



The Ultimate Guide to Studying in Australia



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Chapter 1: Why Australia?

Australian universities have been rising in popularity, now consistently holding a place in the top five destinations for international students across most rankings. Australia sits alongside other popular English-speaking countries - the UK, Canada and the USA - as a refreshing and increasingly compelling alternative.

And it's not surprising that Australia is becoming many students' first choice.

The country boasts a whole host of attractive features, ranging from lifestyle factors to academic offerings. Plus, for students based in Asia, it's generally more geographically accessible than its key competitors.

And not only is Australia attracting students, it's also proving itself worthy to those already there: international students report almost 90% satisfaction!

So before we delve into the technicalities of studying in Australia, let's think about some of the many reasons why your students might choose to direct their applications there, and why those studying there love it so much.

A wide range of study destinations

Australia contains a multitude of high-ranking educational institutions providing a huge range of degrees across almost any subject a student could be interested in studying.

With over 1100 institutions and 22,000 courses across every discipline and at every level, there really is something for everyone.

In terms of universities, Australia has 43, with at least one in every state/territory. That means if any students have their heart set on a particular region, they'll be able to find a university.

That being said, most of the universities are clustered on the east coast, so if students are keen to be amongst a lot of fellow students, they might want to focus their searches there.

Academic prestige

Of course, there's more to learning than location! Many students are attracted to Australia because of its educational ethos: the Australian education system encourages innovative and independent thinking and fosters academic excellence.

You only need to look at some of its legacies to see: Wi-Fi, penicillin, the black box flight recorder, the Earth Hour initiative and the Cochlear implant are just some of the world-shaping inventions of graduates from Australian universities.

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What's more, its academic rigour is unquestionable. Australia as a whole ranked 9th worldwide in the 2020 Universitas 21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems, beating other popular destinations like New Zealand, the Netherlands, Germany and France.

Six Australian universities were ranked in the Times Higher Education top 100 universities in 2021, too (Australian National University, The University of Melbourne, Monash University, University of Queensland, University of New South Wales and University of Sydney).

The Australian lifestyle

For many expats in Australia, the main motivation for the move was the Aussie way of life. Australians are known as warm and welcoming, making it an attractive community for outsiders to join.

After all, many of its cities are already very multicultural, so students might not feel as much of the culture shock or alienation that often come with international study. More than half a million international students from almost 200 countries have already studied in Australia, which not only suggests the country is very welcoming to visitors but also increases its multicultural atmosphere even more!

As well as being multicultural, Australian cities are generally very safe, and have some of the lowest crime rates in the world. The country also has a robust infrastructure, and facilities like transport and healthcare are excellent.

A beautiful natural landscape

No summary of Australia's magnetic pull could omit its staggering natural beauty.

Australia - the world's sixth largest country - has an incredibly diverse landscape containing some of the most recognisable and breathtaking scenes our planet offers, including 20 world heritage sites.

From the Great Barrier Reef to the famous outback, there's no shortage of wonders for international students to explore.

We'll get into even more detail about Australia's varied and vibrant attractions as we consider its individual regions in the next chapter!

Chapter 2: A Guide to Australia's Regions

As we mentioned, Australia is a huge and geographically diverse country. It would be difficult to summarise it accurately or usefully for students trying to discover whether it's the right fit for them, and where they might apply.

Instead, let's zoom in a little and explore Australia's different regions.

New South Wales



New South Wales, located on Australia's south east coast, has the biggest population of all Australia's states - largely thanks to Sydney's 5 million inhabitants which make up a significant proportion of the approximately 7.7 million total.

Of course, Sydney doesn't just boost the state's population. It's also a huge draw for international students, expats and tourists thanks to popular attractions like Bondi and the Sydney Harbour, as well as a rich cultural offering of museums and galleries. Given its size and attractiveness, it's not so surprising that Sydney is one of the most diverse cities in the world, with many inhabitants from Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

But Sydney isn't all that New South Wales has to offer! Newcastle and Wollongong are two other lively seaside cities, and there are the golden beaches all along the coast as well as the well-known Byron Bay.

For the active explorers amongst your students, the Blue Mountains might be a particular gem, providing a great opportunity for climbing, abseiling and hiking.

Victoria



Although Victoria is less than a third of the size of the bordering NSW, it has almost as many people, with a population of around 6 million! Again, these are mostly concentrated in one very famous city: Melbourne.

Like Sydney, Melbourne enjoys considerable popularity with international students, expats and tourists alike. It's well-known for its sport and culture (as well as its coffee!). In fact, sports fans might feel especially at home in Melbourne, which hosts big events like the Australian Tennis Open, the Australian F1 Grand Prix and the Melbourne Cup.

Non-sports lovers needn't fear, as Melbourne is a very welcoming and diverse city with influences from all over the world. It's particularly European in its vibe.

Beyond Melbourne, Victoria has a lot to offer international students, like the celebrated Great Ocean Road, which makes for impressive road trips. It's also home to Torquay, a hub for surfers.

Students interested in other outdoor activities can also check out the Grampians, Wilson's Promontory National Park (aka 'The Prom'), Phillip Island and Gippsland.

