



HOW TO

study abroad in

Australia

UPDATED





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Introduction

Many students dream of taking a gap year in Australia, but how about studying there instead? From the bright lights of Sydney to the café culture of Melbourne and onto the natural beauty of Perth, this 7,692,024km² island has a diverse terrain, character and appeal that keeps international students returning year after year.

When you think of Australia, perhaps you think of the Great Barrier Reef, Bondi Beach, Ayers Rock and aboriginal culture. Or how about kangaroos, koalas and scarily large spiders? Or maybe it's Neighbours, Nicole Kidman, vegemite and Shiraz wine? Choose to study here and you'll soon have your own unique set of memories and anecdotes to capture the experience.

Australia is proud to consistently rank close to the top of various lists of the world's best places to live, offering a quality of life which is difficult to beat. Studying here offers the chance to learn at an internationally renowned higher education institution, while exploring the nation's natural wonders and the buzz of its cosmopolitan cities. Student life offers a lively flurry of bars, sports teams, outdoor pursuits and of course, making the most of the nation's 10,685 beaches.

Almost 24 million people live in Australia, over six million tourists visit every year and as of March 2017 there were 480,092 international students studying in the country. The Australian government is keen

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to keep increasing overseas enrolments, and in 2015 set out a Draft National Strategy for International Education on this theme. Support for international students is well-established across the country, from excellent university support services to a generous annual offering in government-funded scholarships and grants.

In the 2016 International Student Survey, 89% of surveyed international students were satisfied or very satisfied with their Australian university experience. Want to join their happy ranks? Read on to find out how...



Higher education in Australia

Across Australia's universities you'll find every subject you could expect, but it remains a particularly popular destination for those studying natural sciences such as biology, zoology and chemistry, as well as mathematics, engineering, the social sciences and medical fields.

In total Australia is home to 43 universities, of which the majority are public and just two private. Most Australian universities are self-accrediting institutions running under legislation set either by the state or territory. Funding comes from the Australian government via the Higher Education Support Act 2003 through grants and loans.

Three levels of degree are offered: bachelor's (three to five years), master's (one or two years) and doctorate (three to four years). In general Australian universities have great facilities and there are always lots of activities going on, with plenty of social nights and clubs to get involved with.

There are also over 1,100 accredited vocational and technical higher education institutions in Australia. These offer technical and further education (TAFE) and vocational education and training (VET). Here you can study short courses, certificates I through IV, diplomas, and advanced diplomas in industry training designed to prepare you for a specific job.

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As in many countries, pursuing an internship alongside study is encouraged in Australia. For some courses, such as education, nursing, engineering, IT, accounting and communication, completing work experience may be a requirement. Internships can be pretty competitive, so get your applications in early to ensure you get a good place.



The country's elite "Group of Eight" – a kind of equivalent to the US Ivy League or UK Russell Group – includes **Australian National University (ANU)**, the **University of Melbourne**, the **University of Sydney**, the **University of Queensland**, the **University of New South Wales**, **Monash University**, the **University of Western Australia** and the **University of Adelaide**. All eight of these make the top 150 of the QS World University Rankings® 2018, with a further 29 Australian universities featured in the overall rankings.



Student cities

Sydney

The name of Australia's biggest city tends to evoke images of beaches, surfing and drinking, all in the shadow of the nation's most recognizable landmark, the Sydney Opera House. And, sure, it is famed for its party lifestyle. But, like many larger cities famous for their nightlife, it is also bohemian, creative, and intellectual.

If this sounds like your kind of environment, then universities in Sydney provide plenty of choice. Two of Australia's prestigious Group of Eight – the **University of Sydney** (ranked 50th in the world) and the **University of New South Wales** (ranked 45th) – are based in the city, as well as a number of other institutions, including the country's top-ranked non-Go8 university, **Macquarie University** (joint 240th), the **University of Technology, Sydney** (176th) and the **University of Western Sydney** (551-600).

Melbourne

Considered to be the cultural and multicultural capital of Australia, Melbourne is a good alternative for those who perhaps find Sydney a bit too brash – think of it as a sort of San Francisco to Sydney's Los Angeles. However, it's not a pretentious intellectual bubble either – Melbourne's locals are known for their love of sport, and you won't be left wanting in terms of nightlife. It is also notable for being one of Australia's best-preserved cities architecturally.

