

Despite English being his second language, Martin has taken a leading role in helping to develop a sophisticated videoconferencing system that operates within Griffith University. The long distances between Griffith's four campuses means video conferencing is an innovative way for Griffith staff and students to reduce their reliance on cars for transport and simultaneously lower the university's carbon footprint. But apart from his impressive skills on a computer, Martin also finds time for sports, socialising and artistic experimentation. He is also one of the few people around who would positively describe Brisbane's public transport network as modern, organised and "timely". Martin took some time out to chat with *Universe* about growing up in Indonesia, the work he is doing for Griffith University and why living in a sharehouse can be both "awkward and cool".

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia.

What caused your deafness? I was diagnosed with bilateral deafness during birth. If I remember correctly, it was caused by German measles.

What is it like growing up deaf in Indonesia? Normally during my childhood I had been schooling in a special school reserved for deaf students. The school was founded by a missionary from The Netherlands who cared a lot about teaching deaf students who were left lacking special education that can help them to gain education, just like many other normal students do. Generally my school life at that time had been supportive because teachers in the school had always been assertively helpful. One day, a long time ago, a decision was made for me to move to a normal school. This made a very big difference, and I was able to gain some further education, but at the same time I was being overwhelmed with the challenge of adapting to a new school. However, I have praise for the deaf school that helped turn me into a capable person.



How long have you been learning English for? If I am not mistaken, it should be roughly around six years now.

Why did you want to come to Australia... was Griffith your first choice? Actually I came because it was my parents' wishes for me to come to Australia, and coincidentally the certification of my High School Certificate originated in Australia, so I needed to transfer to any university where English is the language of instruction. It was a bit difficult to adapt in Australia, as communicating with people in English is hard because of my profound deaf hearing impairment. Despite that issue, I'm fortunate to have close relatives who also live in Australia, which is convenient for me to seek help whenever I have a problem.

Do you have immediate family here or do you live on your own or with friends? My family is in my home country, so I live in a shared flat with Swedish flatmates, which is both a bit awkward and cool. I have my cousin in Brisbane and Melbourne too, just in case I want to visit them during the holidays.

What are you studying at Griffith? I am studying Multimedia majoring in Design/Visual Communication Design, and I am based at the Nathan and South Bank campuses. My interest in graphic art and painting prompted me to study a degree in Multimedia, as it gives me plenty of options and a variety of media to work in.

What do you like about life in Australia? I like how Australia provides a modern and organised mass transport system that enables me to go anywhere in a safe and timely manner, compared to what I have seen in my home country. Furthermore I can say it's safe to stay here, and Brisbane is one of the best cities that always has sunny weather that brings a good mood to all people! Australia is nice – an ideal country for both lifestyle and safety. I plan to apply for permanent residency when I graduate.

Do you miss Indonesian food? Apparently I do! Just like a classmate of mine who is a fellow countryman and always says the same thing!

Can you tell me about the videoconferencing project you helped design for Griffith? The videoconferencing project required the construction of a self-paced website that informs and trains the user or staff who wish to use a videoconferencing room about the location of the rooms, good practice and behaviour when it comes to videoconferencing, and the technical aspects of the different equipment. Basically, it ensures that the user knows everything about the videoconferencing system before they make a booking to use a videoconferencing room or perform a videoconferenced session. My role in this

project was to design Flash-based web components: a videoconferencing map for the user to browse the locations of videoconference sites and an interactive virtual guide for the user to gain knowledge in the technical aspects of equipment used for videoconferencing.

What do you want to do when you graduate? I want to try to migrate as a skilled graduate to Australia, or at least perhaps go back to Indonesia for a while because I miss lots of things there. I would pursue a career in graphic design in any flexible, commercial studio or small organisation. I'd like to get more graduate work experience in Australia then work full-time in graphic design or 3D animation in any young, flexible and equity-focused company that suits my condition and will help me excel.

Is Indonesian sign language the same as Australian sign language... if not, are there any similarities? It's probably not the same in some specific definitions. I can say there is a similarity in that whenever a person communicates using hands, such as waving to indicate greeting, the other person will know it easily. The common thing about sign language is using hands to indicate expressions.

What do you do in your spare time? I like to do casual activities on the computer such as chatting with old friends and experimenting with graphic work, especially when looking for something different to try out. Oh, and I like to play billiards, bowling and badminton as well.*

You can see Martin's portfolio at www.martintung.com

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