Queensland



Queensland is renowned for its great weather, which even inspired a state slogan of 'beautiful one day, perfect the next'! It's also home to the Great Barrier Reef and tropical islands like Magnetic Island and the Whitsundays, as well as miles of stunning Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast beaches.

Of course, there's also the bustling but relaxed city of Brisbane, which has a wealth of potential both socially and professionally for international students.

Outdoor explorers can also find a lot to do here beyond diving, surfing and other water sports, with national parks full of fascinating wildlife as well as an actual rainforest! Daintree Rainforest is the largest area of tropical rainforest in the whole country, at 1200 square kilometers.

The most intrepid of your students might like to explore the outback and see whether they stumble upon any precious stones or fossils. It's also a great place to explore rich Aboriginal culture.

Western Australia

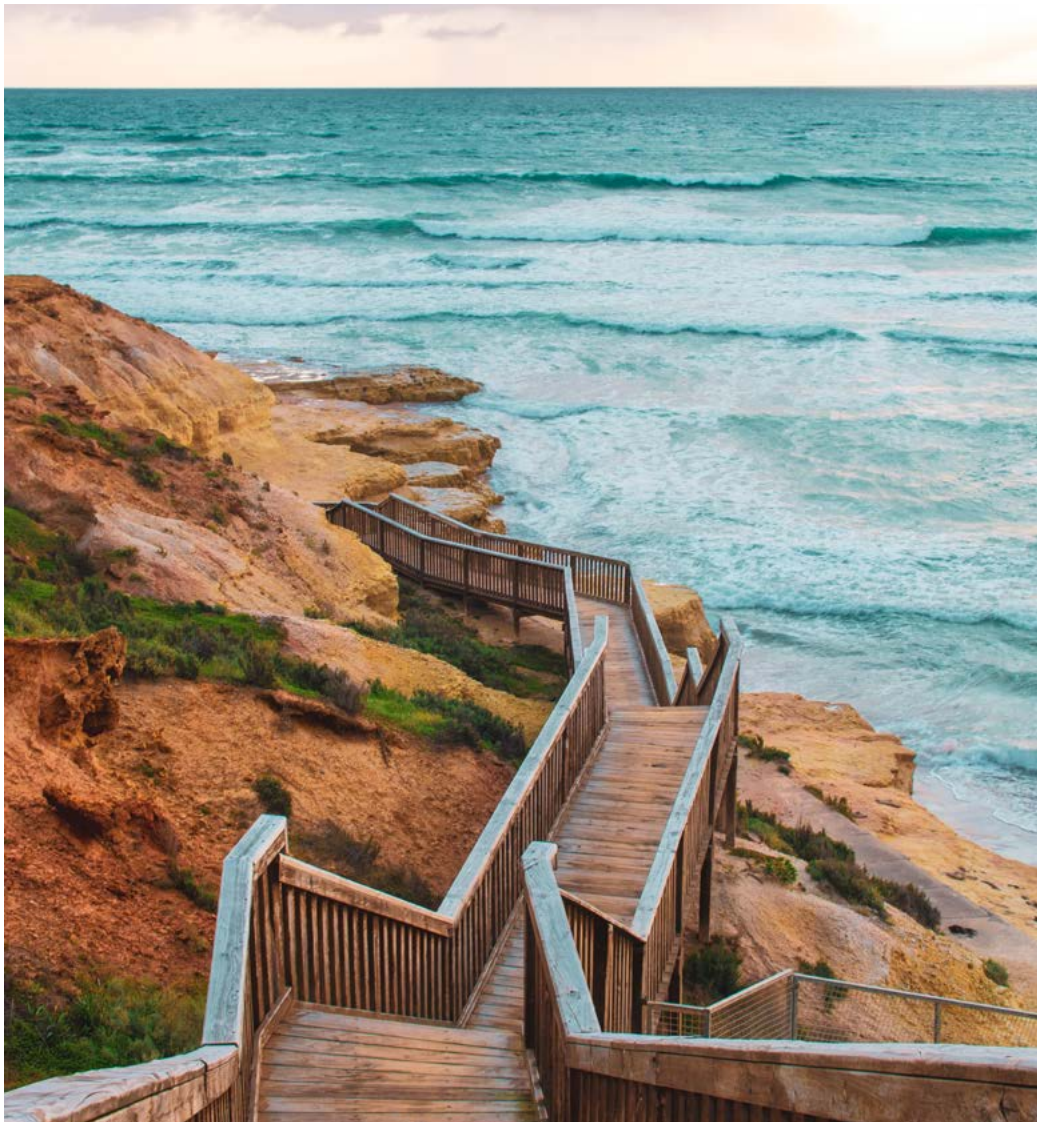


Western Australia is a huge state which differs considerably from the rest of the country. Here, students can find astounding landscapes of the Australian outback.

There are the Pinnacles, mesmerising stacks of limestone, and the dazzling Wave Rock, a rock formation which naturally bears an uncanny resemblance to a breaking wave. And let's not forget the world heritage site of Bungle Bungle Range in Purnululu National Park.

If you have students who are more comfortable as city-dwellers, Western Australia's capital, Perth, is a good bet. It's a bustling and friendly city with its own attractions, including Rottnest Island and the port of Fremantle.

