further, I used the framework to set up a behavioural driver study to investigate the traffic phenomena - the “rubbernecking” effect. I collected the experimental data from the study, which I now analyse to come up with a potential publication in the near future. My ability/skills in English language were sufficient.

In overall, the collaboration with those excellent researchers from traffic engineering field was a great opportunity to advance my research.

5. Expenses:

I was able to manage my daily life expenses as I planned in my budgets.

Travel Expenses:

- Round Trip air fare : 128 416 yen
- Health Insurance : 48 835(while in Australia 25 675 yen, while travel – 23 160 yen)
- Visa : 24421 yen

Living Expenses:

- Food & Accommodation and Others : 300000 yen for whole stay

Grant:

- Study abroad program: 554 000 yen.

6. Activities other than study or research during the stay:

The short stay study program in Australia was a great experience for me personally and professionally. As an Australian state, the Queensland is known for the coolness for its holiday experiences. I was very fortunate to experience Queensland during my short stay program. I managed to find time during the weekends to explore the east coast of Australia, mainly the Gold Coast and the Sun Shine Coast beaches, which were truly amazing. In addition, I had the great rainforest experience in Tamborine Mountain in Brisbane. I had the many opportunities to visit most parts of Brisbane city as QUT is located in the heart of the city. In addition, I was able to meet new people and make new friends from all over the world, who were happened to be studying/staying/living in Australia.

I also enjoyed a cricket game (my favorite one) between Australian and Indian national teams who competed at the famous “Gabba” cricket ground. Of course, Australian thrashed the Indians on that day☺.

Overall, the short stav program was a tremendous experience for me.

7. Language at the receiving university/institute:

At the Smart Transport Research Center at QUT, English was the required/official language for research. Australia, as an English speaking country, IELTS level of 7 was sufficient enough to manage the daily life. At the start, I was taking time to catch the unique Australian accent during my daily life. However, within few weeks, I overcame that difficulty, by carefully listening to the native's speakers.

8. Things you found difficult (if any)

Thanks to the host supervisors Prof. Edward Chung and Dr. Marc Miska who arranged a safe accommodation with an excellent family, I had no difficulty during my stay in Australia. My host family provided all necessary help for me to settle in nicely in the new environment which helped me focus on the research work I aimed to do, from the day one.

The weather conditions (e.g. continuous rain) were little harder for few weeks. However that did not stop me to make the best of my stay in Australia.

9. Advice for future applicants:

Study or research during the stay:

One must settle in the foreign country as quickly as possible. For that, the arrangement regarding accommodation, transportation (if accommodation is too far), should be made prior to the travel because this helps one to be able to start his/her study/research as early as possible. One must also complete the visa and health insurance matters so early.

Regarding the other activities:

One must plan ahead; mainly take note of the weather forecast, local holidays, and customs early to make the best out of his/her stay in any foreign country. One must not wait till the end of the program to do the traveling.