NMMU STUDY ABROAD: Your African Experience
AFRICA
By Zanele Nondzimba

Have you ever diverged from your comfort zone? Moved away and found that you’re all alone? Have you ever experienced another race? Tried to understand at your own pace?

Africa is adorned with the richness of being. The breathtaking mountains are certainly worth seeing. Our country is your home, your refuge and a mystery. A mystery that unfolds when you study our history. A history that is immersed in pain, suffering and sorrow. But, led to a revolutionary change that weaved a brighter tomorrow.

Head off to any city and your soul will gyrate with glee. The warmth and spirit of our brothers and sisters, will surely set you free.

Africa’s magnificent nature will leave you in absolute awe. Our warm beaches and subtropical climate; are blessings you and I can adore.

Feel the fragrant African heat. Hear the silent call of the wild. Ululate and dance with joy. But, most of all, we challenge you to immerse yourself in being African – even if it’s only for a few months.
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) is an ever-evolving institution that assists in keeping the economic heart of the Eastern and Southern Cape beating. It offers students the best of both theory and practice from entry certificate level right through to doctoral research.

The University has already established itself as a leader in fields such as automotive engineering, ecology, marine studies, community health, the built environment, art and design, accounting and auditing, education and IT, but it also offers students an even wider choice of stimulating and market-orientated courses, opening up a variety of career opportunities.

NMMU believes the success of its career-focused programmes lies in the hands-on involvement of industry and business experts. Many programmes include workplace experience as part of the curriculum, giving students the advantage of being able to walk straight into the real world of work.

Students from different cultures study together on the NMMU’s six campuses – there are five campuses in Port Elizabeth and one in the picturesque town of George in the Southern Cape.

We are the most diverse university in South Africa, since students come to us from across 34 African countries to obtain a first-class education.

Participate in a cultural day... or strut your stuff during International Week.

NMMU Orientation at the beach!
Are you ready?

Are you ready for a unique experience - an experience that will shape your thoughts and allow you to dance to an African drumbeat? The Eastern Cape offers blazing orange sunsets, tranquil sandy-white beaches and thick, lush green forests where the ghosts of past inhabitants still linger. People with friendly smiles greet you with a ‘good morning’, ‘goeie mor’ or ‘molo’, and invite you to sample some traditional South African fare.

Past students have experienced the salty air, and cool water of the Indian Ocean. Walked along stretches of unspoilt sandy beaches. Went shopping while the famous PE wind started blowing. Experienced a traditional ‘braai’, and made friends a plenty.

Now, we want you to experience something of Africa - maybe the roar of a lion, or the thunderous noise of South Africans cheering on a favourite sports team. But most of all … we want you to become part of the vibrant culture and people of a land that has a treasure trove of secrets that it wants you to discover.

You’ll find that this 15-minute city is laid back, spirited and the ideal place to study, while you ‘play’.

They won’t be roaming around in the streets, but the ‘wilder inhabitants’ of ‘The Bay’ can be seen on the outskirts of the city in nature reserves and various game parks.

The sunsets will take your breath away.

Yes, it’s true. We are the “Watersport Capital of the World.”

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The Bantry on tour

by Jonny Harper

Stranmillis University College, Northern Ireland

Well, it’s that time of year when most people head north to ‘the Port’ for a short break over Easter, but this year I’ve actually travelled away from ‘the Port’ for my Easter adventures! That’s right, Port Elizabeth is officially renamed ‘the Port’ in honour of Northern Ireland’s finest tourist attraction! I have just returned from an 11-day road trip encompassing four countries, over 5000 km and three speeding tickets! Here is some of what happened:

“We left ‘the Port’ on a Wednesday evening not really knowing what an amazing adventure lay waiting for us. The drive to Johannesburg was just over 1000 km and we drove through the night. I had the leg between Colesberg and Bloemfontein, a long straight stretch of road through the incredibly featureless Free State Province. Driving at night was tough, as I had to contend with cows crossing the road and a truck driver who had no rear lights. I was so glad to get to Bloemfontein and switch drivers! It wasn’t long after that, that I fell asleep.

