

First Name: Leah Marshall

Institution: Murdoch University (Algae Research & Development Center, Marine & Freshwater Research Lab, School of Environmental Science)

Where did you work abroad (city, country): Perth, Western Australia

When did you go abroad: Exchange (February 2010-June 2010); Co-op (July 2010-October 2010)

Which work term (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.): 3rd



1 Deploying light loggers in the Indian Ocean, August 25, 2010

1. What motivated you to seek out an international work term?
 - The chance to explore how different countries apply their knowledge in the field and gain international experience to make myself more marketable after graduation.
2. How did you fund the travel and other costs associated with this opportunity?
 - I took my first two co-op placements in my hometown so I was able to save on rent and accumulate my co-op earnings. I also applied for various scholarships and was awarded the Faculty of Environment Travel Award and the Ontario International Educational Opportunity Scholarship.
3. Can you tell me what steps you took to secure your co-op position? Did you feel it was hard to secure your co-op position and how would you advise other students to make the same effort?
 - I was on exchange at Murdoch University the semester prior to my co-op term, so I had approached my Marine Biology professor early in the term to make him aware of my intentions and to see if he was able to help me find a placement. I had also sent out various “cold-call” emails to companies and contacts that fellow professors had suggested, but found this to be a difficult route. I did receive a couple volunteer offers from these cold calls, but was

unable to secure a paid job through this method. The position I accepted in Perth wasn't a paid position, however it didn't have a relocation cost associated with unlike the other volunteer positions offered.

4. When conducting your job search did you find that many of the jobs available were in specific sectors? (ie: corporate, non-profit, government, etc.) Where, or how, would you suggest other students focus their search?
 - This is not applicable, as the majority of my job searching was by word of mouth and personal contacts.
5. Tell me about the cost of living in (city or country). How did your expenses compare to your income based on the salary you were earning? Were you able to save any money and where did you find savings or discounts which reduced your expenses?
 - My position was unpaid, however I was able to ration my saved money/ scholarship funding to last the duration of my co-op. The minimum wage in Australia is high (~\$18/hr) which translates to a comfortable wage in comparison to the cost of living.
6. How did you find accommodations and what rent can you expect to pay in (city or country)?
 - I remained in residence where I had been staying for my exchange the semester prior to my co-op term. Here I paid \$600/month (AUS).
7. What, if any, cultural barriers did you have to overcome and what were some of these challenges?
 - There were no cultural barriers that I had to overcome. The Australian culture is very similar to that of Canada; however, Australian lingo and accents took awhile to get used to!
8. Did you find it difficult to meet new people? What steps did you take to integrate yourself into your new surroundings and make yourself more comfortable in a new setting?
 - I had no problem integrating into my new surroundings and meeting people because I lived in the on campus residence where there was a mix of other international students and Australians. There was always someone willing to explore the city with me, whether it was their hometown or a brand new city to them!
9. Overall, what advice would you give co-op students who are seeking international opportunities?
 - Plan ahead of time and save, save, save! There are tons of scholarships out there that go unclaimed, so do your research and you may be able to alleviate some of the financial worry!
10. Is there anything else you want us to know about your experience?

- It was definitely the highlight of my undergrad! I cannot recommend it enough!