South Australia



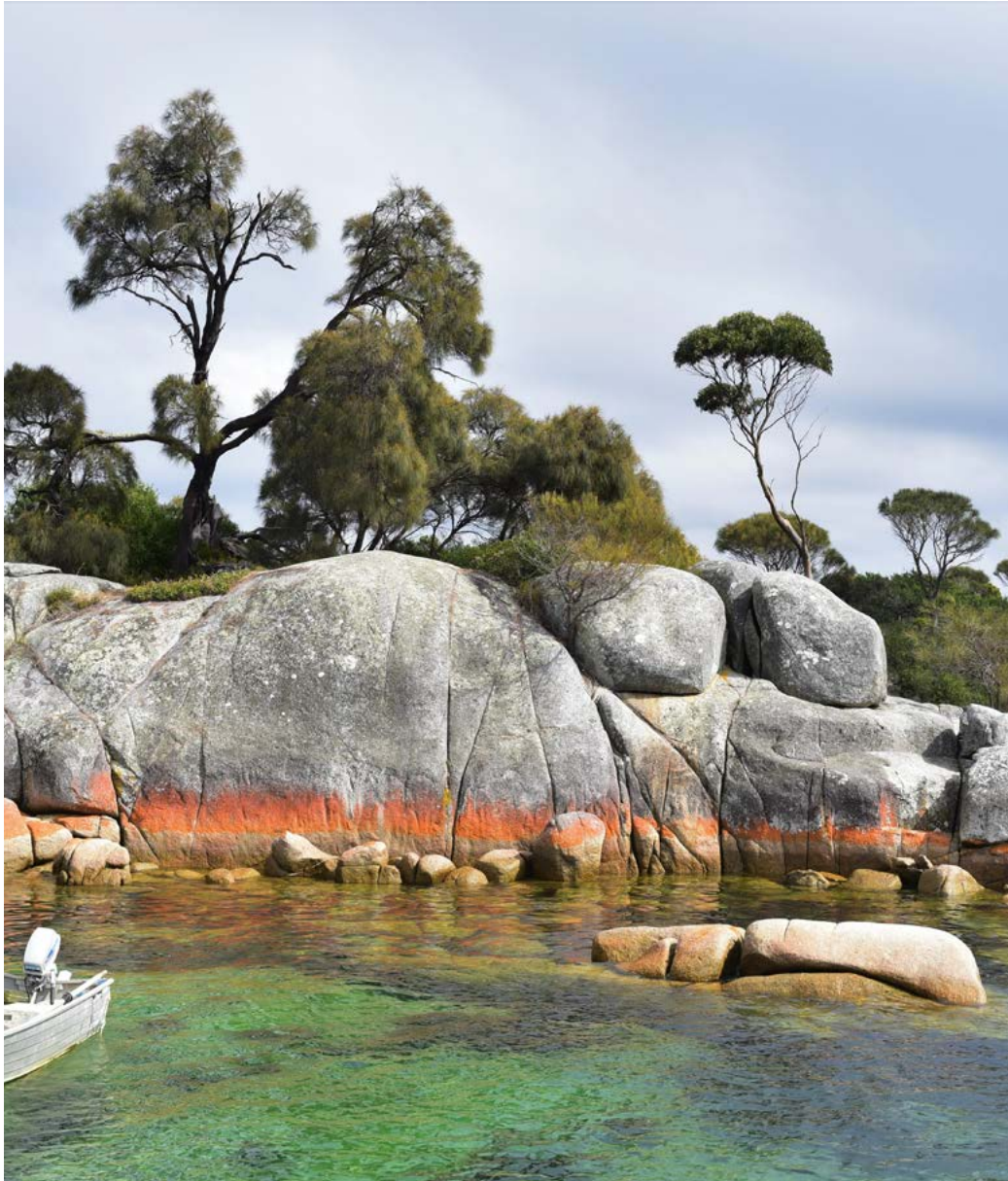
This is one of Australia's smallest states both in physical size and population, but it has a lot to offer! Students can seek out the essence of Australia in places like Flinders Range, the Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island.

At the same time, they can find familiar modernity in the cosmopolitan state capital of Adelaide.

South Australia is interesting in that it's split into two quite distinct halves. Its southern part is very fertile, and has a pleasant Mediterranean climate - both of which mean it's quite well-populated and its landscape has been shaped and moulded by human hands.

The northern side tells a different story, as it's incredibly dry and hot, and therefore has a much smaller population. In fact, there are areas in which people live underground to escape the heat!

Tasmania



Tasmania is separate from mainland Australia as its very own island. It's also the very smallest of Australia's states - it has just half a million residents, and is about the size of Sri Lanka.

Tasmania has a reputation as being quite old-fashioned, although that's been changing in recent years - as evidenced by developments like the opening of the Museum of Old and New Art in 2011.

The state also offers riches of beautiful wildland, including diverse rainforests, glaciated mountains and white beaches. If your students are passionate about nature, they'll find plenty to explore. In fact, almost half of Tasmania is designated as reserves, national parks and World Heritage Sites.

Northern Territory



Another region with a small population (so small, in fact, that it hasn't achieved full statehood), Northern Territory might be overlooked but it's home to some of Australia's iconic sights and experiences. There's the legendary Uluru, treks around Darwin and Arnhem Land, and Litchfield and Kakadu national parks.

