

Transcript

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Chris Bonham 0:09

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of the Study Abroad Programme podcast. In which we talk to students who've participated in our study abroad programme to share what they've experienced so far, highlights, hints and tips, et cetera. We are joined today by one of our current students on the study abroad programme. So I will pass over to him to introduce himself.



Brice 1:02

My name is Brice. I'm a study abroad student from America, originally from Lexington, Kentucky, going to Eastern Kentucky University pursuing a double major in finance and risk management and insurance.



Chris Bonham 1:16

And welcome Brice. Lovely to have you with us today. So you've already told us who you are and what you study and where you're from. So would you be able to tell us a little bit about why you chose the University of Reading as your study abroad destination?



Brice 1:35

Yeah, absolutely.

The campus was a huge selling point kind of.

The combination between getting to know more of like the English countryside kind of lifestyle as well as being 20 minutes from London was a was a great selling point.

The academics here fit.

Kind of more what I was looking for. So the Henley Business School was a great asset for me in that I could take classes here that would be equivalent to classes I'm taking back home, but a little bit outside my programme. So an example for that would be I'm currently taking international human resources.

Which is it? It fits in my programme, but it's a little on the outside of it, so it gives me additional perspectives and insights in kind of within the business field as well as the other academic offerings. So another module I'm taking is the history of Latin

America in Spain, which takes care of some of my cultural credits back home, but also.

Gives me a perspective of something very close to home from living in America, but from an outside.

Kind of kind of viewpoint. So I would definitely say it's a combination of the lifestyle that you live here.

The accommodation options, the academics and the kind of convenience to both London, London Heathrow Airport. So if I if I needed to travel and and I've, you know, been able to, to kind of visit it a little bit earlier was a great opportunity too. So it was definitely a huge hauling point.



Chris Bonham 3:05

Grant, thank you. And yes, I remember because you would participated in a summer programme with your home university that brought you to the UK in the summer before you actually joined us. So you're able to take a little look before you joined us as a full time student on the study abroad programme. And I will say to listeners, we do love to welcome you before you actually join us. So if you do happen to be in this neck of the woods.

Send us an e-mail, book, a tour. We'll be happy to see you.

So you've talked a little bit, Bryce, about the modules and the academics that you're taking and say while you are taking some very business focused modules, you're also taking the Spanish module, which would you say would be your favourite of those modules?



Brice 3:53

Hmm, that's a really good question. They're both very different.

I find the international human resources one very stimulating. It's rare when you can sit in a lecture for two hours and be mentally engaged the entire time.

But also the history of Latin America and Spain is something that's quite relevant to to kind of the lifestyle back home. And so it's an interesting.

Look in the not just the way that the modules are being taught, but in the kind of insights that you gain from just, you know, they're from an English perspective.

They're being they're being taught.

You know in England and there are subject matters that very much affect kind of, you know things by calling you as someone who wants to go into business. HR is always

going to be a thing. And I've taken classes back home for HR. But the international element of the human resources dealing, particularly with like expatriates and how companies, you know, go abroad and what some of the outcomes of that are. So I don't know if I have a favourite between the two, but I can tell you some of my favourite elements of each one.

With the international human resources, we do a lot of case studies, so there's like, so there's like so you know we have our lectures, but then in the seminars we get a chance to kind of.

Go back and forth and really run an analysis on the different case studies of when companies went into other countries and how it went and what sort of the outcomes were and what some of the different purchase they could have taken were or from an individual perspective. So I think I really enjoy that that kind of engaging hands on, you know, analysis of real life events but with the international human resource are the.

History of Latin America and Spain.

I think I'm enjoying these seminars more.

Umm, I mean the lecture's more than the seminar, so I would say the international resources is the seminars and the.

History of Latin American Spain are the lectures the professors are really, really great, very energised about the subject matter, and it's interesting to hear them both read the English and then read the Spanish so you know you kind of can start talking about the nuances of language, but also the actual history of kind of some of the key events of the of the different people.

