

Petersburg and Polytechnic University as Viewed by a Student from Australia

Andreas DAMOURAS came to the [International Polytechnic Summer School](#) from Australia. Andreas is studying at the University of Technology, Sydney, and chose the course in civil engineering for studying at Polytechnic University. What impressed the Australian in Russia, why, in addition to the main attractions of the city, Andreas went to see the Parnassus District, and what Vasilievsky Island reminded him of, you can read in the interview below.



- Andreas, Sydney is 14 thousand kilometers away from St. Petersburg. Was it difficult not to shy away from such a long trip?

- To resolve to come to Russia, of course, was not an easy thing. For the most part, I had to organize the whole trip myself. But I was lucky: I found a student who had already studied in Russia, and I could check with him on many aspects.

- How did you know about our school? And why did you choose precisely Polytechnic University?

- I learned about the International Polytechnic Winter School at my university: somehow, I got a letter in the mail with a description of the programs. In addition to Polytechnic University, I was choosing among four other European universities, and as a result I arrived in St. Petersburg. The duration of the program was important to me; I did not want to leave home for a long time. I also liked the content of the course. And finally, I wanted to come in winter!



- For better or worse, this winter is not cold at all. However, how easily did you adapt to the Russian climate?

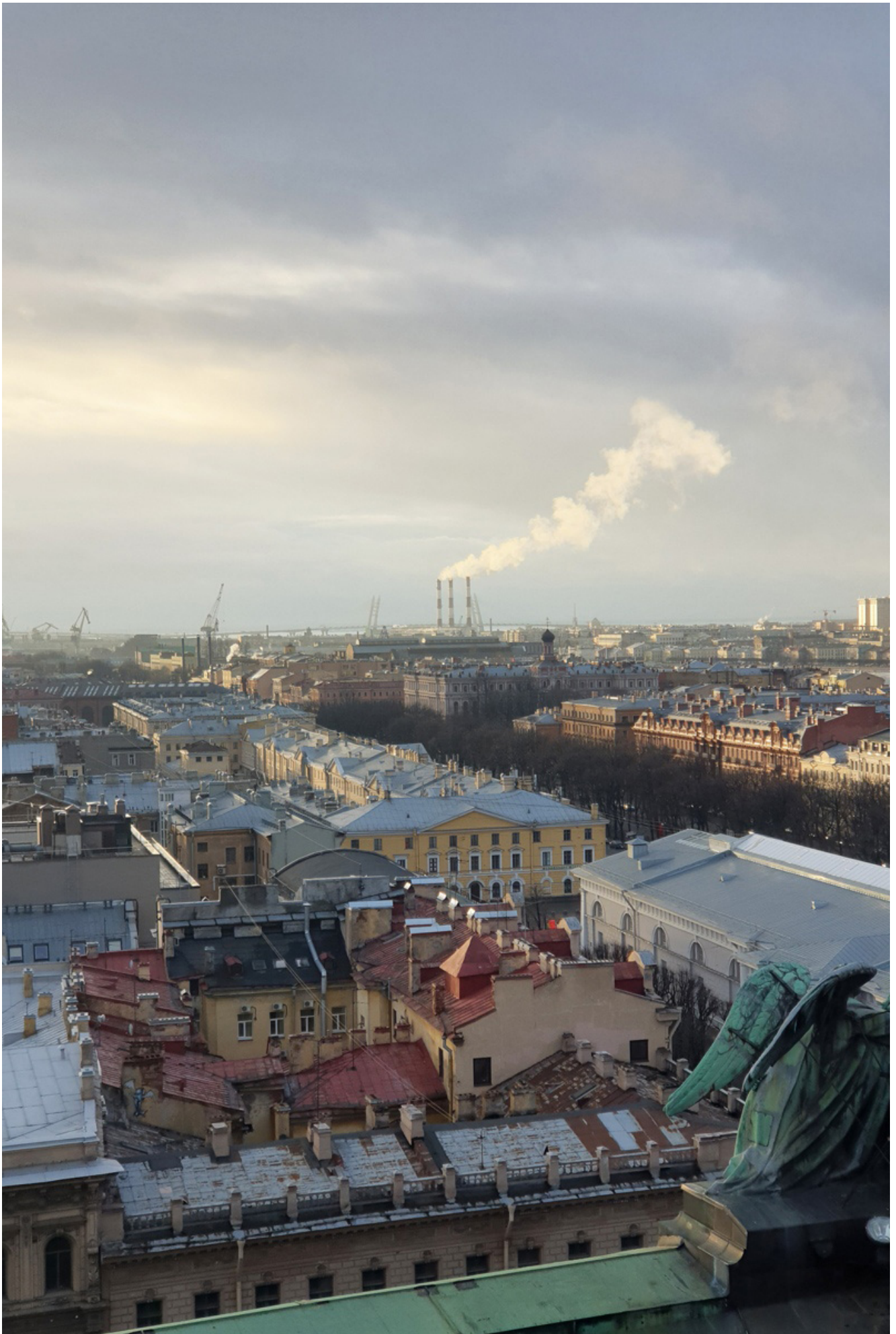
- When I flew here, I thought: "How freezing!" But I got used to it pretty soon - I like the cold. Moreover, it is very hot in Australia right now. Russia is not the first country where I go in winter. Before that it was in Japan, one of my favorite trips: it was the middle of winter, extremely cold and incredibly beautiful. Strangely enough, in some parts, St. Petersburg reminded me of Japanese cities - recently I was on Vasilyevsky Island, and thought that it was somewhat similar to Japan.