People from NT have a reputation for seeing themselves as something of 'outsiders', hardened by the extremes of distance and climate which they face compared to most of their compatriots.

But NT is also known as Australia's Asian Gateway as it's closer to Asia than to Australia's most powerful cities. As a result, the capital, Darwin, is actually a very sophisticated, cosmopolitan and vibrant city with strong cultural and trading links to Asia Pacific.

Australian Capital Territory



This region is entirely within the bounds of New South Wales. It's a relatively tiny territory, but the presence of Australia's capital, Canberra, means it packs a real punch. It's a beautiful, multicultural city and has a lot of cultural attractions, including fascinating museums and galleries.

It's a good bet for international students in terms of employment opportunities and healthcare, and it has a great education system.

Chapter 3: Post-Secondary Education in Australia

Ultimately, the driving motivation for undertaking any degree is to learn.

Of course, destination research takes into account myriad factors, like the ones we zipped through in the previous chapter. But academic environment and options should be heavily weighted factors.

After all, students don't want to end up in a country or institution with a teaching style, learning ethos or subject material that doesn't allow them to thrive!

Don't worry, though. Australia has such varied and malleable educational offerings that it's unlikely any student keen on the country will end up having to rule it out.

Because there is so much variety, it's important that students understand the different options out there, so that they can browse courses with all the information they need, and look for the ones that best fit their goals.

In this chapter, we'll look at the different types of educational institutions open to international students and their underpinning philosophies. We'll also explain the degrees which Australian universities can confer.

Types of educational institutions

Universities

As we mentioned, Australia has 43 universities spread across the entire country. Australian universities aren't centralised, meaning they can be quite different from each other in lots of ways; they're all run independently, and can decide on crucial details like their entry requirements, deadlines, and even course durations for themselves.

As a result, it's important that students carry out thorough research, making notes on each individual university and course that they're interested in.

Most universities in Australia are public, meaning they receive funding from the government - in this case, the federal/national government.

Educational philosophy

Although there's a great deal of variety, Australian universities do broadly embrace the same approach to education.

Essentially, this approach is something of a middle-ground between the UK's and the USA's - two countries which are often considered opposing poles in terms of higher education. So what exactly does that mean in practice?

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Australian degrees tend to allow for more specialisation than American ones, which take a very interdisciplinary and generalist approach, requiring students to undertake classes across a broad spectrum of subjects.

At the same time, in Australia students are generally afforded more flexibility than in the UK, and can choose a loose pathway or area rather than studying just one subject. In fact, students can usually study up to four subjects per semester.

For example, students might opt for a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Law. But those labels encompass a variety of classes, and students are welcome to go even beyond those and stray from their general area of interest. Even more concrete degrees, like a Bachelor of Computer Science, allow for a good amount of flexibility.

Majors and Minors

Australian universities often embrace what is considered the typical American approach, whereby students have a Major - the area they're focused on - for which they have to complete a minimum number of credits, and a Minor which will need fewer credits for completion. Both of these would sit within the broader pathway or area students selected as their programme.

For example, a student at the University of Queensland might choose the loose pathway/area of a Bachelor of Mathematics. They might then decide they'd like to Major in Data Analytics and Operations Research, with a Minor in Bioinformatics.

NOTE: Although the Australian system adopts some typically American flexibility, it is fundamentally based on the British model. This is important because it means that Australian degrees are internationally recognised as the equivalent of British qualifications, something particularly significant for students studying subjects like medicine and veterinary science (both of which require graduate education in Australia), or engineering and nursing.

The academic year

Australian universities split their year into two semesters, each of which is split in half again. Essentially, students have four twelve-week blocks of classes. Broadly, these are:

- February-April
- April-July
- July-October
- October-December

Because Australia is in the southern hemisphere, its semesters might be the opposite of what students in the northern hemisphere are used to. Rather than running from September through to the summer, the Australian academic year begins in February or March, and ends in late November or December.

Students who are particularly keen to stick to their more habitual academic calendar rather than having to delay enrolment until February often have the option of starting their degrees in the second semester. That would mean enrolling sometime between July and October.

Still, it's important to note that the first semester - the one beginning in February - is by far the most popular option. Students who choose to begin in the second semester might have a slightly harder time

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meeting new people, as a lot of the induction events take place in the first semester, and many friendships will already have been formed.

Assessment

This is a really important factor for students to consider as they weigh up different destinations. People respond really differently to different types of assessment, so choosing an approach that doesn't best reflect their abilities could really impact the grades they graduate with. And that's their whole reason for being there!

Assessment in Australia tends to be quite holistic and varied. While some countries/systems focus heavily (sometimes entirely) on final exams, Australian qualifications tend to take many more factors into account.

Typically, assessment will draw on:

- Class participation
- Written assignments
- Final exams
- Mid-year exams
- Practical assignments
- Group exercises

Of course, this can vary somewhat depending on each student's institute and especially the classes they take. But overall, Australian universities will take a bigger-picture view of students' progress.

Sandstone universities and the Group of Eight

It's worth noting two groups of Australian universities which are considered to be particularly prestigious - think of them as akin to the USA's Ivy League, or the UK's Russell group and redbrick universities.