After a rough night, we were on the road again around five and began our assault on Jo’burg. We arrived at O.R. Tambo International Airport in no time! Picking-up our 4X4 accommodation for international students. Unfortunately, the company brought the wrong car with only one tent and no camping equipment. But, due to their mistake we managed to get upgraded to a Ford Ranger with two foldable tents on the roof and complete camping equipment! On the road again, we somehow managed to navigate Pretoria and pass through several tollgates, which were slightly ridiculous in price considering the distance we travelled between them! However, the most expensive outlay of the day was still to come just south of the Botswana border.

We walked around a beautiful waterfront area and saw hippo tracks and elephant dung, a reminder that these animals are real and do live in the wild! Our campsite was located right on the river, and being new ‘African campers’ we felt a little bit vulnerable. We were slightly more on edge when we heard an elephant trumpeting, followed by a hippo growling, or whatever noise a hippo makes. That was when we realised the hippo noise was actually coming from around 30 m from our camp! We saw the large outline moving through the bushes beside our site and shining the torch on it revealed that it was indeed a hippo, but thankfully, it was on the other side of a fence!

And that is where I leave my tale - camped on an African border with a hippo for a neighbour!
STUDY ABROAD:
study at a unique study address

A melting pot of cultures is present in the city fondly known as ‘PE’. Here Xhosa, Afrikaans and English speakers work and socialize side-by-side, creating a fusion of experiences. From creating your own African beat at a drumming session, to feasting on traditional Afrikaans dishes like ‘melktert’ to enjoying the ultimate South African experience, a ‘braai’, after an exciting day spent wildlife watching, you will experience it all while studying at the NMMU.

Students coming on an exchange agreement and study abroad, whether it’s for six months or a year, will not only experience quality education, but also be able to experience adventure, wildlife, history, culture and South African nightlife. The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is indeed South Africa’s unique study address.

STUDY ABROAD AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

The University proudly plays host to more than 370 Study Abroad and Exchange students a year, from Europe, North America, Asia and Africa. These students are warmly welcomed as they add to the cultural diversity of the university and make the NMMU campus one of the most internationalised universities in South Africa.

This programme accommodates students, not only from NMMU partner universities, but also from all over the world.

We warmly welcome international students to join our exciting and diverse university environment for the study experience of a lifetime!

NMMU accepts applications from students that fall within the following categories:

Exchange students

NMMU has signed exchange agreements with specific institutions throughout Europe, the UK, the USA, Africa and Asia. Please see Global Partnerships, page 19, for a list of our partners.

The exchange agreements have been set up for a specific number of students who will be selected by their home institution. Each home institution has their own internal procedure to select students. Students must liaise with their International Office, and applications will only be accepted if it is submitted via their International Office.

Study abroad students

NMMU accepts students from partner universities and also students from universities with whom we do not have agreements. These students are referred to as ‘free movers’. A Study Abroad student is a full-time non-degree seeking student registering for a variety of modules from one or more faculties for a minimum period of six months and a maximum period of one year.

Study Abroad students are treated in the same way as Exchange students as far as academic requirements and practical arrangements are concerned.
A life changed: My semester abroad at NMMU

by Whitney Bonrud

St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, USA

I needed an adjustment. I was heading into my last year at university when I realized that studying abroad would be the boost I needed to finish my degree. It didn’t take much searching on my part to realize that South Africa would be the right fit. I figured, everyone at my university was heading to Europe, so I would head off to Africa.

The culture, the people and the diversity that I was able to adapt to changed my life in more ways than I could realize at the time. Now that I am home in Minnesota, I am catching up on those changes and putting them to good use by altering my own lifestyle and attitudes.

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University was surprisingly a big change from how St. Cloud State University operates. Of course, it took a few weeks of adaptation and a day or two where I sat in on the wrong class, but luckily fellow students and the professors were welcoming enough to not laugh too hard and to point me in the right direction.

