

When the dream is to go to Australia

An EU scholarship gave a student from the city of Horsens, Denmark, the chance to study "down under" for one semester.

At the School of Technology and Business in Horsens, 1,200 students from more than 60 different countries are leaving an international mark on the campus.

But it is also highly valued that students – Danish as well as international – go abroad to gain new competences during their education at VIA.

One of the options is a scholarship from the so-called EU-Australia Mobility Project, which provides a number of students from European countries with financial assistance so they can try study life "down under".

Daniil Plotnikov from Estonia has seized the opportunity to do so. Ordinarily, he studies to become a Global Business Engineer at VIA University College in Horsens but when he got the opportunity to go, he gladly accepted.

"The offer almost appeared out of nothing. Beforehand, I had a great wish to go to either the USA or Australia but I could not afford it, if I had to finance my stay on my own," says Daniil Plotnikov, who was hand-picked by the Director of Studies and the teachers to go abroad.

In the future, the student must make a motivated application to be considered for the scholarship which purpose is to create better opportunities for the exchange of students between EU countries and Australia.

The suitcase is a requirement

In several of the educations at the School of Technology and Business in Horsens, the students are encouraged to go abroad. And at the Global Business Engineer education, a stay abroad is an integrated part of the study.

The reason is that students who take part of their education abroad return both vocationally, socially and culturally strengthened and, at the same time, they have made themselves more attractive to future employers.

"I think it is very vital for our Global Business Engineers to get international, practical experience. Therefore, it is also a requirement in the curriculum that you spend at least one semester abroad," explains Director of Studies Anders Møller.

"Australia is a pipedream for many students and, therefore, it is amazing that such a project can help move things along. At the same time, we have good experiences with the Australian universities," he says.

The scholarship covers expenses for the ticket, travel insurance, a visa, vaccinations and food during the five months you spend abroad.

Having returned to Horsens, Daniil Plotnikov is grateful for the experiences he has had during his semester in Australia, and he hopes that it is not the last time he will visit the great continent.

"I would definitely like to go again – either as a tourist or in connection with a future job. There are many places which I didn't get to visit because I didn't have the time," explains Daniil Plotnikov.

Good for the CV

During his stay, Daniil had a practical placement with an Australian company where he gained insight into what he will work with when he finishes his studies.

"It was a very exciting experience, and I definitely think that it is a plus on my CV that I have been to another country where I more or less had to manage on my own," says Daniil.

Lena Nielsen from the Study Administration at VIA University College could not agree more:

"Employees with international competences are in demand by many companies. It provides greater independence to have to manage on your own in a foreign culture, and in that connection language is naturally a significant factor. The competences are cultivated by studying or having a practical placement abroad," she says.

"At the same time, students bring new knowledge home with them. It goes for e.g. new technology or new markets which can be cultivated by Danish companies."

The project will last for a three-year period until September 2011, and EUR 212,250 in EU means have been set aside for coverage of expenses for a total of 35 students and 26 teachers.