The Sandstone universities refers to a group which benefit from their own funding and research body, and are considered to be at the forefront of vital research. The group gets its name from its universities' distinctive sandstone buildings (making the redbrick and Ivy League comparisons particularly fitting).

Membership is based on universities' age - these are the oldest universities in their respective states. They are:

- University of Adelaide
- University of Melbourne
- University of Queensland
- University of Sydney
- University of Tasmania
- University of Western Australia

As well as academic and research excellence, Sandstone universities are closely associated with having a large proportion of international students. As you can see, they're also in vibrant cities which are especially welcoming to international students, and whose multicultural ethos can help alleviate feelings of culture shock or isolation.

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The Group of Eight is similar to the Sandstone universities, but the membership does differ slightly. It comprises Australia's leading research intensive universities, and is often likened to the UK's Russell Group. They are consistently ranked the highest amongst Australian universities, and take some of the top spots in international rankings too.

The Group of Eight is made up of:

- University of Adelaide
- Australian National University
- University of Melbourne
- Monash University
- UNSW Sydney
- University of Queensland
- University of Sydney
- University of Western Australia

Unsurprisingly given the amount of overlap with the Sandstones and the academic pull of these institutions, the Group of Eight also has a large international contingent. In fact, one of its core tenets is fostering international academic bonds.

Private Colleges

Although most Australian universities are publicly funded, there are hundreds of private options out there. They grant a wide range of qualifications, including VET (Vocational and Educational Training) qualifications and Advanced Diplomas/Associate's degrees, Bachelor's degrees and postgraduate qualifications.

It isn't just in the source of their funding that private colleges differ from Australia's public universities. They offer quite different academic experiences.

The two main distinguishing features are in specialisation and size.

Colleges tend to focus on a particular subject area (e.g. business or engineering). That means that students who are particularly excited by Australia's more flexible approach might want to stick to the public universities. On the other hand, those who have a more defined career in mind and are looking to specialise should look at some private colleges.

Private colleges are also typically smaller in class size and overall population, allowing students to form closer relationships with fellow students and instructors. This also changes the dynamics of the classroom, with interaction and active participation being much stronger components.

TAFE (Technical and Further Education)

Students looking for more vocational options might also consider TAFE, sometimes referred to as colleges. They'll have different entry requirements compared to universities, so students should look carefully to see whether they're eligible and what they'll need to provide.

Like universities in Australia, most TAFE are public, and receive funding from the government (on the state rather than national level).

The programmes at TAFE are strongly focused on particular careers, although they can also be gateways to tertiary degrees, often granting students credit which can count towards an undergraduate degree in the future.

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Subjects range from Fashion to Finance to Fitness, also covering more abstract areas like Aboriginal Education, and very technical skills like Aviation Engineering.

It's not just in course material that TAFE offer a lot of variety - the qualifications they can grant vary too, from certificates to Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas, with some also providing degree level programmes in and of themselves.

Types of qualifications

Bachelor's Degrees

These are the most commonly conferred degrees at Australian universities - so much so, that they're often referred to simply as 'undergraduate degrees'. They're likely familiar to both you and your students, as they're offered around the world.

Like in the UK (we did say the Australian system is very much based on the UK's!), Bachelor's degrees take three academic years to complete.

NOTE: Unlike in the UK, medicine can't generally be completed as a 5 year degree which students can begin straight from secondary school (although Monash University does provide this option as a combined Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine). Instead, students would complete an undergraduate degree and then pursue medicine as a graduate qualification, like in the USA.

The same broadly holds true for veterinary medicine. The only university currently offering an undergraduate option in Australia is the University of Queensland.

Bachelor's Degrees with Honours

In Australia, receiving an undergraduate degree with Honours requires students to take a much more research-intensive approach.

Generally, to receive the 'Honours' students must complete an additional year (bringing the total to four), during which they carry out independent research towards the completion of a dissertation, thesis, or other extended project.

This, too, is somewhat different to the UK, where many degrees can confer Honours within the three-year period.

Double/Combined Degree

As we've said, one of the big draws of Australian university is the flexibility and variety it offers. This is especially clear in the option of the Double or Combined degree (which is not dissimilar to Combined or Dual Honours in the UK, or taking a double Major in the USA).

Rather than choosing just one pathway, students on this degree-type can choose two, for example arts and law, commerce and engineering, or science and arts.

It's a very popular option amongst Australian and international students alike, but it can often require an additional year of study. Students should be sure to factor in additional budget for tuition,

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accommodation and living expenses for a fourth year, or find out if their university allows them to complete a Double or Combined degree in the three-year window.

Advanced Diplomas and Associate's Degrees

These are vocational qualifications, often granted by TAFE but available at many other institutions, too. They are usually shorter, coming in at two years.

This is a great option for students who want to undertake specific training for a career path they've settled on.

On these kinds of courses, students may well have older classmates who have already entered the workforce and are looking to upskill, reskill, or simply refresh their training with the most modern technology and techniques.

International students have the option of transferring from an Advanced Diploma or Associate's Degree (level 6 on the Australian Qualification Framework which measures all educational qualifications in the country) to a Bachelor's degree (level 7). The change can't be made the other way around though.

