

## Ruchi Gupta

**Country:** India

**Course:** Diploma of Hospitality Management (including Commercial Cookery)

**Institute:** TAFE NSW - Western Sydney Institute, Nepean College



Ruchi Gupta was anxious before she left her home in New Delhi to come and study the Diploma of Hospitality Management, including Commercial Cookery, at TAFE NSW - Western Sydney Institute, Nepean College. "In the beginning, I thought I'm going to a new country, a new environment, a new social set-up. You feel that it is very full-on," Ruchi said. But so far she has had a positive experience.

It took Ruchi about a month to settle in to Australia, an experience made somewhat easier because she had family living here in the Nepean region. "I am living with my family, so earning money for living expenses is not a stress for me," Ruchi said.

Nonetheless, Ruchi continues to work, gaining experience in her industry. "There are lots of jobs in hospitality, but you have to have that motivation and that goal in yourself. You need to be focussed," Ruchi said. "To get a job, I just went from one place to another talking to people directly face-to-face and dropping in my resume. In my first job I worked as a short order cook. Then I worked with Penrith Panthers," Ruchi said. "The teachers originally referred me there for the training part of my course, and then because I was reasonable, I was able to get some casual work during the vacation. They had excellent wages."

Ruchi is very impressed with the course at TAFE NSW. "The teachers over here are very experienced and they have lots to teach you," Ruchi commented. "I like the way the course is made up, the way the practical work is combined with the theoretical aspects".

"The kind of inputs that are given, the types of teachers, the kinds of classes and the college make the classroom close to a workplace environment," Ruchi said. "Hospitality, being a very hands on job, a very practical industry, it becomes very useful when you go out into the industry."

Nepean College is a specialist centre for Tourism and Hospitality with three full commercial kitchens, cold storage rooms, a bakery and a meat retail outlet, a wine cellar and a hotel guest services facility. A training restaurant called "Patama Garang" (Aboriginal for "Meeting Place"), is open to the public and offers five-star dining for lunch and dinner Monday to Friday. Student work placement is rostered in the restaurant where they learn essential culinary and customer service skills to meet the high expectation of our paying customers.

During her time in Australia, Ruchi has made friends with international students from all over the world, as well as with many local students. "It is a very diverse class with people from different cultures, with different sets of values, with different sets of beliefs," Ruchi said. "You become friends."

"Another very good thing I found out about Australians is that they accept you for what you are. Here you are open to every culture, every cuisine, very diverse people and they understand that you share different sets of values and beliefs."

Ruchi admits to getting homesick sometimes, but despite her initial fears, has decided that she would love to stay in Australia. "My parents come to visit me. I email them. Email facilities are at home, in the college and in the library. There are phonecards available for A\$10 a card and you can talk for 1 hour and 15 minutes."