

Diary of an International Business Management Student



Rosie Hampson is a 3rd year IBM student who is currently undertaking a semester at the University of French Polynesia in Tahiti as part of her study abroad year.

“For my year abroad I have been lucky enough to spend a semester in Tahiti, French Polynesia which is in the South Pacific.

At the University of French Polynesia there are three other students from Newcastle so we have been able to share this fantastic experience together.

Tahiti is the largest of the Society Islands, though not very big at all in comparison to the cities we live in. The community here is very close knit and family based, there is a great vibe and it is in the Tahitian’s culture to be welcoming.

I am studying history and geography during my time here which was completely outside of my comfort zone to begin with, but I felt that whilst here I should immerse myself in the culture, as the year abroad is as much about the experience and language progression as it is the grades you come out with. All of the lectures and exams are in French and so it is really easy to progress your skills without even noticing.

There have been several experiences so far that have stuck out for me, but my favourite event to date was when we went, with some friends I have made over here, on a two hour trek into the mountains of Tahiti to see the Fautaua Cascade. The trek was definitely worthwhile, as we were able to swim in the pools at the top of the waterfall and go down the natural slides that the water cascade has created.

There have been so many memories that I am going to go home with; such as seeing whales, standing on the Trou de Souffleur in Arahoho, eating a traditional Tahitian maa, attempting Tahitian dancing, snorkelling, surfing, visiting a pineapple plantation, seeing Cook’s bay (where Captain Cook arrived), the list could go on.....

I am so thankful that I was given the opportunity to come to French Polynesia because this is an experience that I will never forget and one that I would recommend to anyone who is willing to try new things and does not mind being thrown in at the deep end. The people I have met here and the friends that I have made are so kind and have made this experience what it is. The Tahitian culture is something everyone should experience, not to mention the constant tropical weather



Dean Spooner is a 3rd year student who is currently studying at Hosei University in Tokyo as part of his IBM degree.

“Prior to arriving in Japan, I had a very busy summer getting my flights booked, visa sorted, buying suitcases, clothes, toiletries, books and all sorts of items I thought I might need for my year abroad.

I think it would be fair to say that I wasn't really nervous at all before coming to Japan, I was just too excited! However, many of my friends were very nervous for several weeks prior to arriving in Japan. It's to be expected that students will feel a concoction of nerves and excitement at the same time – only natural!

I remember feeling very tired and grumpy for the first day or two after landing in Japan, but the buzz of being in one of the world's biggest, busiest and most atmospheric cities soon jolted me, and before long I was spending all day at the parks, palaces or walking by the never-ending stream of skyscrapers, taking photo after photo!

The food is incredible, the sights are amazing and I find myself being astounded by anything and everything – I could be in a 100-yen store (essentially Japan's answer to Poundland!), and I'll be excitedly trying to read flavours of crisps in Japanese! All of us who've started at Hosei Uni say we're currently riding a high, a 'honeymoon period' if you will.

I can't speak for other countries' residents, but I have found the Japanese to be incredibly welcoming. You find in their culture that they're a very welcoming, hospitable nation, and will do anything they can to assist you and make you feel comfortable.

But I absolutely must say now, any student coming to Japan must have some grasp of Japanese – do not expect to scrape by on English! I, along with many others, assumed before my arrival that English would be widely spoken and used in Tokyo, but this isn't the case. Outside of the train stations and airports, you'll find you have to rely on your knowledge of Japanese to get by, whether it's speaking to a passer-by in the street, or going shopping!