- That is amazing! What else did you manage to see in St. Petersburg?

- I tried to see as much as possible. Of course, the obligatory cultural program: the Hermitage and the Russian Museum, the Savior on Spilled Blood, the Trinity, St. Isaac's and Kazan Cathedrals, the Faberge Museum, Nevsky Prospect and the Griboedov Canal Embankment... In addition, I visited the St. Petersburg Water

Park, and also went to one of the districts of St. Petersburg, i.e., Parnassus.





- Far from every foreign student knows how the districts of St. Petersburg are named! Please tell us, what caused such an unusual choice?

- I study architecture in Australia. I was wondering how modern houses are being built in Russia, to look at a high-rise area. I liked it!

- The course that you chose at the International Polytechnic Winter School is dedicated to civil engineering. What are your impressions of the program?

- As I said, when choosing a course, it was important for me that would correspond with what I study in Australia. So, upon returning, I would be able to credit the ECTSs received here at my university. The [“Civil Engineering”](#) module was to a big extent devoted to BIM technology. This is a very popular and trendy area of study. As part of the course, we learned about information modeling technologies for buildings and structures. No doubt, two weeks is too little for a full immersion into the topic. However, I’ve got a good base, and I can continue on my own.



- Do you plan to continue studying BIM technology?

- Yes, absolutely! At the university in Australia, we did not study this area, and the experience I got here is extremely essential. The Winter School of Polytechnic University gave me the opportunity to learn what BIM technologies are, look at the programs, find out how they work, and try them myself.

- And before that, have you ever taken part in international educational programs?

- This is my first experience. I was looking for various exchange programs, and I really enjoyed living in Russia. I met many people from all over the world - from Belgium, Austria, Holland, African countries, from Uzbekistan... I have never met anyone from Uzbekistan before! This is very cool when you have the opportunity to get acquainted with a new culture and get to know it better. I am one hundred percent happy that I came to Russia and will definitely be back!



- Speaking of culture and traditions - how do you like Russian cuisine?

- When I come to another country, I normally don't eat much. I can't say why but I want to say right away that I didn't have any problems whatsoever with food in St. Petersburg: one definitely can find a lot of places to eat. And I particularly liked the dish, the name of which is very difficult for me to pronounce - pelmeni!

- And the last question: would you recommend other students to participate in such programs?

- Absolutely! Get out of your comfort zone and set off to meet new experiences!

- Andreas, thanks for the interesting interview! We wish you success and bright impressions!

Prepared by Center for International Recruitment and Communication. Text: Olga Dorofeeva

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