

# University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Semester 2 2015 | MPlan (Master of Planning)

## Why You Should Choose Hawai'i

Aloha! Hawai'i is the perfect place for you if you are ready to embrace the spirit of aloha. Life in Hawai'i is vibrant, cultural, stress-free, exciting and just plain inspiring. There's so much to do; you'll never feel trapped (island fever), and it will quench your thirst for adventure. Snorkelling, seeing active volcanoes, enjoying incredible views around every corner, eating local grinds at food trucks, finding waterfall after waterfall, driving on the right, shopping, experiencing a vibrant art scene, camping and HIKING (rainforests, volcanoes, mountain ridges) are



just some of the reasons why Hawai'i is so special. There are so many islands to discover, and each is very different. It's a state of the U.S.A with a real pacific fusion. I spent my last semester ever there - I couldn't have thought of a better way to finish off my time at university. Just know in advance that it will be hard to leave.

## Accommodation

I chose to live at Atherton YMCA. As a postgraduate student I didn't want to live on campus as most students who do are young. The YMCA is across the road from campus which is so handy; the university gym is right there, as is the library and places to eat. The best part about the YMCA was its proximity to bus stops. Just about every bus route you could possibly need was right there. It's an old building that could really use interior renovations, so don't have high expectations. No swimming pool but the beach isn't far. You can have a roommate or a single room. I had a roommate from China, we had a great time. Don't worry that most rooms don't have air conditioning - you'll acclimatise and learn to sleep with a fan!



## Getting Around

Busing is free for all students at UHM with ID. The buses are fantastic, air conditioned and go almost everywhere. I used them almost every day, and I never felt like I needed a car. Hawaiian Airlines fly to the other islands usually for about \$100NZD each way. I strongly suggest hiring a car if you visit other islands, as busing is difficult and there's so much to see! It costs extra though if you're under 25.

## Life at UHM

UHM is a beautiful campus - as you would expect in Hawai'i! It's big with lots of open green space, huge

shady trees, places to eat, interesting architecture, big sports facilities, and the buildings are air conditioned. Classes weren't too big and were generally easier than back at Otago. UHM is located in Manoa valley; a really lush valley within greater Honolulu. It's got a supermarket and other shops just a short bus ride away. And it's about a 30minute bus ride to the beach and all the fun and shops in Waikiki, Kaka'ako, and Ala Moana.

### Quick List of 'Bests'

**Best food:** Ahi (Hawaiian tuna) sandwich from Nalu in Kailua on the windward side. Acai Bowls from Banan, a food truck near Diamond Head.

**Best sunset:** From any of the beaches on Oahu's north shore.

**Best drive:** Circumnavigate Oahu - drive around the south coast and then up the windward side to the north shore. Stop often! Second best: any of the highways through the Ko'olau Mountains. The views are amazing no matter which direction you take them.

**Best Hikes:** **Oahu** - Koko Crater, Lanikai Pillboxes, Olomana 3 peaks. **Maui:** Sliding Sands Trail in Haleakala Volcano (be prepared!), Twin Falls. **Kauai:** Awa'awa'puhi trail, Kalalau Trail (even if you don't do all of it). **Big Island:** Akaka Falls, anything in Volcanoes National Park.

### Final tips

Don't leave Oahu without exploring the windward side. It's mountain views are jaw-droppingly beautiful, and it has the best beaches. Do go and watch the crazy massive surf competitions in November on Oahu's north shore, just don't try swimming there during that time! Do come with lots of money - everything is so expensive; but try not to think about that too much, you want to enjoy your precious time there. Do go to at least one other island - you haven't seen the real Hawai'i unless you do.