Becoming well connected with your professors is the perfect way to tackle your questions and concerns. I spent a memorable afternoon with Professor Mazibuko, my marketing professor. I will never forget her telling me to hold myself accountable and to “just work hard.” As I said before, I took some lessons home with me and that was definitely one of them.

Aside from academics, you can never understand what you will learn from the culture until you’ve submerged yourself in it. Live the lifestyle of the locals by working hard at university, spending the weekend at the beach and meeting new people in your community or by meeting them out on the town.

I did most of my learning in Zimbabwe. I knew for sure that my life had changed when I backpacked through Zimbabwe. Even though the countries of South Africa and Zimbabwe are close to one another, the culture and the country are very different. Like South Africa, the people were beautiful and incredibly accommodating to an obvious foreigner. I remember thinking the people of Zimbabwe were some of the happiest and most humble of people I had ever met. I took the trip with a male friend from my university, but as time went on, it was actually smarter for me to head off alone into Zimbabwe.

Being a young, white woman I realized the dangers, I wasn’t naïve. Successfully making it through a trip where I had not reserved transportation or a night’s stay at a hotel on any given night, and nearly running out of cash, was the most strengthening and rewarding accomplishment I’ve had in my life. Ending it with a bungee off Victoria Fall’s was another strengthening accomplishment, but in a different way. Of course, many people were not pleased to hear that I took off alone but I knew that I could make it.

Studying abroad is not just about what classes you take and the marks you get. It’s so much more. It’s meeting people from around the world, learning each other’s customs and helping each other to adapt. The friends I made during my stay in South Africa will be friends that I will always have and will always turn to. Before I came to Africa, I had heard so many stories about how studying abroad is the most life changing experience that a person could ever go through. I never really believed it and now I am another person whose life has been changed, for the best.
The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University offers a comprehensive list of courses to choose from. The Admission of International Students to the NMMU must be viewed against the background of the South African Higher Education system.

The South African Higher Education system operates mostly as a 3 – 1 – 1 - 2 system. This means the following: an undergraduate bachelor of three years or a four-year professional qualification followed by, in most cases, a one-year postgraduate programme referred to as an Honours degree. This specialist-taught programme is required for entrance to a Master’s programme. Most research Master’s programmes have a one-year minimum duration followed by a two-year minimum registration for a Doctoral programme.

Admissions to all these programmes are based on academic excellence in previous studies. Applications from applicants that acquired an average mark of 60% or higher in their previous qualification, will be considered for admission.

Prior to admission, International Students are assessed to determine if their school results will give them conditional or full exemption. The foreign school qualification is benchmarked against the South African senior certificate with matriculation endorsement as the standard.

The NMMU follows a semester-based system. The University’s semesters fall within the following months:
- First Semester: February to June
- Second Semester: July to November

NMMU does not use a grade point average system. Grades are awarded for individual courses.

Study Abroad and Exchange students should note that specific requirements will be discussed with them when choosing their subjects.

Study Abroad and Exchange students are required to take a certain amount of modules that are worth credits. You are required to take the following amount of credits:
- Six month programme: 40 to 60 credits
- Year programme: 100 to 120 credits

This requirement allows students to keep within their own university’s credit requirements, as:
- 4 NMMU credits = 1 US credit
- 2 NMMU credits = 1 ECTS credit

This arrangement will give students ample time to experience not only the Eastern Cape, but also the rest of South Africa…and even Africa.

Module credits should be considered in conjunction with the course when credit equivalencies are determined by non-South African universities.

As the NMMU has become an increasingly popular study destination, the Office for International Education is delighted to offer students from all around the world an unforgettable experience by means of a variety of short programmes, that can last 3 – 6 weeks.

The Office works together with global partner institutions and NMMU academic departments to conceptualise programmes that are academically sound, appealing, well-planned, cost-effective and efficiently executed.

