

REPORT EXCHANGE
SEMESTER
WINTER TERM 22/23

Frankfurt University of
Applied Sciences

Griffith University
Brisbane - Australia

A. THE PLACE



Figure 1 Highest point in Brisbane City

1. THE CITY: BRISBANE

- Brisbane is the capital city of Queensland
- It is known as the Sunny City as it is mostly sunny the whole year
- It is the 3rd most populated city in Australia after Sydney and Melbourne
- It is known for its art, and sports as it has many museums, art galleries, theaters, and footy and cricket stadiums
- Although it is very sunny and hot, Brisbane has no natural beaches but artificial in the center of the City.
- Brisbane has a lot of greenery in and outside the city that makes it very calm and relaxing
- It has ferries, buses, and trains as reliable public transport with bike lanes all over the city
- As a UA student, there are a lot of issues in Brisbane to tackle as an urban planner. However, many features have caught my eye.
- The city of Brisbane has a multi-functional aspect with many cultural, residential, commercial, and leisure.
- Another exciting feature is the city's walkable streets; with the long and big trees, shade is created allowing people to walk freely in the sunny city. The shade, restaurants, and shops encourage people to walk on the bay along the harbor.

2. THE COUNTRY

Australia is known for:

- Its biodiversity, it is home to varied animal and plants species which makes it a unique ecosystem in the world
- This biodiversity is challenged by many issues that threaten the environment which hold a significant meaning to the country as it highlights the importance of sustainable development.
- Most importantly, the respect of the human as human. As it is a country that is known for its cultural diversity, it puts a huge effort to respect firstly the aboriginal people and any human being.

3. THE ACCOMMODATION

Many accommodation sites can be a big help for Griffith University as they are convenient for short or long-term students.

- www.unilodge.com.au
- www.iglu.com.au
- www.flatmates.com.au

My room was in a shared house that I found on flatmates.com.au with the help of a friend that was almost 40mins away with public transport.

This room cost 500euro/ month which is considered cheap in Australia.

4. THE EXPENSES

- Accommodation varies from 120-250 euro/ week depending on location, size, and type
- Groceries: 300-350 euro/ month
- Transportation: 50-70 euro/ month
- Phone: 12-17 euro/ month
- Insurance: 40 euro/ month
- Travel tickets: 80 euro- Sydney/ Melbourne
- Entertainment: 100 euro/ month

B. THE UNIVERSITY

1. THE UNIVERSITY'S FOCUS

- Griffith University ranks top 2% worldwide
- It is Globally connected
- It is innovative in teaching and learning
- It supports reaching your goals
- It is a state-of-art facility

- It is an international network of graduates
- It has a research culture that makes a difference

Griffith University has 10 faculties that include these study fields:

Architecture	Visual and creative arts	Performing Arts
Construction	Business and government	Criminology and Law
Planning	Engineering	Humanities
Education	IT	Languages
Medicine	Aviation	Social sciences
Dentistry	Music	Science and environment
Health		

2. THE CAMPUS



Figure 2 Nathan Campus- Green streets

- Griffith University has 6 campuses across Brisbane and Gold Coast. My studies were at Nathan Campus on top of a mountain in Brisbane.
- The buildings on campus are designed in a sustainable way that encourages the students to sit and enjoy their studies.
- Nathan Campus offers many facilities that aid students' lives:
 - Lectures theatres for different faculties
 - Different library buildings that offer study zones, academic training, and workshops
 - Different bars, restaurants, and cafes all over the campus
 - Sporting facilities that include gyms, tracks, fields, pools, tennis courts, and recreation halls
 - Retail shops that offer convenient products for everyone
 - Childcare centers
 - Studio and labs that help with teaching
 - Computer and printing labs

3. THE FACULTY: Architecture, construction, and Planning

"Planning and building sustainable solutions for our communities and cities"

At Griffith University, this faculty focuses on enriching your learning of architecture, construction, and learning by focusing on sustainability to develop solutions for global issues, making industry connections for students to develop their career visions, and offering architecture, construction, and planning leadership development to stand out.