Of course, students need to remember to apply for a visa extension if they take this option.

Chapter 4: Admissions

If your students have thought through all the information we've covered so far and set their hearts on studying in Australia, it's time to think about how to get a place at an Australian university.

Unlike in other popular destinations - including the UK, to which Australia bears so much similarity - students apply directly to the universities as individuals.

Students will need to be mindful of different application processes. Like fees, Australian universities are free to set their own deadlines and requirements, so there can be quite a lot of difference.

Make sure students get in touch with each university early to understand its unique application process.

Application materials

Because universities define their own admissions processes, the required documents can vary quite a lot.

For the most part, though, international students will have a few extra materials compared to students applying from within Australia. It's worth students getting hold of them as soon as they can and keeping them safe, as they'll need them for their visa applications later, too.

Materials students may have to send with their application include:

- A personal statement similar to the ones written for UK applications
- An application form with students' personal details
- Academic achievements proven by transcripts and certificates
- Proof of English language proficiency
- Proof that they have adequate funds to support their study
- Overseas student health cover
- The application fee

Personal statements

Not all Australian degrees ask students to submit a personal statement. In fact, it's usually not a requirement for admission.

And because it's up to each university to design their application process, there aren't any blanket, black and white parameters that we can lay out. The character or word limit can vary quite a bit, as well as what exactly the university wants students to highlight in the statement.

That means that students who are applying to multiple Australian universities won't be able to just copy and paste one statement across the board. Still, they'll likely be able to use parts and broadly draw

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from similar ideas, so it shouldn't be too overwhelming!

As ever, the best tip we can give is for students to look at the entry criteria for each course they're applying to.

But, as well as general good practice (like checking spelling and grammar carefully, and maintaining an appropriate tone), there are a few pointers that you can give to students!

Firstly, remind them that this is a personal statement. It should be unique to them, and let universities know what makes them stand out from other applicants. Whether that's conveying just how passionate and knowledgeable they are about a subject area, or the valuable experiences they've had outside of school, make sure they focus on their individuality.

And experience doesn't necessarily have to be limited to official work experience or in-school extracurriculars. It could be moving overseas, taking part in activism or caring for younger siblings. There's no limit to the things students can draw from to show how and why they're well-suited to higher education.

That brings us to another key tip: show don't tell! It's a cliché for a reason, and it's particularly pertinent here. It's easy for any student to say they're resourceful, determined, responsible and so on. But talking about when they've demonstrated those qualities is harder. Likewise, any tangible evidence of love for a subject (like writing a related blog or joining a club) is always worth mentioning.

As well as their past experiences, sometimes it's a good idea for students to mention their future ambitions. Showing admissions tutors that they're driven and focused is always helpful, and having bigger motivations than simply earning a degree lets them know that the student will work hard and actively participate in all aspects of university life.

Ultimately, students should take this opportunity to show what a great asset they could be to the university, and why it's the right place for them to achieve their goals.

Deadlines

Again, Australian universities do set their own deadlines, but they all tend to follow the same general timeline.

To begin their studies in the first semester (when most students enrol), students will need to submit their applications by **December** at the latest.

Considering they will still need to arrange their visas and accommodation before travelling to Australia in February, it's probably wise to apply and receive a response ahead of time, though.

Students enrolling in the second semester need to apply by **May** - but the same word of warning applies.

Tuition fees

A final important consideration for students as they explore whether Australia is the right destination for their higher education is how much it will cost them.

Admittedly, Australia is one of the countries with the highest tuition fees.

Rather than being standardised and regulated by the government, fees are set by each individual university. As a result, they can vary widely, so students need to look carefully at the costs of different programmes they might be interested in.

As is usually the case, international students will pay higher fees than their domestic counterparts. Importantly, they're also often expected to pay their tuition fees before they start their course - at least for the first semester.

So just how much can students expect to pay for Australian tuition? Per year, the range in 2021 is around 15,000 AUD to 33,000 AUD, which is equivalent to around 8,400 GBP to 18,400 GBP, or 11,200 USD to 24,600 USD.

Scholarships

That being said, there are many scholarships available in Australia to help ease the economic burden. These are granted both by the Australian government and by universities themselves, so students often have several options to explore.

Students' eligibility can sometimes depend on their nationality. For example, the Australia Awards scholarships are only available to students from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific.

A good place for students to find scholarships open to them is on the Study in Australia website. They should also have a look at the universities they're interested in to see what they offer, or get in touch with the international office there.

Students also have the option to work part-time while they study to help earn some extra money. We'll look into the requirements and restrictions of this in Chapter 6, in which we think about living in Australia.

Chapter 5:

Australian Student Visas

Once students have decided Australia is the place for them and sent off their applications, they'll have to start organising their visas.

It can be quite a complicated process, so it's a good idea to encourage them to start as early as they can. The processing times vary, but most are granted within a month and the vast majority within 45 days. But students need to factor in their own organisation times, too, and the fact that embassy or consulate appointments might not be available as soon as they need them.

All international students will have to apply for a student visa (subclass 500). That will grant them authorisation to live, work and study in Australia for the duration of their course, up to a maximum of five years.