Courses and making those decisions

Most modules are available to Study Abroad and Exchange students; however, each faculty has its own requirements for certain programmes and modules. Some modules have restrictions on the number of places, and students may in certain instances not be allowed to enroll for these modules. Students can choose courses/subjects from any faculty. Courses as well as the subjects for each course can be viewed on the NMMU website at: www.nmmu.ac.za OR Online at www.nmmu-international.com

The Study Abroad experience provide students with the possibility to experience one of the 11 languages of South Africa like: Xhosa or Afrikaans, or learn more about the country’s fascinating history while obtaining an international education in their chosen field.

Unfortunately, you cannot choose courses from levels higher than your current academic year i.e. if you are a third year, you cannot choose subjects from a fourth level.

Credits

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Transfer of credits

Module credits should be considered in conjunction with the course when credit equivalencies are determined by non-South African universities.

Short courses

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Short courses already offered:

- Mid-Year Experience:
  - Programme 1: Environmental Studies
  - Programme 2: Community Development and Community Service Learning
  - Programme 3: Conflicts, Human Rights, Peace and Justice
  - Programme 4: South African History and Culture

Customised Short Programmes
(Faculty Led):

- Public Health
- Nursing Education
- Photojournalism
- Business Ethics
- Community Development and Service Learning
- SA History and Culture
- Environmental Studies
- Conflicts, Human Rights, Peace and Justice

The Office for International Education can also customize courses for institutions, and enquiring higher education institutions can contact us at international@nmmu.ac.za for more information.
As an international student at NMMU you can never get bored. In between lectures and tests it is also important to have fun and explore what is outside the gates of the university. And when it comes to having fun and exploring, Port Elizabeth really is a “best kept secret”. There is an endless amount of things to do here.

First of all there is the beach and social life: sunbathing, swimming, learning how to surf, sand board and how to snorkel and deep sea dive. A Friday evening braai (barbeque) always happens at someone’s house, and is almost always followed by a party at one of the nightclubs in town.

Besides that, there are game farms (safari’s) surprisingly close by. In only 15 minutes you’ll be able to see giraffes, zebras, rhinos and even great difficulty to touch a cheetah! And... if you are brave enough, you can pet a lion or a Bengolian tiger at the Seaview Lionspark, only 20-minute outside of town. If you want to see some bigger animals, you can drive about 45-minutes and enjoy a tour around the popular Addo Elephant Park. You can also take a turn towards the “middle of nowhere” in the Park, where you’ll eventually arrive at Addo Back Safaris. Here you can feed and walk with the elephants and even get to RIDE on them.

To me, the most amazing things I’ve done so far were diving with ragged tooth sharks, walking with lions, and taking a safari on an elephant. The elephant ride was especially memorable. The way the elephant guides communicated with the 5 meter high, 5 ton heavy enormous animal was magical.

As you can see Port Elizabeth is a place where you can experience amazing adventures to keep in your heart and soul for the rest of your life.
Students entering their second year of study at their home institution are welcome to apply. In order to apply for a place at NMMU please read the instructions carefully before completing the forms.

Application form

Students are required to complete the official NMMU Study Abroad/Exchange Application Form that can be found on our website at www.nmmu.ac.za/international or at a Partner University’s International Office. Please complete the form and make sure it is accompanied by the following:

- Certified copy of your passport
- Copy of a study record/academic transcript with the grades achieved (subjects completed at tertiary level) preferably in English
- Curriculum vitae
- Photo
- Recommendation/nomination letter from partner institution (including English Language Proficiency - this is applicable to Exchange students)
- In certain instances students may be required to submit TOEFL/IELTS certificates or proof of English Language Proficiency
- List of courses that you are planning to take at NMMU

Incomplete application forms will delay the process and we urge students to submit all the required documents.

Acceptance letter

After we receive the completed application form we will send you an Acceptance Letter. You are required to apply for a study permit in your home country at your nearest South African Embassy, High Commission, Consulate or Trade Mission. When submitting your documents for the study permit application, please ensure that you have read and complied with the medical aid requirements.

Fitting in

Studying in a new country can be daunting. Because of this fact, the Office for International Education, organizes various activities to allow the new international students time to adapt and settle into their ‘African’ way of life. A weeklong orientation allows you to familiarise yourself with the university system, campus, and city, but also allows you to make friends along the way.