4. ARRIVAL

- After getting the Certificate of Enrolment CoE, you will get myGriffith credentials that will help you enroll.
- You will choose multiple courses to get approved
- After getting the CAR, with the approved courses, you will get your timetable
- If any of the courses clashes, new courses should be chosen
- By the end, the final courses will be enrolled in myGriffith to get the final timetable for the integration to begin.
- Through orientation week planned on my Griffith, and many emails, and Teams messages are more than enough to help the student understand their places in the university and degree

5. STUDENT LIFE

- myGriffith, teams account, learning@Griffith, and outlook account was easily accessed on and off campus for any information regarding the enrolment, the university life, the support, the program, my colleagues, my professors, my online sessions, and my courses' contents.

- The library was a very easily accessed building and service, as it was open to everyone for study hours. It was very rich in the book's variety and quality. Griffith Library offers a lot of online and on-campus training sessions to help international students with their academic writing to meet the university's requirements.
- The campus had many restaurants with a variety of food, many cafes, and bars.
- The university is filled with different clubs that have different goals and concepts making it easier for students to integrate into student's life.

C. THE MASTER'S PROGRAM

1. ORGANISATION

1.1 Semester dates

- Orientation week: February 27- March 03
- Start of the semester: March 06
- End of semester: July 17
- End of courses: June 04
- Exam dates: June 07-17
- Holiday dates: 8 total days in April, and May for mid-semester break, labor, and Anzac days.

1.2 Mentoring and support

For the first 2 weeks, the university offers multiple introductory programs in their orientation weeks. As international exchange students, international student, and exchange student programs were offered to make it easier for us to understand the whole procedure.

Plus, during the semester, multiple groups were created on Teams for any mentoring or support from other students and advisors.

2. CONTENTS

2.1 Study focus

The Masters of Urban and Environmental Planning has many courses related to many study fields such as architecture, engineering, biology, environment, economy, philosophy, and many others. What was interesting is the different backgrounds in the different courses I was in. As an architect, it was very interesting to hear all the different points of view from different perspectives about one specific topic.

2.2 Study program

During this semester, I took 4 courses from the master's program:

- 1- Environment and development
- 2- Environmental economics
- 3- Environmental systems and climate change
- 4- Research design and methods

These 4 courses were taught in English the whole semester, everyone had the option of online, on-campus, and recorded sessions. As it was an international course, many students were not even in Australia, but from all over the world, with different ages, and different nationalities. This program made it easier for everyone to have a moderate study-life balance.

1- Environment and development:

- 33 students
- Instruction language: English
- The course focuses on the link between development and the environment in developing and developed countries. The main focus was on presenting all the global issues and discussing sustainable solutions to solve them as much as possible.
- This course was divided into 2 modules:
Module 1: International Politics, economics, and Sustainable module focus on the International System covering good and bad governance in any sustainable development, the Sustainability Transitions from weak to strong, the Accounting for the Environment covering the SDG's progress, challenges, and roles, and ecological economics, the North-South Context regarding the development differences and progress.
Module 2: The Ecological Dimension module focuses on Water Management, Environmental Management through Regional Planning, Aquatic Ecosystems and Agriculture, and Mining and Environmental Management.
- The sessions were theoretical lectures ending with a small workshop that made the students discuss the different views on one topic
- This course is graded according to 5 assessments throughout the semester. These assessments were a high workload as every week there is a graded assessment. Every week, an online discussion is held on Teams for a group of 10 people discussing one question or statement related to the week's topic. Another assessment is related to the first one, where 3 students from the group are considered Student Leaders who lead the discussion from start to end. The third assessment is an Essay Proposal for the fifth assessment the final Essay that is submitted at the end of the semester. Forth assessment is a Mid-Trimester Test that covered the first module.
- The assessments, especially the weekly contribution helped to stay within the scope of the course. This course mainly helped me understand the

weak and strong sustainability and the main components to implement sustainable development whether it is in a developed or developing country as long as there is good governance starting from the people to the international global system.