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Universities in Melbourne again include two Go8 institutions, the **University of Melbourne** (ranked joint 41st in the world) and **Monash University** (60th), as well as the **Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology** (joint 247th), **Deakin University** (joint 293rd), **La Trobe University** (360th), and **Swinburne University of Technology** (421-430).

Brisbane

Australia's third-largest city Brisbane is known for the friendliness of its locals – often considered to be a major factor in the city's growth. Of course, friendliness alone isn't enough to make a city, and it also has a thriving live music scene, a plethora of world-class cultural institutions and – of course – access to plenty of beautiful beaches.

Among universities in Brisbane, the most prominent is the **University of Queensland** (Brisbane is the capital of the state of Queensland), which ranks at joint 47th in the QS World University Rankings 2018. The other ranked institutions in the city are the **Queensland University of Technology** (joint 247th), and **Griffith University** (joint 325th).

Perth

If it's the quiet life you're after, then maybe Perth should be quite high up your shortlist. The city lies in splendid isolation on Australia's west coast, and boasts a high volume of relatively unspoiled and quiet beaches. The city itself is uncrowded and peaceful. If you're more into cafés, parks and peaceful beaches than all-night partying, then you and Perth might be a match made in heaven.



Universities in Perth include the **University of Western Australia** (joint 93rd), **Curtin University** (262nd) and **Murdoch University** (501-6550), and Perth is also the main location for one of Australia's two private universities, **Notre Dame University**.

Adelaide

Located in the midst of Australia's chief wine-growing region, Adelaide is the capital of the region of South Australia. Like all of the cities listed here, Adelaide is a coastal city, so can offer the gold and blue shades which characterize Australia's beaches, as well as the lush greenery which provides the setting for the region's vineyards.

Unsurprisingly, given its location, Adelaide is noted for being a good city for lovers of food and drink. It is also, as a result of the many nature preserves and conservation areas which lie within spitting distance of the city, a good choice for lovers of nature and wildlife. Among universities in Adelaide, the highest ranked is the **University of Adelaide** at joint 109th in our world rankings, followed by the **University of South Australia** (joint 279th) and **Flinders University** (551-600).

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Admission requirements & applications

In addition to submitting your academic record to date, you may also need to submit proof of proficiency in English language, as well as completing any set tests or interviews

Each higher education institution is unique in the programs offered, entry requirements, cost and culture. There is no federal or state-level application system for international students applying to universities in Australia, so you will need to apply directly to the university, usually online and often for a fee.

Australian universities certainly aren't cheap, with average tuition fees for international students averaging around AU\$29,235 (~US\$22,230) at undergraduate level. This will vary from university to university and subject to subject – a humanities student will pay substantially less than someone studying medicine. If cost is going to be an issue, then make sure you do some research.

In addition to submitting your academic record to date, you may also need to submit proof of proficiency in English language, as well as completing any set tests or interviews.

The beginning of the academic year in Australia is February, although it may also be possible to commence studies in July, at the start of the second semester. You can usually apply between three and 18 months before a course starts, but the earlier the better.



Student visas

Australian student visas were previously categorized in different types depending on study level, but this was simplified in July 2016, so all international students now apply for the **Student Visa (Subclass 500)**, which you must apply for online.

The Australian government's Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIPB; www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Stud) provides all the information you need on how to apply.

Students from New Zealand are not classed as international students and therefore will not need a visa to study in Australia.

You will need a Genuine Temporary Entrant (GTE) requirement to state your genuine intention to stay in Australia temporarily for the purpose of study. You may need to attend an interview at your nearest Australian embassy for this.

Here's a quick checklist of what it takes to get an Australian student visa:

- **Acceptance on a course**

Australian visa requirements for students mean you must first be accepted to study a course which is registered on the Commonwealth Register of

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Institutions of Courses (CRICOS). You'll need an online code and a copy of your confirmation of enrolment or an offer letter to serve as proof of this. You will be able to change course afterwards, but it must be to one of the same or a higher study level, or else you will need to be apply for a new visa. Students may also package their studies by studying two or more courses on their Student Visa (Subclass 500), where there is clear progression from one course to another.