The compulsory orientation starts with an optional overnight trip to Umlambo Rustic Tent Camp on the Sundays River – an authentic African experience at a site renowned for teambuilding. Together with fellow students and staff members from the Office for International Education, international students share travel stories, goals, hopes and dreams as they learn about the climate, natural beauty and culture of South Africa.

The Office, in conjunction with Student Counselling also offers culture shock workshops that further help international students to acclimatise and settle in.

LIVING IN AFRICA

Living in a foreign country can be costly; however, in South Africa you will be amazed at the ease of living and cost-effectiveness of essentials and even a ‘treat’ or two.

The estimated living expenses are as follows:

- Accommodation: R 2500.00 per month
- Books and stationary: R 5 000.00 per year
- Medical aid: R 3300.00 – R 6000.00 per year
- Public Transport to the University (students living off-campus): R 350.00 per month
- Meals: R 1 000.00 – R 1 200.00 per month
- Sport clubs and societies: R 600.00 per year
- Laundry: R 250.00 per month
- Electricity: R 200.00 per month (R250.00 in the winter months)

Keeping you informed

Once you are accepted as a student, the Office for International Education will keep you informed about your application as well as any other information you might need. You will receive:

- Pre-Arrival booklet that answers all your questions, however, if you have more questions you can contact international@nmmu.ac.za
- Accommodation information, application, and confirmation
- Medical Aid letter
- Orientation information and Booking Form

Application deadlines

First Semester Deadline: 15 November
Second Semester Deadline: 30 April

Keep in mind that the NMMU’s First Semester spans from SUMMER to WINTER and its Second Semester spans from WINTER to SPRING. African winters are very mild, while its summers are warm – ideal for days at the beach or roaming its natural environment.

For more information on Port Elizabeth and Nelson Mandela Bay, visit:

- www.portelizabeth.co.za
- www.nmbt.co.za
- www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za

For more information on South Africa, visit:

- www.southafrica.co.za
- www.southafrica.net
- www.southafrica.info
- www.gov.za
- www.news24.com

The estimated living expenses are as follows:
A week in the life of a Study Abroad Student

by Jayne Lamont

Stranmillis University College, Northern Ireland

- Monday -

I had the day off and loved it!

- Tuesday -

We have observation at our placement school. The three international students have been placed together, which I enjoy. It means we can sit beside each other in the staffroom. Jonny, the other international student, was away for the week so I missed him greatly. Because of this, it was just Jonny and I for school on Tuesday. But, on Monday night, Jonny wasn’t feeling well enough for school. Because of this, I couldn’t go to school. The reason for this is I wouldn’t feel safe entering a township school by myself. Back home I would never feel unsafe to go to a school, but in this case I did. The area where the township is located has a number of different townships surrounding it. Jonny agreed, and so did my coordinator from NMMU. This was a shock and was a reminder that although I’ve become more relaxed, there are dangerous parts of South Africa where a white girl just can’t go.

- Rocky Week -

This week, with regards to class, didn’t get off to a good start. My two flat mates, who are nurses, woke me up. They leave every morning at 06:30 am. My class was supposed to start at 11:00 so I was able to have a lie in. However, the girls told me that the taxis, which we use for transport, were on strike. The reason for this was, because a major taxi boss was on trial for murder and the taxi drivers were showing their support. This is a cultural issue that I find hard to comprehend. People can’t go to school, or work, because their usual method of transport is not available. If he committed the crime, he should do the time regardless of who he is. Comparing this to Northern Ireland, we also have gangs and such who can affect the everyday life of people.

- Friday -

In the evening, I had my first goodbye, the first of many I’m sure. Kayla, a trainee teacher from America was heading home. We went out for dinner at the Boardwalk. My favourite restaurant there is called the News Café. I love the food! It’s sad to think that I won’t see her again, but it’s all about the experience. It makes me grateful that I still have a number of weeks left.

