

My favourite spot for lunch between classes at Greenwich University is on the steps at the big steel gates with my back to the Thames riverfront. Ignoring the fact that it is usually a little chilly, I always enjoy the moment and soak in the magnificence of my surroundings, for this is a very special place to study.

On the waters' edge to my left and right around the Grand Square are the Queen Anne and King Charles Courts, and behind each respectively are the Queen Mary and King William Courts. The construction of these magnificent buildings for the Royal Hospital for Seamen was begun by Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor in 1696 at the instigation of Queen Mary II. Later it became the home of the Royal Naval College, which occupied it until 1998 at which time it was handed over to another educational institution, The University of Greenwich. Our classes are held in Anne and Mary, where many of the rooms still retain their original nautical names and detailing, such as The Room for Twenty Men. The National Maritime Museum and The Royal Observatory are just across the road.

I am currently at the final stage of my Masters in Museum Management, with (only!) the dissertation left to be finished. I am undertaking this course for a number of reasons. When I began studying I had been living for 3 years in The Netherlands (with dual citizenship) so taking the Eurostar to London every 6 months was easy. In addition, the course is taught in the Business School, which is more appropriate to my current development needs. I learned about the course when the Professor visited the Groninger Museum in Groningen where I was working as a Curator. It was the first year of the course, and as they were keen to encourage international students, she persuaded me to apply.

Museum Management is part of the Cultural Industries Management suite of programmes at Greenwich University, which also includes Masters degrees in Arts Management, Cultural Tourism Management, Cultural Industries Management and Heritage Management. All programmes comprise compulsory business subjects such as marketing, human resource, operations and financial management, as well as specialist subject courses such as programming, planning, interpretation, conservation, cultural regeneration and visitor management. In addition, a dissertation and work placement are required. While some of the subjects may sound familiar to those offered in Melbourne, the focus remains on the business and management aspects of these areas.

Greenwich University has a strong focus on international students, which is an additional bonus in our field of study. My co students have come from all over the UK and Europe, as well as Asia and the Americas. To my knowledge, I am so far the only Australian who has attended, but I highly recommend it to those who are looking further afield. This diversity enlivens the debate greatly, and enables us to place heritage and cultural issues within a truly international context.

My only regret in having undertaken the course part-time and not full-time, is that I have missed out on some of the fabulous excursions and lectures that are held in between units, as I am usually on the plane or train going home. I am looking forward to my graduation, which I believe is in the grand baroque environs of The Painted Hall. What an adventure it has been.

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