- **Proof of finances**

You'll need to show evidence of sufficient funds to cover tuition, travel and living costs. From July 2016, the amount you need to prove you have for living costs (separate from tuition and travel) is set at AU\$19,830 (~US\$15,080) for a year. If you have dependents (such as a spouse and children), you will also need to show evidence of being able to cover living costs for them, including school fees. Alternatively, you can show evidence that your spouse or parents are willing to support you and that they earn at least AU\$60,000 (~US\$45,600) a year.

- **Medical check-ups/ health insurance**

You may be required to take a medical and/or a radiological check-up to show that you are in good health, but you shouldn't do this unless you are specifically advised that you must. If you are told to take a test then you must attend an appointment with a doctor who has been approved by the Australian immigration department.



You are also obliged to purchase Overseas Student Health Cover – OSHC – unless you are from Belgium, Norway or Sweden, though Swedes must be covered by CSN or Kammarkollegiet for this to apply. You may purchase this cover through your university, or directly from one of the five approved providers. These are Australian Health Management, BUPA Australia, Medibank Private, OSHC Worldwide and nib OSHC.

- **Proof of English proficiency**

If you're not from an English-speaking country (and haven't completed at least five years' study in an English-speaking country) you'll need to prove you can speak English to the required level. The DIBP website lists eligible tests, with possibilities being the IELTS, TOEFL iBT, Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic, and Cambridge Advanced English (CAE). The score you will need will depend on whether you are starting a full degree, studying a foundation course, or enrolling on a preliminary English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), which you will have a maximum of 30 weeks to complete.

- **Good character requirements**

You must also be of good character to enter Australia, something which is assessed by performing a criminal record check. You may also need to acquire a penal clearance certificate (or police certificate) or get a police statement, and may be asked to complete a Character Statutory Declaration Form.

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Visa applications

You will need to submit evidence for all of the requirements along with application form 157A, four passport pictures, your passport biodata page and proof of your academic record – you can use the Document Checklist Tool to ensure you have all the evidence you need. All documents should be translated into English. Applications take about four weeks to process. You may be asked to attend an interview at a local visa office. You'll be given a Transaction Reference Number (TRN) to track and manage your application online in your ImmiAccount.



Tuition fees, living costs & funding

The cost of study varies significantly depending on the institution, study level and subject. Programs in areas such as engineering and medicine are typically at the higher end of the scale.

According to Study in Australia, the official government site for international students, typical annual tuition fees for international students are:

- **Bachelor's degree**
AU\$15,000 (~US\$11,400) to AU\$33,000 (~US\$22,800);
- **Master's degree**
AU\$20,000 (~US\$15,200) to \$37,000 (~US\$28,130);
- **Doctoral degree**
AU\$14,000 (~US\$10,640) to \$37,000 (~US\$28,130).

These figures do not include high-value courses such as veterinary or medical degrees, which can cost significantly more.

Living costs

As mentioned earlier, the Australian government's Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIPB) puts a specific figure on the costs for international students. In order to be eligible to study in Australia,

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Although Australia is an expensive place to study, the good news is that the Australian government is active in supporting international students, and gives out approximately AU\$200 million each year in scholarships, grants and other financial aid

you will need to show you have AU\$19,830 (~US\$15,080) per year to cover living costs. If you're bringing a partner add AU\$6,940 (US\$5,270) to this figure. And if you have children, you'll need to show you have an additional AU\$3,720 (US\$2,880) for one child and AU\$2,970 (US\$2,250) for every additional child.

Funding

Although Australia is an expensive place to study, the good news is that the Australian government is active in supporting international students, and gives out approximately AU\$200 million each year in scholarships, grants and other financial aid. Major government-funded international scholarship schemes include the Australia Awards and the International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) program. The Australia Awards are available to nationals and citizens from eligible countries. The list of eligible countries is extensive, covering the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific area and Asia.

Many other organizations and individual universities also offer scholarships for international students, and a searchable database is available on the government website www.studyinaustralia.gov.au.