2- Environmental Economics:

- 54 students
- Instruction language: English
- The course focuses on how to manage environmental challenges by explaining how environmental economics tools and techniques are used.
- This course is divided into 6 topics covering first the linkage between the economy, society, and the environment. Second, it discusses Value and Markets identifying economic terms to understand demand and supply curves. Third, it presents different market failures and techniques to correct environmental issues. Forth, it focuses on the different toolkits for managing environmental and ecological resources such as “command and control”. Fifth, it discusses the Non-market valuation methods covering the Hedonic Pricing and Choice Experiments. Finally, the last topic covers Decision Support Tools such as discounting or Cost Benefit Analysis.
- The sessions were theoretical lectures with some equation examples and practices.
- This course is graded according to 3 assessments throughout the semester. These assessments were a moderate workload as students were working on an individual final case study presentation. First, from week 3 to week 6, students had 4 In-Course Multi-Choice Quizzes about the past week’s topic. The second assessment was the Case Study Presentation where we had to choose one environmental issue in a specific place and manage it economically by using the different techniques and methods learned in class. The final assessment was a Final exam covering the whole trimester’s topic.
- This course is very interesting as it shows global issues from an environmental economist’s point of view which was very new to me. It helped me understand a new perspective on the environmental issues that should be economically managed for whatever industry or city to develop sustainably.

3- Environmental Systems and Climate Change:

- 82 students
- Instruction language: English
- This course focuses on the impacts of anthropogenic climate change on the natural environment, it adopts an Earth System Science perspective to explain the role of environmental systems in determining global climate.
- This course discusses the evidence of climate change and its consequences, the models and IPCC projection of climate change, it covers the impact of climate change on ecology such as organisms, species, and

ecosystem function and how can they adapt to such changes, the impact on human health and the direct and the indirect impact of Climate Extremes on human health. Plus, it discusses the impact of climate change on Marine Ecosystems and covers Ocean Acidification and its effect. The last couple of weeks cover the climate change impacts on agriculture and food security and the solutions, the mitigation challenge with the emission story so far, and the global response to climate change through Paris Agreement and the IPCC Special Report on 1.5 Degrees warming. Finally, the last week discusses the skeptics and deniers, their arguments, and how to deal with them.

- The sessions were theoretical lectures with a follow-up workshop that focuses on the course's assessments.
- This course is graded according to 3 assessments throughout the semester. These assessments were a high workload as students were working on a final individual project report after a group project literature. First, 4 online tests are taken during weeks 3, 6, 9, and 12 that cover the past workload. The second assessment is a group project where 6 students choose a topic related to Climate change. My group's topic was climate migrants, each student had to find 15-20 articles and find the key issues to present in the project literature. The last assessment was the project report where every student individually expands their research from the group project to write a specified report on a specific issue or place related to the topic
- This course introduced me to the scientific and factual part of climate change. This information was a bit vague before taking this course, but it helped me figure out the scientific facts that can allow me to face deniers and skeptics in such a hard time for our global community. Plus, this course helped me figure out where and how to search for such information with a scientific background that allows us to dig deeper into such issues.

4- Research Design and Methods:

- 64 students
- Instruction language: English
- This course helps postgraduate students to understand the nature of their research as a Master's student working with concepts and theories focusing on how to identify research problems and develop the questions.
- This course first introduces the scientific methods for research with all its types, and strategies, and explores pure and applied research. After that, many lecturer guests presented their different research on different topics for students to understand the process from the beginning till the end.
- The sessions were theoretical lectures and case studies from different lecturers.
- This course is graded according to 3 assessments throughout the semester. These assessments were a moderate workload as students

were working on one Research proposal. The first assessment is an outline and annotated bibliography of the 20 articles related to the research topic of each student. In the final weeks, students made a Poster Presentation covering the topic overview, the background, the hypothesis, the research questions, the methods, and the expected results. Final assessment, the research proposal had to be presented in a specific detailed manner from the topic overview to the budget.

- Although this course was not new to me because of the courses at FRA-UAS, it emphasizes the research proposals and the specific components of the proposal.

2.3 Professors

Although we were a significant number in the sessions, the professors included everyone. A lot of discussions popped up during the sessions and the professors were encouraging all students to participate in any way. The Teams groups were another way for the professors to include the students where they were boosting them to share any thoughts or articles they would find interesting.

D. CONCLUSION

This semester was very helpful as it introduced me to a more scientific and environmental part of sustainable urban planning. Although not a lot of sessions focused on urban planning, most of them got me linking it with my degree and my focus. Understanding the climate change basis and its impacts urges me to consider the consequences and causes of such phenomenon during any sustainable development.