The visa costs around 620 AUD as of May 2021.

It's also worth taking a moment to say that students should still apply for their visas even if they won't be travelling to Australia for their first semester (or longer) due to COVID-19 restrictions. It can be much more complicated to do it afterwards.

Required documentation

The Australian government will need to see a lot of different documents before it can grant a student visa. Again, gathering them can take time. Students need to begin as soon as possible.

Helpfully, many of the materials will be similar to the ones they need for their university applications. Still, there are unsurprisingly some additional ones.

The documents students need for their visa applications are:

- Proof of previous study and qualifications (e.g. transcripts, exam certificates)
- Letter of Offer of a place on their course
- Confirmation of Enrolment, which will be sent to them after they have accepted the offer and paid their deposit
- Genuine Temporary Entrant (we'll look at this in more detail soon)
- Proof of sufficient funds
- Proof of English language proficiency (e.g. TOEFL or IELTS certificate)
- Proof of Overseas Student Health Cover for the duration of the student's stay (more on this soon!)
- Proof of health can be a requirement, but it isn't always. If requested, students will need to undergo a health exam by a registered practitioner, and provide a medical certificate stating that they meet the required health standards
- Proof of character. For the most part, this will be some basic questions about themselves and their past behaviour. Some students might be asked to provide a police background check, too

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- Sometimes students will be asked to an interview. It's nothing to worry about, and usually simply used to determine that the student's move is motivated by educational ambitions rather than a desire to immigrate to Australia

Genuine Temporary Entrant

The fourth point we mentioned might be a little unfamiliar to those who haven't got much experience with the Australian student visa process.

Essentially, its goal is the same as that of the visa interview: to confirm that the student will genuinely be only a temporary resident, and doesn't plan to stay in Australia after graduation.

To that end, students are required to submit a written statement. Logically, the two main themes of this statement should be:

- That the student is genuinely going to Australia to study, and isn't motivated by other factors
- That the student will only be in Australia temporarily and for a set duration of time, and doesn't plan to overstay their visa

It isn't something that students shouldn't fret about, as their intentions are genuine! To help settle their nerves, there is some general guidance they can follow.

One area which the assessors will be considering is students' ties to their home countries. This is a good thing for students to focus on quite heavily.

For example, they might talk about their relationships with loved ones. Another useful thing to mention can be a job they want to return to, or hope to secure in their home country after graduating.

Similarly, it's a good idea for students to mention how the Australian degree they'll embark on will help them reach their future goals (goals which shouldn't necessarily require them to stay in Australia). That helps to demonstrate that they're legitimately motivated by professional and academic factors.

At the same time, students might want to explain why they aren't studying in their home country, especially if there is a similar course available there. Of course, if there aren't any similar programmes in their home countries then students should definitely state that, as it's a very compelling reason for their choice!

Assessors will also be interested in seeing students' competencies and interests in their chosen subject areas, and it's worth explaining why they've chosen a specific education provider, too.

Any gaps in students' education (e.g. gap years) are also worth explaining.

If students can start investigating their accommodation options before submitting the visa application, that can really help them too. Part of the assessment of the GTE is to consider their planned living arrangements.

There are some other general areas which GTE assessments look at, including political and/or civil unrest in their home countries which, of course, students can't control. If there are any relevant circumstances to mention, though, it might be worth students addressing these as they will be a topic of consideration.

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Visa applicants are encouraged to provide as much evidence as possible of everything they mention in their statement.

Some of the evidence which they should consider attaching or areas to find evidence for include:

- Academic transcripts and certificates
- University/educational institution (e.g. Letter of Offer)
- Duration of course
- All current employment details (e.g. name and address of employer, period of employment, position, a contactable reference)
- Any offers of employment
- Any other professional connections or pathways they've explored in their home countries (e.g. internships)
- Evidence of ties to home country (e.g. photos with family, invitations to social events like weddings)

NOTE: If students don't feel they can effectively convey their sentiments for the GTE in English, they can write it in their own language and submit a translated copy with the original version in their application.

Overseas Student Health Cover

All international students are legally required to have health insurance throughout their stay in Australia. Having it in place is part of the requirements for their student visa.

The Overseas Student Health Cover is a special system of insurance which Australia provides for international students. Its purpose is to help students pay for any medical care they might need while they're in Australia, including ambulances, paramedics and other emergency treatments.

OSHC also helps students pay for medications they need, including most prescriptions.

Essentially, it helps guarantee that students will be able to stay in good health throughout their stay, and saves them from having to carry out their own investigation into health insurances (which can be especially complicated for people seeking insurance from abroad).

It also means that they can rest assured that the coverage they have is legitimate, and if anything goes wrong they won't be stranded at sea or ripped off.

Students can find out more about OSHC and where to purchase it on the Australian government's [private health website](#).

COVID-19

Currently, international students aren't being permitted entry into Australia, whether they already hold a student visa or not. We're hopeful, though, that by the time your students are applying for entry in February 2023, these restrictions will be a long-distant memory!

If you have students who are hoping to enroll sooner, all hope is not lost! They can apply for a student visa and commence their studies online until they're allowed to travel to campus - all their credits should be counted as usual! If they're not sure they'd want to learn remotely full-time until travel back into Australia is allowed, it may be worth them having a back-up option, or being prepared to defer their studies for another year.

