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Before even considering applying for IISMA, I participated in various activities which honed my leadership, communication, and adaptability skills. These three skills helped me to endure the long and challenging registration phase, blend in and maximize my time in Brisbane, and reap the benefits from the program.

As someone who firmly believes that I can do and be anything if I put my mind, heart, and effort into it, the IISMA registration pushed me to walk the talk. The juggling between 24 credits of university load, organizational responsibilities, and internship made it a lot more challenging. Tight deadlines and indefinite information were something I had to face along the way, and I befriended them. The registration phase itself taught me to be strategic and agile.
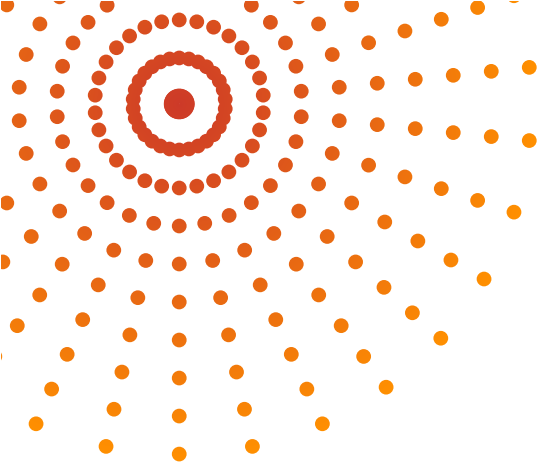
As a Naval Architecture student, I didn't have much soft skills training as I mainly dealt with different software and calculations. IISMA allowed me to explore various formal learnings supporting my future career aspirations: communication, organizational behaviour, data analysis, and decision-making.

I am aware that there are many study abroad programs. Still, IISMA is one of a kind, as it expects me to be a living representation of Indonesia through the given challenges.

Though the pre-departure activities are less demanding than the registration phase, they have challenges. As an awardee, I had to participate in IISMA's preparation webinars, apply for a visa, seek accommodation, and pack for when I was in Brisbane. I was lucky that the UQ awardees were facilitated by an agent who helped us with the visa application process and that the Australian visa doesn't require me to travel anywhere. We didn't even have to do a medical check-up since our stay would be less than six months. In addition, IISMA's partnership with Scape, a well-known student accommodation in Australia, was also an excellent benefit for the UQ awardees. I received a special rent price and additional facilities for free.

Although it all seemed seamless, as an acting student representative, I had to be able to lead my cohort. The responsibilities include gathering data, communicating aspirations to the IISMA bureaucracy, and ensuring all the UQ awardees receive the same information and understand them. This is where the difficulties lie: I had to lead people I had never met before and push them to do what was asked. I was grateful they understood my position and knew we were on a tight deadline.

The given challenges made me sceptical about the program as it was strict. I thought I would not have enough time to explore, which was wrong because it made me bond with my cohort.

Throughout my journey, I tried to balance my academic and non-academic life. Studying at The University of Queensland broadened my perspective on what an exceptional education system looks like. Everything provided, the materials, lecturers, facilities, learning methods, digital design, and events, were top-notch, number one in its level.

The experience made me realise that the significant difference between the students in Indonesia and UQ is that the students there are people who want to learn and are eager to find knowledge. Meanwhile, most university students I met attend university because it is what's expected in society. In UQ, those wanting to study are not restricted based on age or background. Although my courses contrasted with my engineering degree, it is what I expected—the knowledge I received equipped me to work with people from different nationalities and practice my English skills.

In my non-academic life, I participate in UQ's weekly events and volunteer at FareShare. UQ has a weekly theme, and the circumstances vary, like panel discussions, workshops, etc. I always try to make friends in every event I attend and ensure I have fruitful discussions with them. I also made sure to stay in contact through social media platforms. In FareShare, I worked with the elders to prepare, cook, and pack food for those in need. These experiences helped me practice my emotional intelligence, which is also necessary for my future career.

My life post-IISMA will never be the same. The opportunity to have learned from the world's top 50 universities will forever be something I am grateful for. The outcome of every course I have taken has shaped me into the person that I am today.

Organisational Behaviour helped me understand the dynamics of an organisation.

The psychology of Communication gave me a theoretical and practical understanding of communication and its application in everyday life.

Analysis of Scientific Data broadened my knowledge to design an ethical experiment, data modelling, and analysis using The Island and Rstudio.

The Science of Everyday Thinking helped me explore the nature of everyday thinking to make better decisions.

After IISMA, I decided to work on "Elevaits", a project my senior entrusted me with. The project aims to help ITS students explore wide, dream smart, and communicate skillfully. I planned on tapping what I learned at UQ into the curriculum of this mentoring program. Besides that, I have been asked to become a speaker at various events to share my study abroad experience and soft skills capacity building.