

Transcript

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Chris Bonham 0:06

Hello and welcome to this latest episode of the Study Abroad Programme Podcast, where we speak to study abroad programme students who've joined us at the University of Reading about their experiences with us. So we're joined today by one student who is currently with us on the programme. So over to you, who are you and what do you study?



JAMES MARSDEN 0:51

My name is James Marsden from Australia. I study Bachelor of Commerce, Business and Psychological Science. So yeah, a bit of a double degree, which is good.



Chris Bonham 1:10

And which university is that at James?



JAMES MARSDEN 1:12

At La Trobe University in Melbourne.



Chris Bonham 1:15

Grand. So that's one of our exchange partners where we've been welcoming students from for a number of years now. I don't know the exact number off the top of my head. So lovely to have you with us today, James. Now, why did you choose the University of Reading as your study abroad destination?



JAMES MARSDEN 1:37

I multiple factors really. A few there was looking at the subject list. That was quite broad, lots of options to choose from, which really sparked my interest in what I could like, what I was interested in, and those all those too much to choose from. So there was actually subjects I missed out on that I wanted to do. There was also there was also the campus I look looking at the campus that was really good. It's quite big. There's lots of sport, lots of fields, sport facilities. Basketball courts. Lots of libraries, huge as well. That's great. Also, and one of my other things was a societies, lots of

societies to join and there they go from there was a random egg society which was I went to at the fair look that which was didn't join but was funny. But yeah, I'd say a combination of sports. So the social aspects with societies, the campus was great and the selection of our subjects.



Chris Bonham 2:57

So a real mixed bag then.



JAMES MARSDEN 2:59

Yes, definitely yes.



Chris Bonham 3:00

And yes, I will say for listeners there is an egg society. Just one of at least 150 different clubs and societies that we have on campus every year, run under the auspices of Reading Students' Union. So obviously you mentioned that you had to miss out on some of the modules that you might have wanted to take because you are limited in how many you can take.



JAMES MARSDEN 3:29

Yep.



Chris Bonham 3:29

But what has been your favourite module of the ones that you have been able to take with us so far this semester?



JAMES MARSDEN 3:36

So far my personal favourite has been clinical neuroscience, the psychology module that I'm undertaking. I find I found it really interesting. Talking about the brain. Neurotransmitters and how I guess how we function and feel and what's like go instead of on going deeper than the surface level about like what causes what this dopamine effects this and that. Serotonin we feel happy. So it's really dives into. Like fun, fun, structure and function of why we feel what we feel and also, there was branched off to topics of pain. We were talking about different conditions as well, which was really interesting about depression, which is something that I didn't know much about. But now after that lecture I came away from it, at in the pub talking

about it. So it kept me on my feet and was really interesting to. I learnt a lot that I previously I had a base knowledge. But I came home to my flat and instantly talked to my one of my friends about it. And did you know this? Did you know that? And they're like no, didn't know that and got on Google and watched some YouTube videos about it. So I just. It was really interesting of why of basically why it is what we feel and why does this happen looking at the cause and then this is the effect I guess. So it was, yeah, I really enjoy it.



Chris Bonham 5:27

Grand and the fact that it prompted you to talk about it with folks in the pub and talking about it with your flatmates when you got home after the lecture, I think just demonstrate how much you've got out of it.



JAMES MARSDEN 5:33

Yes, you know. Yep.

Yeah, yeah.



Chris Bonham 5:43

Grand. So you've been with us for about two months now at the time of our conversation?



JAMES MARSDEN 5:51

Yes. Yep.



Chris Bonham 5:54

You've got about a month to go. What has been a highlight of your time so far with us at Reading?



JAMES MARSDEN 6:03

Highlight for me has probably been the social aspect of it all. There has been like every day there's a an event on, there's always something to do. That's what I've noticed. Like there's free where I am Home at Halls. Like what in the halls. I get notifications about. Like there's Pilates and yoga, and all these interesting other things like piece of activities to do, there's trivia nights, which I did last night, which was really fun. Karaoke; didn't do the karaoke. And there's bingo lingo. I did that.

That was very interesting and funny. And the, of course, the infamous Wednesday Union night where everyone gets down to that. That's really good. Good night. But yeah, there's heaps going on that. I kind of sit down. I'm like, well, if I do this, I'm gonna miss this. So I've gotta plan it to make sure that I fit all the all the events. I want to do in and it's a good thing that have so many options, because if I miss one thing one week, I'll make sure to get to it the next week. So definitely the social aspect and meeting new people at reading. I've met a mixture of local students and international students. So that's been awesome to connect with them. Different nights. I'll do trivia with the some international students and then go to the Union night with some local students as well. So it's just great to have different options of what to do socially.