Chapter 6: Living in Australia

Hurray! Students have now selected Australia as their top destination, found the institution and course that's right for them, and applied for their visas.

So what will it be like to live in Australia?

Accommodation options in Australia

Before students fly out, they'll need to have a place to go! Let's think about some of the different options students should consider for life in Australia.

University-managed accommodation

Australia is closer to mainland Europe than the UK or the USA when it comes to university-managed accommodation. In short, it's not very common.

But while most Australian students don't choose to live in university-owned housing, many institutions do provide some options, either as halls of residence or residential colleges.

Halls of residence might be compared to their British namesake, and are also similar to American 'dorms'. They're basically buildings full of shared or single rooms, all occupied by students who tend to share facilities like kitchens and bathrooms.

Residential colleges provide meals, cleaning and other forms of support to students as well as the accommodation itself.

The benefit of university accommodation is that it is relatively easy and secure. Unfortunately, though, it's limited and usually quite expensive (driving up its unpopularity!). Understandably, residential colleges are even more expensive than halls.

Shared private housing

This is the most common option for Australian students (including first-years, while in the UK students tend not to opt for private housing until their second year).

Students aren't left totally to fend for themselves when it comes to finding private housing, though. Most universities have accommodation offices dedicated to helping international students research, secure and manage off-campus accommodation.

The house will typically be shared with fellow students, although there will also be some houses with non-students.

In these set-ups, students have their own bedrooms, but the rest of the house is communal.

Also communal are the bills: students have to split the cost of utilities and pay for them themselves. This can be a big and new responsibility for many undergraduates, so it's worth preparing your students beforehand!

The Ultimate Guide to Studying in Australia

Homestays

A less common option is for international students to stay with host families in Australia. It's often families with children who choose to host international students - especially as it can introduce their children to a new language and culture!

However, that isn't always the case, and many different types of households may choose to offer homestay lodging to international students.

Often, the hosts will cook for students, but self-catered options are available if students would prefer it.

Of course, this option generally saves students the hassle of organising and paying for utilities.

Student experience

Although academically Australian university sits between the USA and the UK, in terms of student life it bears a greater resemblance to mainland Europe.

As we've just covered, there's much less of a campus culture in Australia, and it's typical for Australians to study at the university closest to their homes and often to live with their families.

As a result, the bulk of students' social experiences tend to happen beyond the bounds of university. Students studying in Australia might have to be a little more proactive when it comes to making friends and social plans compared to their counterparts in the UK and USA.

Cost of living in Australia

It isn't just tuition fees which can make Australia a fairly expensive option: the cost of living is also higher than in many other countries. Of course, as ever, this depends on specific regions, as well as the lifestyle and accommodation which students choose.

As a rough guide, students are advised to have a budget of 21,041 AUD (or around 15,700 USD) per year.

There are several tools which can help students calculate their budget, like The Insider Guides 'Cost of Living' Calculator, and the Australian Home Affairs website.

To help give them an idea of how much funding they'll need, here are some estimated living expenses (not including bigger things like accommodation):

- Groceries and eating out: 140-280 AUD per week
- Gas and electricity: 10-20 AUD per week
- Phone and internet: 15-30 AUD per week
- Transport: 30-60 AUD per week
- Entertainment: 80-150 AUD per week

Working in Australia

Fortunately, international students in Australia do have the option to work if they'd like to earn some extra money.

The Ultimate Guide to Studying in Australia

Most Australian student visas allow students to work for up to 40 hours every two weeks during term time. During holidays from university, students are free to work as many hours as they wish. Of course, it's always worth double-checking their visa's stipulations before accepting a job offer.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has also raised the amount of hours international students can work in certain sectors, including aged care, agriculture, tourism and hospitality.

Chapter 7:

Preparing Your Students for the Australian Application Process

One of the key themes of this whole guide has been that there are very, very few hard and fast rules. In fact, the only area where things start to become more black and white is in the visa application process, where the same rules apply to all international students.

But as we've seen, even in this very rigid process there can be differences! Not all students will be called to interview, for example, or asked for criminal records or background checks.

The Genuine Temporary Entrant statement is also hugely subjective and individualised, looking at a student's entire life and history.

But the biggest and arguably most important differences are the experiences students will have once they've passed the visa application stage and are living in Australia. After all, that represents 3-5 key years in their lives!

To ensure they're making the right choices for the right reasons, it can be a good idea to first have students assess their natural learning styles and academic preferences. For help on this, you can refer to our [Helping Students Find their University Match](#) eBook.

With this knowledge, students can begin their searches guided by what should really be the most influential factor: the academic fit of different institutions.

Once students start exploring options, you should impress upon them how varied different Australian regions, universities and courses can be. Students well-suited to Tasmanian life will probably be less at ease in Sydney, for example. So be sure to emphasise to students how vast and diverse this wonderful country is, and that they need to do thorough research and think carefully about which part of it they'll thrive in.

Ultimately, every student's research and application journey will be unique - as it should be. The key things are to start early and with an open mind. They'll be marvelling at Australia's countless wonders and contributing to its vital academic world in no time!

About BridgeU

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