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IISMA is the Real Deal

The first time I heard the word "IISMA" was when my Vice-President in AIESEC got accepted back in 2021. I was very oblivious and had 0 clue of what it was about. Then after witnessing all my friends who got accepted in IISMA 2021 had experienced, I was intrigued. See, compared to other exchange programs, IISMA is the real deal, they subsidized most of your expenses abroad, from your visa, flight ticket, accommodation, tuition, and even to live there, for a specific period, of course. And the universities that they are partnering with are top notch, world recognized universities, and they offer various interesting courses, and the good part is that you can choose any of the courses you want, regardless of your major or background.

After finding my university that I'm interested in, which was Massey University (yes I know it's not USYD, I can explain), located in New Zealand, I was in full-focus mode all the way. From submitting all the administrative papers required by ITS IO, finishing my EPT and thankfully getting a decent TOEFL score of 97, completing all of my essays, preparing and rehearsing for the interview, it's on. I was really driven to go to Massey because they offer an Aviation Studies course, in which I will be learning everything you need to know about airplanes, their systems, crew management training, and so on. They even have a flight school at the main airport, more chances to study about planes!



God works in mysterious ways. I got accepted in IISMA 2022, but in a twist of fate, all the awardees that's going to New Zealand got transferred to Australia due to visa problems. And that's how I've ended up in The University of Sydney. This changes everything in my game plan. From my courses to the plan's I've come up with to spread Indonesia's culture. I have to re-choose all the courses that I want to studying, and sadly there isn't any aviation studies course in USYD that IISMA provides.

On the bright side, the USYD IISMA awardees are really friendly and cooperative, I got chosen to be the vice-SR and thankfully, most of them showed a really high sense of initiative, and that really eased up our teamwork during the pre-departure phase. All of our visa applications are accepted, and luckily for us, our housing team has already partnered with our IISMA coordinators, hence cheaper prices! I've also replanned what my goals are in USYD, which (other than studying, that's number 1) is to get to know and connect with as many people as possible within 4 months, and spread Indonesian culture, mainly from food. The 17 of us USYD awardees could not wait until D-Day!

Arriving in Sydney, Australia was a dream come true. The first weeks of my stay were filled with explorations and getting to know new friends, both Indonesian and foreigners. Classes never felt that fun before. We celebrated our Independence Day by creating traditional Indonesian competition games such as “lomba makan kerupuk”, “memasukkan pensil kedalam botol”, and more while collaborating with the PPIAUSYD. We also wore traditional Batik, kebaya, and Balinese clothes. It was attended by more than 40 students from various countries. During our BATIK challenge, we coordinated with Street Buffet NSW, a charity organization that feeds and supports the homeless community. We cooked Indonesian traditional food like Nasi Goreng, Martabak Mie, Yamien, and some other, wore our Batik clothes, and feed more than 60 homeless people in Sydney.

As for exploring Australia's culture, one of the courses that I choose was Sports and Australian Culture, which takes me to most of Australia's sports games, such as the AFL (Australian Football League), horse-racing, and many more. Aside from the courses that I enrolled via IISMA, out of my curiosity on airplanes, I joined 2 more classes titled Aircraft Construction and Design and Aircraft Performance and Operations. I never knew I know so little about the principles of aircraft construction before those classes. Plus they also have cutting edge technologies to support their student's research, like a real-life sized plane simulator, which is amazing!

Coming home from IISMA, I've gained more than 300 new friends and connections, filled with memories that'll last for a lifetime, brightened with new knowledge. Although, since the courses that I took was cross-majored, applying the knowledge I've learnt from The University of Sydney would take a little bit longer as I will need to refocus on my major back in ITS.

All that I can do right now is tell the world how IISMA really helps change your life to the better, by broadening your views about the world. Back in Australia, what really hit me the most was that people really value their work-life balance. There is time for work, and there is time for leisure. They really invest for recreational things too, such as going on vacation twice a year, developing a hobby, where as in Indonesia, people tend to hustle more throughout the year. I was invited to several webinars and seminars, from my major up to UNAIR's ABC Club.

Since IISMA2023's registration is already nearing, I and a lot of other IISMA2022 awardees created a lot of free mentorship programs, such as proofreading their essays and giving them mock-up interviews. Now that the registration has ended, we move on to help the newly picked IISMA2023 awardees with their pre-departure and continue to contribute towards IISMA via its Alumni Club, and also via other platforms.