Saint Patrick’s Day arrived finally. I love the fact that there are only two Irish here. Jonny and I are unique! I really enjoyed celebrating Saint Patrick’s Day. I dressed in green, did some Irish dancing, and enjoyed being Northern Irish! I kept taking photos of me. I loved being the centre of attention.

- Saturday -

We had our alternative visit to a local school called Cape Recife High School, which is a public school for learners who have special educational needs. This school serves children with a number of learning abilities. They include cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities such as children who have been left disabled because of accidents. We met a young boy, I think he was 16. He told us about how he was hit by a car in 1996 and how he doesn’t remember the accident but he remembers waking up and being told he would never walk again.

Stories like this make me appreciate what I have. The teachers that spoke to us have excellent relationships with the kids. This school had excellent facilities and the children here are getting an excellent education. Cape Recife High School is very similar to the schools back home. I really enjoyed this experience and, hopefully, will get the chance to go back for a couple of days.

- Sunday -

We went on an old steam train called the Apple Express. We left at 08:30 am and ‘steamed’ through the countryside, going past local townships. The children were running and waving at us. They seemed so friendly and must know each day that the train will be passing. We had a picnic and relaxed at a small farming village. We hadn’t experienced rural Africa yet – until now. The people within the small village were very friendly, while telling us about the local area.
The NMMU firmly believes in the strength and benefits of a well-defined higher education network society. The active development of such networks enhances its internationalisation, and is clearly demonstrated by the University’s international partnerships. The University not only uses these partnerships to enhance student mobility, but also to promote the internationalisation of our curriculum as well as international research partnerships.

Special agreements are signed with our partners, and thus students from these universities can visit their respective International Offices for more information.
The Office for International Education prides itself on its ability to assist international visitors and students with information on international travel, visas, and academic studies. The support network we offer is comprehensive and visitors and students can feel confident that they will receive a friendly welcome and be looked after during their time at the NMMU.

The Office is responsible for the admission of all International Students to NMMU. It has a dedicated Finance Department to deal with payments, student accounts and other financial matters. The Office further assists students with study permit applications and renewals, and academic registration. It also provides advice, information, and materials on courses, admission, and critical issues including health, safety, visas and living and learning effectively in the host country.

The Office further adheres to and strongly implements the Immigration Amendment Act 19 of 2004. This Act essentially instructs the Office to make sure that every international student provides proof of medical cover with a medical scheme registered in terms of the Medical Schemes Act, 1998 Act 131. Your accommodation will also be taken care of as the Office provides you with NMMU accredited accommodation in picturesque off-campus locations.

**Ultimately, the Office would like to be your ‘home away from home’**.

For more information on Study Abroad and Exchange opportunities, please contact: studyabroad@nmmu.ac.za
The Office also offers Study Abroad and Exchange students the opportunity to see more of the Eastern Cape and South Africa. Students can partake in the following excursions:

However, the Office can also assist in the organization of other excursions.

Early this month has passed since I arrived at NMMU to settle in for my semester-long study abroad experience. It is unbelievable how quickly time flies! Remarkably, I am the very first Japanese Exchange student to study at the University.

My host university is named after Nelson Mandela, a most significant black leader in South Africa who became a strong symbol of resistance for the anti-apartheid movement. NMMU has a rich, multifaceted international atmosphere. For example, my class consists of eight students from Cameron, Congo, France, Sweden, Pakistan and China. I’m enrolled in the English Language Programme and my teachers provide a comprehensive, slow-paced learning environment in which I feel comfortable.

One recent class event included a visit to the Kragga Kamma Game Park, within the city limits! It is home to a variety of animals such as cheetahs, giraffes, and rhinos. The guide drove us around the park in a specialized viewing truck. It was exciting to see the large animals first-hand in the vast African wilderness. I had previously only witnessed this type of thing on TV.

Each month we will visit a different location and I can hardly wait to find out where we will go next!

Certainly, during the next four months I will experience a few challenges with my English studies. However, undoubtedly, I will also enjoy many new experiences, which will build fond and unforgettable memories to treasure for the rest of my life!