And you know, we recently talked about, you know, a nun that, you know, was kind of laying some of the groundwork for feminism and feminist ideas and something I didn't know at all was that you, you had to pay to be a part of a convent. So it was something that, you know, I guess from my perspective, I always assumed it was just something that you either kind of got trapped into, but it was considered more of a luxury position, especially for women to be able to kind of pursue academic means. Without having to be, you know, physically attached to a man or someone else. And I just thought that was just absolutely fascinating.

No, I mean, I'm sure I could have learned it a little bit in America, but it's just very it's been very engaging here as well. And I think the perspectives have been insightful. So I don't know if I have a favourite between the two, but I definitely have different favourite elements of each.



Chris Bonham 6:52

A very diplomatic answer. Thank you, Bryce. It's also demonstrates that the breadth of the, the academic offer that we have here at reading and the ability of study board programme students to take modules from across that. I mean say you're combining business modules with a Spanish module and that is.

Far from you, from unique at reading we have a lot of students on the programme who will be taking modules from multiple subject areas here.

To meet requirements for their home university degree programmes, but also just general interest. And that is yeah very much possible and encouraged and supported here at reading.

So we've spoken a bit about your modules and the academics. Now that might be a highlight for you but?

Are there any other highlights or any highlights of your time so far with us at reading in particular?

You think you've done anything? You've seen that you will look back upon fondly.



Brice 8:02

Who? That's a big answer. So I've taken a couple trips, been very fortunate. Been to London several times, which has been amazing. Kind of chance to go to Scotland and you know, kind of go on this whirlwind tour of the three big cities, but Edinburgh, Glasgow and Manchester. And I also could take a lot of small trips as well as a trip with the programme here to Bath, which was which was out of fun. So I would say that.

You know, aside from the trips that are either structured by our programme or ones that have kind of taken on my own, it's also the friends I've met here.

You know, I'm at a lot of English people, naturally, which are all wonderful. But I've also met Germans and Australians and Swedish are Swedes and people from France, I mean from Spain all over. I mean, in the morning, if I get up early enough, there's a Spanish rower who goes to the gym and will both go together, which is really lovely. But then, you know, a lot of a lot of the time I spend in the library, I spend with a lot of the English friends or some of the Aussie friends.

You were speaking earlier. People who you know, trying to take the opportunity to go abroad and do something they can't do back in their home university. I know one of my Aussie friends that you know she she's very passionate about art but she was

afraid to take a full degree in it and I think all of her modules here are art focused and so she's kind of having this this really great three month period of just exploring that side of herself. But no I mean it's both getting to know the English people here it's getting to know.

A whole range of people from different nations and different nationalities.

I think living on campus has also been a highlight in that it just facilitates a lot of that. Our whole, I mean in in just our dorm, I think we have Italians, we have the we do have the Swedes, we have the Germans, we have the Aussies, we have some Americans, we have some people from South America too, like Colombia, but.

I mean, it's just across the board. You get so much exposure to so many different cultures, it's something I didn't expect either. You know that that I do think will be a highlight that I'll remember quite fondly in that.

You know, I got to connect and explore with all these different people when I really just expected to, to kinda get to know, you know, English people. I don't. I don't why I didn't expect to see other nationalities, but I didn't expect to get to intermix with them so frequently.



Chris Bonham 10:22

No, that's lovely. I mean, I will say on the study abroad programme alone, we have usually at least 20 to 25 different nationalities represented amongst our cohorts. Combined that with a wider university with a student population of over 18,000, you're going to have a lot more nationalities represented and folks to learn from and share with.

Both in class and in halls of residence. So note that is that's fantastic.

So you've come here, you've travelled and yes, you had been to sort of the UK before?

But what's hints and tips do you have for future study abroad programme students?

Is there something you wish you had known or hadn't known something you wish you'd packed or not? What would you encourage future study abroad programme students to think about?



Brice 11:22

Oh, lots of tips and tricks. So first London Heathrow will steal every liquid you pack. Don't bother, just buy it here.

The tube network in London is fantastic. Don't be afraid of it, but it will leave you

behind if you're not on your game.