Chris Bonham 8:02

I'm going to use that if you don't mind, "if I do this, I'm going to miss this".



JAMES MARSDEN 8:09

Yes.



Chris Bonham 8:10

That really neatly sums up how much is going on campus here at Reading.



JAMES MARSDEN 8:14

Yep, definitely.



Chris Bonham 8:16

If I may, James as well, the ones that you didn't mention, there is your budding interest in Reading FC, our local football team.



JAMES MARSDEN 8:22

Oh yes, of course, of course. Yes, I've. Yeah, I've actually got the I'm looking at the scarf as we speak. So yeah, I'm a massive fan. I wasn't when I got here. I was just like Reading FCs a team for me. Yeah, I'm come from a big football background back at home so Reading, oh it's I think the atmosphere here in the UK is something different, is incredible. It's just like the chance and everyone gets around it. It's just everyone's so passionate. But yeah, no, I've been to three or four reading games with

a few of my flatmates, but it's just it's such an experience. Everyone just screams and yells and when we're close to scoring and I don't want to be, I don't want to. Since I've arrived, Reading has won a lot of games so I do want to say as I've become a fan like I think maybe because I'm here, they're winning more games and I'm cheering on to them so. Since I've arrived from Australia Reading have put on, they've just they're going up the ladder. They could get promoted. So I don't wanna say it's me, but it could be me. But well, yes.



Chris Bonham 9:49

You're only with us for a Semester 1 James. So let's hope there's some more Australian good luck.



JAMES MARSDEN 9:59

Yes, fingers crossed.



Chris Bonham 10:00

Last semester, two students from La Trobe and elsewhere, and it doesn't all leave when you leave us at Christmas, I will. The Full disclosure here, I'm not a Reading fan, but I support another team personally, but it is always good to see the local team doing well and seeing students feeling welcome and able to go along to matches. No, James, that's absolutely grand. Thank you.



JAMES MARSDEN 10:30

Yep.



Chris Bonham 10:31

So obviously if you do this, you're gonna miss this. You love the social aspect of it would, would that be a hint or a tip that you'd give to future study abroad programme students, to really get involved in the social opportunities?



JAMES MARSDEN 10:37

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Just yeah, I guess. Sign up for as many things as possible and just go. What was really good about Reading was that they had taster sessions. So I went to a few actually, which was I went to the volleyball one, I trialled for football, so it was really good just to get kind of the gist of how things work and the vibe. And

even if I didn't want to do it, I was like, oh, well, I'll just go see how it is. I might like it. Who knows? But yeah, it's definitely a hint or a tip to just sign up for it. Do it. Don't even think about it. Just go. Go do it. So if you don't like it, you don't like it and but yeah, give it a shot. So it could be could be a sport or a society or something you like. So go for it.



Chris Bonham 11:39

Around and I will say for folks joining us in Semester 2, all these taster sessions and opportunities to join clubs and societies are repeated in Semester 2. A slightly smaller scale than Semester 1, but it takes advantage of the fact that a lot of people come in either new to the university or come back from Christmas and New Year holidays with resolutions and with new ideas to get involved with stuff. James, it's been fantastic hearing about your experiences with us so far. Thank you so much for sharing is there, is there anything else you want to add before I close up the pod?



JAMES MARSDEN 12:16

Thank you. I think I'll just add, with the doing the study abroad at Reading, I'd probably say just do it, go for it. It's incredible opportunity. It's an awesome experience. It's like time flies, so I'm already here. I've two months is already like it's just been so much fun. So definitely do it. If you're thinking about doing it, definitely go to a session about it or learn and find more information about it 'cause it's definitely worthwhile and it's incredible. You'll make lifelong memories and friends, so definitely do it. You should definitely do it.



Chris Bonham 13:12

And thank you, James. And as James has said, if you want to learn more about studying abroad with us, you can speak with the study abroad office or equivalent office at your home university. You're also more than welcome to get in contact with us direct at reading at any point in your study abroad journey to joining us, we can be emailed on studyabroad@reading.ac.uk, or you can access online appointments via our website, studyabroad.reading.ac.uk. So thanks again James. And take care folks.



JAMES MARSDEN 13:50

Awesome. Thanks. Thank you.