

Kerala to KL and Beyond: A Taylor's University Student from India Reflects on Her Global Experience at MMU in the UK

Going on exchange overseas is not just something for Malaysian students at Taylor's to consider, as this student from India shows by sharing her experiences in Manchester.



Daya Sreeja Raj during her semester exchange in the UK

"Often your dreams don't come true" said Ms Daya Sreeja Raj, and "for me, the UK was my 'dream country' to go and live in - and thanks to Taylor's University I suddenly had the chance to make my dream come true". Originally from Kerala in India, Daya was able to get a place at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in northern England. As she observed, "Although I was there for a period of just over 4-months, I got to meet lot of wonderful people and was able to expand my circle of friends", adding that, "being in a totally different culture from what I was grown up in, meant it was fun exploring and learning about new things at the same time". Of course, many things were very different. As she said, "Coming from the tropics, the weather in the UK was quite fascinating to me, and I got to enjoy the golden days of autumn and the beginning of winter there - and I was even lucky enough to experience my first snow!". MMU has a large open-campus and a number of buildings right in the heart of city, and as she said, "I was living roughly 30-minutes walking distance away from the university, which gave me a good reason to walk every morning in the wonderful weather". Daya is studying for a **Bachelor of International Hospitality Management (Hons)** at Taylor's University and living overseas gave her new personal and academic insights into another part of the world, as well as into other cultures and behaviours. It also provided her with another way to reflect on her own culture. As Daya noted, "the UK as a whole, and Manchester in particular, strong Indian communities which in some ways also made

me feel more at home" Adding that I was happy to hear from the Brits how much they are in also love with Indian food - even though they found it rather spicy". The learning environment at MMU also challenged her in different ways. She found that the other students and classes were more interactive, and also structured in such a way that gave her time to think, explore and exchange her own ideas, noting that, "The classes were mainly conducted as group discussions. Furthermore, in each module, we were also expected to write an extensive essay as part of the coursework" but commented that she also found that "the lecturers were all very friendly and helpful". During her time at MMU, she participated in numerous clubs and society activities which she found were happening daily on the campus, and travelled on the weekends to see other parts of the UK. "I am so thankful to Taylors and especially to my parents for giving me a chance to explore and learn more from another side of the world" she said. Taylor's University has been working closely for a number of years with MMU to encourage both student and staff mobility. Over that time not only have a number of Taylors [students gone on exchange to MMU](#), but [Taylor's staff](#) have also had the opportunity to spend time at the MMU campus. MMU and TU have also [successfully applied for Erasmus+ funding](#) which has also helped some students with funding for travel and living costs - (Global Matters 2018)