The transport getting here, I think for me as an American, I had kind of this, this excitement of public transit, which doesn't exist back home in the in the same capacity that it does here. And so I was very star eyed about it and I think.

I would absolutely recommend taking as much public transit as possible. I know a few people who took, you know, either the shuttle from London Heathrow to get here or they took a taxi, but really going through Paddington, taking the Great Western Railroad, getting here and kind of getting to know public transit and building that confidence in your ability to navigate successfully from one place or another without.

Total reliance on Google Maps or, you know, train travel. There is also some things you might want to do ahead of time with train travel, especially if you plan to be travelling around is there's a lot of discount cards that you can get for transportation. And that some routes can be more expensive than others.

Like the plane ticket from London Heathrow to Edinburgh was like 50 lbs. But you know on the way back the trains were quite a bit more expensive, but it just makes sense 'cause. I was going to different cities.

But there are different discount codes that that you can get there different that different cards and I would say you know looking into.

What you think you're going to be using to get around predominantly, whether that's buses or trains or you know are flying?

Definitely look at those discounts ahead of time. I know you know one of my, one of my friends here in America just planned like over reading week he visited 7 cities in seven days. Absolutely ridiculous. But I think he spent a total of £250 on travel, which considering that, you know that's a minimum of seven flights, it really wasn't bad and it included accommodations which was predominantly hostels. So I stayed at my first hostel here. That was an interesting experience.

I would definitely recommend that if you can.

You know your first time around doing stuff like this, maybe try to do a buddy system and do it with a friend and that even if you do get lost it then kinda turns into an adventure.

But aside from just the kind of basic.

You know, kind of utilitarian advice of this and that, you know, I found this is an experience I'm just never going to regret taking. But I would also do very differently if I did it again. And I think that's a very exciting thing and an exciting place to be.

And in that, you know, it feels like I'm learning things. It's changing the way I view myself, the way I view my own country, the way I view other countries.

And it's if, if anything, it's adjusted my perspective to not necessarily see you know certain ways of doing things is better or worse, but really starting to see everyone.

More is just humans and people, which I think is quite helpful when you get to visit a place and it stops being like a fantasy world and starts being a real place. So I would just recommend kind of keeping an open mind.

Not doing as much research as beforehand, which I do recognise kind of contradicts my first elements of kind of looking at travel cards. I would I would definitely do the utilitarian stuff, but don't do as much research on the culture. Just go out and

experience it and you know I found that the English to be a very friendly, very polite.

A group of people said that so absolutely, you know, they're gonna recognise you're American and they're gonna try to help. So as well as I found out with all the

nationalities I've come in contact with, I haven't found anyone who's, you know, runs into you and you know is ready for you to just get away from them. So I think I think

always being kind of open minded and willing to to accept help and learn and in a very new environment which I assume you know if you're doing this you would but

yeah don't do too much research but just do the utilitarian stuff that may save you a little bit of money.

And help you get a little more out of your time here.



Chris Bonham 15:21

And thank you, Bryce. And by the sounds of it, you've very much taken on board what we said in orientation. That's how we do things at reading, how things are done in the UK. It's not right. It's not wrong. It's just different to what folks might be used to back home.

Obviously, yes. Money saving. That's a big thing for a lot of students. So if you can, as Bryce says I think, do as much research as you can to save as much money as you can before you get here.

The study Abroad office could always help advise and support another money saving hint tips as well once you're here.

But definitely, there's some really good stuff there. Bryce, thank you so much for sharing.

So yes, if you would like to replicate Bryce's experience and join us on the study abroad programme at the University of Reading.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch. We're happy to take queries as whatever point you are on your journey to joining us, we can be emailed via study abroad at reading.ac.uk. We can also be booked for online advising appointments as well. So yes, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any queries questions.

Or interested in joining us after listening to this.

Bryce, thank you so much. Again. It has been a pleasure.

Hearing about your experiences and having you share them with us today.

 **Brice** 17:01

Thank you so much for having me. It's been a pleasure, as always, to talk to you.

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