**Introduction**

My name is Amritpal Kaur and I belong to a small village in District Amritsar of Punjab, India. My date of birth is August 15, 1993. Talking about my academics, I have done my 10th class in the year 2010 with 55% marks under PSEB. Then, I did my 12th class in the year 2012 in medical stream in which I scored 69% marks. After that, I decided to pursue my studies in the nursing field as I like to take care of the patients and I find it satisfying. So I took admission in Baba Farid University of Health Sciences and I completed my degree in 2018 with 59% marks. After that I wanted to gain some work experience and luckily I got an opportunity to work with Dhuria Nursing Home, Raman Mandi in District Bathinda. It is a multi-specialty hospital and I joined there as a Staff Nurse on Febuary 6, 2019 and I am working there till date. I appeared for Tofel on 22/10/2020 and scored 94 scores.

**Reasons for choosing Master of Public Health Course**

After studying and working in India, I felt that Indian Health sector is far behind in terms of having proper infrastructure, facilities, technologies etc. Although the government of India spends lot of money on improving overall health of people, but they lack skilled people who can work for masses and provide health care solutions to a larger population which India has. Being a nurse, I will only be able to take care of individuals but I feel India needs health professionals who can take care of the masses. So I decided to study Master of Public Health, which is related to my field and also will provide me greater opportunities to help large number of people. Along with this, the salaries paid to skilled and experience professionals is also very high. I also researched about the same on the internet and found out that to experienced professionals, the salaries paid in India are approx. INR 70,000- 1 lakhs <https://medical.prepladder.com/dental/203-everything-you-need-to-know-about-mph-masters-in-public-health.html>

**Research about Colleges in India**

After deciding this, I looked for colleges in India that offer Master of Public Health program. Some of the colleges that I looked for were Manipal University, Amity University, AISECT University etc. But when I looked at the ratings of these universities at world level, it was very low. Also the course curriculum offered is very general. Being a nurse, I understand that practical exposure is of very high importance. But in these courses there is no practical exposure or internships are offered. Also, I would like to do a specialisation in the areas like traditional medicine in public health, health economics etc. but such topics are not taught in India. Then, I also found out that the job opportunities offered to students who pass out from India are not very good because they do not have the desired skill set. In fact, I can very well relate to it because even after being a bright student all through my qualification, I am earning a very less salary as a nurse. But on the other hand, if I will study from a good overseas university, the salary paid in India will be very high. So in order to fulfil my dream, I took this big decision to study abroad. Moreover, studying abroad will improve my overall personality, communication skills and will provide me an exposure to the advanced medical and health techniques that are not available in India.

**Reasons for Choosing Australia**

I looked for many reputed countries like Canada, Australia, USA and UK where large number of international students go for their studies. I also researched about the public health postgraduate degrees in colleges like University of Victoria, New York University, Imperial College London etc. But after looking at the fee structure of USA and UK, I calculated that these countries are not in my budget. The cost of living is also very high in both these countries. Other than this, it is very difficult to get admission in good colleges of USA, as it involves a lot of formalities and competition. Talking about Canada, the weather is a big concern for me. This country remains very cold for maximum part of the year and I don’t think I will be able to stay there.

On the other hand, Australia’s weather is quite similar to Indian weather. The fee structure in Australia is also quite affordable and the living costs are lesser as compared to other countries. Then, in my research I found out that Australia’s health industry is very advanced and in fact the most widely used techniques like Lithium Medical Treatment, Ultrasound etc. are invented by Australia. The best part is that the universities have tie-ups with the related industries and they make sure that the curriculum taught is advanced and as per the latest trends. Students also get opportunities to do internships in such companies and gain work experience. Also, it is the 3rd most popular country among international students and many of the Australian universities are ranked at the top in the world rankings for providing excellent education and facilities to students. Most of the universities are in fact globally recognised. Also, the employment opportunities after studying from Australian universities are very high so I will have very good chances to get a good job back in India. So with all these reasons, I made my mind to study in Australia. After that I appeared for PTE test in March 2020 and scored overall 75 points.

**Reasons for Choosing University of Technology Sydney**

Many universities in Australia provide Master of Public Health courses like Concordia University, Western Sydney University, Deakin University, UTS etc. Out of all, I have chosen to study from UTS. First of all, my preference was to study in Sydney. Apart from being a beautiful city, it also has a booming economy and it is home to top industries, health organisations and businesses. So this city provides a very good exposure. Also lot of top universities are located in Australia and UTS is one of them. UTS is ranked at no. 11 in Australia for providing quality education and also at no. 194 internationally by the 2020 Times Higher Education. One thing that I really liked about this university is that, it provides opportunities to students to do research and gain practical exposure. The student ratio at UTS is also small and students are given personalised attention. The tuition fee of this university is also in my budget. Then I checked the course curriculum of my chosen program and I was happy to find out that this course not only focusses on health outcomes at local level but at international level. Not only this, UTS is ranked at no. 1 for its Health Program, so studying from this university will be a great opportunity for me. I also found out that during this course, I will get an opportunity to meet the world health leaders like Professor Andrew Hayen, Professor Jon Adams who are world leading health and health services researchers. Other than this, during my course I will go through mentoring and guidance that will help me grow in my career.