The Australia Awards Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships are mainly for postgraduate-level study and research. Out of the four funds available for international applicants, one is a short-term research fellowship for graduates and postgraduates (maximum award of AU\$24,500 for studies



of up to six months), one is for professional development (maximum award of AU\$18,500 for up to four months) and one is for vocational education and training for a diploma or associate's degree (VET) offering up to AU\$6,500 per semester for up to two and a half years (maximum award AU\$131,000).

International graduate students looking to gain funding for a full master's or PhD program should apply for the Endeavour Postgraduate Scholarship, which offers up to AU\$15,000 per semester for a duration of up to two years for master's students and four years for PhD students (maximum award AU\$140,500 for master's, AU\$272,500 for PhD).

It is recommended that you apply early for all Australian scholarships and fellowships. Applications for the 2019 round open in April 2018.

If you're a graduate student from the UK, you can apply for the Northcote Graduate Scholarship from the Britain-Australia Society. This funds your travel there and back, tuition fees and charges, and also provides a basic allowance for three years while you study.

For all undergraduate and postgraduate students, check with the Australian universities you are interested in, as many offer scholarships are open to both domestic and international students at both levels. For more funding opportunities, visit our list of [scholarships to study in Australia](#).

You can also supplement your finances with a part-time student job - you will have permission to work included with your visa.

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You can work a maximum of 40 hours per fortnight when your course is in session and unlimited hours in the holidays. You cannot commence work until you have started your course.

Voluntary work is not included in your 40-hour limit as long it's genuinely voluntary and beneficial to the community (and couldn't have been undertaken by an Australian resident who would have received a wage).

While earnings from part-time work can be a helpful extra, you shouldn't rely on this to cover your living costs. Your student visa was granted based on your confirmation that you have sufficient funds to cover your living and tuition costs during your stay in Australia.



Working in Australia after graduation

If you want to stay in Australia after you've graduated, you'll need to get a work visa. Anyone who's studied in the country for two years or more and has applied for a skills assessment in an occupation on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL) qualifies for a special work visa – the Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485). This allows you to stay in Australia for another two years after graduating.

This visa has two streams:

- **Graduate work stream** – For international students who graduate with an eligible qualification that relates to an occupation considered in-demand in the Australian labor market, according to the Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MLTSSL). A visa in this stream is granted for 18 months.
- **Post-study work stream** – This is for graduates of all other disciplines. The length of this visa depends on your qualification. If you have a bachelor's degree, master's (extended) or master's by coursework degree, your visa is valid for two years. If you have a master's by research, the visa length is three years, while visas for PhD graduates are valid for four years.

Anyone who's studied in the country for two years or more and has applied for a skills assessment in an occupation on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL) qualifies for a special work visa – the Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485)



If you have a “No Further Stay” condition attached to your visa, you can still apply for this visa using Form 1409, which includes an application for the condition to be waived

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The requirements for the Temporary Graduate visa are:

- You must currently hold an eligible visa
- You meet the health and character requirements
- Valid health insurance
- Valid passport
- You must meet the specific requirements of the visa stream you’re applying to
- Evidence you meet the English requirement – if you’re from a non-English speaking country you’ll need to have reached a certain score in an English language test such as IELTS. You must have taken the test within the three years before you apply, and include the results in your visa application.
- You meet the Australian study requirement in the last six months.

To apply, you’ll first need to prepare your documents, proving you meet all the requirements. These documents include your birth certificate, passport photos, letter from your health insurance provider, completion



letters and course transcripts from your university, and more depending on your circumstances.

You should then lodge your application by post or online via your ImmiAccount, providing all your supporting documents and paying the visa application charge, which is currently AU\$1,500 (~US\$1,140) for you, plus extra for any accompanying family members. During the visa processing time, you may be eligible for a bridging visa, which allows you to stay in Australia while your visa application is processed. You might be asked to provide more information or attend a visa interview.



Specific skills in high demand in Australia include electricians, technicians, IT specialists, architects, engineers, veterinarians, accountants, neurologists, teachers, psychologists and medical practitioners. You can also check the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship website for more information about opportunities open to international students.