H.V Supun Nimantha

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Sri Lanaka

12th January 2024

The Visa Officer

U.S. Embassy of Colombo

No 210, Galle Road

Colombo 03.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Comparative Analysis of Master of Computer Science Programs in abroad as an International Student

I am writing to provide a detailed comparison of the Master of Computer Science degree programs at four universities I considered for my higher education. This comparison includes Aalto University, Finland; University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland; Central Queensland University (CQU), Australia; and California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA), United States. This analysis is part of my research for selecting a suitable program abroad and is submitted for visa application purposes.

**University Recognition and Ranking:**

* Aalto University is renowned for its strong emphasis on technology and design, often ranked among the top universities in Europe for technology.
* UCD holds a prominent position in Ireland and is recognized globally, especially for its computer science programs.
* CQU in Australia is known for its extensive research and industry connections, providing a practical approach to education.
* Cal State LA is part of the respected California State University system, known for its diverse student body and strong academic programs in the United States.

**Cost for International Students:**

* Aalto University: Tuition fees for non-EU students are generally around €12,000 to €15,000 per year.
* UCD: Fees for international students often exceed €24,000 per year.
* CQU: Approximately AUD $30,000 per year for international students.
* Cal State LA: International tuition can be around $17,000 per year, varying with the number of units taken.

**Curriculum:**

* Aalto University: Offers a blend of theoretical and practical approaches, with a focus on innovation and technology.
* UCD: Known for a comprehensive curriculum that covers the latest trends and technologies in computer science.
* CQU: Emphasizes practical skills and industry readiness, with opportunities for internships and real-world projects.
* Cal State LA: Provides a solid foundation in computer science principles, with a range of electives to tailor the degree to specific interests.

**Cost of Living:**

* Finland: Helsinki has a higher cost of living, estimated at around €1,000 to €1,500 per month for a student.
* Ireland: Dublin is known for its high living costs, possibly reaching €1,200 to €1,800 per month.
* Australia: Living costs in Australian cities can vary, with an average of AUD $1,500 to $2,500 per month.
* United States: Los Angeles has a relatively high cost of living, typically around $1,500 to $2,500 per month.

**University Rankings:**

* Aalto University: Often ranks in the top 200 universities globally, with high marks for technology and innovation.
* UCD: Regularly appears in the top 1% of higher education institutions worldwide.
* CQU: Known for its strong performance in specific areas like engineering and technology, though overall ranking may vary.
* Cal State LA: Frequently ranks well among regional universities in the West and is noted for its diversity and value for money.

After extensive research and consultation, I have decided to pursue my Master of Computer Science degree at California State University, Los Angeles. Although Aalto University was also a consideration and I applied there as well, my final choice is influenced by recommendations from my supervisor and friends in the USA. California State University, Los Angeles, offers significant advantages such as flexible course selection tailored to individual student interests, a well-recognized curriculum, affordable tuition fees, and reasonable living expenses. These factors are perfectly aligned with my academic goals and financial considerations.

I trust this comparative analysis demonstrates the careful research and thoughtful consideration I have invested in selecting the most suitable program for my higher education abroad.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Hikkaduwa Vithanage Supun Nimantha