Also the university’s campus is very beautiful and large. It is home to places like the Powerhouse Museum, TAFE Ultimo, the International Convention Centre (ICC), Darling Harbour and Chinatown. It is also known as a sustainable campus for its green initiatives like reducing electricity consumption, potable water use etc.

**Accommodation**

Talking about my accommodation, I found out lot of options near my campus at the link <https://amberstudent.com/places/leads/university-of-technology-sydney> and found good shared accommodations at approx. AUD 350 per week and this is in my budget. I will finalise the accommodation, after getting the visa approval.

**About the course**

I have chosen to study Master of Public Health from University of Technology Sydney. It is a full time 2 years degree program that will start from July 27, 2020. This course consists of total 96 credit points out of which 48 points are for core subjects and 48 are for electives. Some of the core subjects that I will be studying are  Foundations in Public Health, Fundamentals of Biostatistics, Fundamentals of Qualitative Research etc. Then, for the electives I can choose the subjects from disciplines like Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health, Complementary and Traditional Medicine in Public Health, Health Technology Assessment, Primary Health Care in Diabetes. As I have mentioned above, I would like to study traditional medicine in public health, health economics areas in detail. Other than this, there will be Public Health Research Project Thesis which I am highly interested to pursue. By doing this course, I will be able to prevent disease and injury, reduce health problems and promote health across populations. This course will also build management skills in me and I will be able to lead and conduct strategic public health programs at a local, national or global level. Overall, with this course, I will also learn to design and apply research methods to a variety of public health problems which will be very beneficial for my career growth.

**Plans after completing the course**

The role of Public Health in the present time has become very crucial because with the kind of changes happening in the environment and our lifestyle, lot of hazardous issues are happening in the world. The most recent concern is COVID-19 that has shaken the whole world. So I have a desire to be a successful health officer and design policies that help the people of India maintain a good health. As right now because of the lack of awareness, people are facing lot of diseases and health issues in India.

So in order to gain a good exposure and understand the latest techniques, I would first like to work in Australia by applying for 2 year post study work visa. After this course, I will be eligible to work in the areas like environmental health, epidemiology, health education, health policy and health promotion. I checked the websites like <https://www.seek.com.au/public-health-jobs> and found lot of good opportunities for myself for the job roles like Public Health Officer, Health promotion Officer, Registrar - Public Health in places like Northern Sydney Local Health District, Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service etc. The average salary paid is around AUD 60,000-70,000 per annum. This work experience will be very beneficial for me when I will go back to India as I will learn the management skills and develop specialist knowledge to design health policies.

**Long-Term Plans**

After gaining this work experience, I will come back to India. Firstly, I am quite attached to my family and out of all the siblings, my parents are sending me to study abroad. Then, later on it will be my responsibility to guide and take care of my younger brothers. Also my parents want me to study there and then come back so that they can marry me to a suitable guy from Punjab.

Apart from these reasons, I have a passion to support the public health industry of India which right now is lacking skilled professionals who can take care of the larger number of people. Although the government takes lot of initiatives like National Health Mission, Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karykram but they lack the trained Public Health Professionals who can run these schemes successfully. Other than this there are lot of research labs opened by the government like PHFI, INCLEN, JPAL Poverty Lab, NHRC that also need experienced public health professionals. Also, there are opportunities in Government Agencies and Public NGOs, Regulatory Agencies and Advocacy Groups like Indian Board of Clinical Hypnotherapy, Indian Nursing Council, Indian Red Cross Society etc. So working with any of these places at the job roles like Policy Analyst, Epidemiologist, medical officer etc., I will able to start at a salary package of INR 70,000-90,000. With experience, I will keep on growing in my salary and position and can easily reach at 2 lakhs per annum, which is very high. On the other hand, if I will study from India, the maximum salary that I will start at will be 20,000 which is very less. So I am sure by studying from Australia, I will be making a very good return on investment.

**Student Visa Conditions**

As I am applying for Master of Public Health Program, my visa subclass is 500. I am aware of my visa conditions which are:

* I am not allowed to discontinue my study in the middle of the course.
* If I migrate or change my contact details I must inform the concerned department of college and immigration within 7 days.
* I should cover by OSHC (overseas health cover policy) during my stay in Australia.
* I should pay my tuition fee before due date.
* I should at list maintain 80 attendances in college.
* I should maintain my term and condition under subclass 500, any breach of visa condition will lead to cancellation of visa.

Also, I would like to mention that I do not have any previous visa history.

Regards

Amritpal Kaur