



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
name degree programme	Kunstmatige Intelligentie
destination city & country	Sydney, Australia
name host institution and/or company/organization	University of Western Sydney, Penrith Campus
purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	06 / 02 / 2014
return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	27 / 07 / 2014

preparation

exchange/placement application process

The process is obviously very extensive, it takes a while to apply. I spent most of my time looking for the right Uni though. Finding a place where you see yourself living and studying for 6 months is something, you want to invest some time in that. Every website is different, and finding the information you need/want always takes longer than you expect. Make sure to look at different websites on what the place you want to study has to offer. Has it a vibrant nightlife? How is the suburb? How far away is it from the city/supermarket/mall or whatever you find important.

counselling/support at home university

The support at the UU is great. Send the people from the office an email and they'll respond asap, you can always come by for additional question. Please do remember that you're the one going on exchange, YOU will be expected to do all the research yourself. I found that the overseas uni support was great too. They replied within 2-3 days to emails, and if you need to know something straight away just give them a call.

academic preparation

I was in my second year when I applied for this and chose to do electives while overseas. All my subjects were in English and easy to follow, I didn't need to much preparation.

language preparation

I was not required to do a TOEFL test to prove that my English was sufficient. A 6 on VWO in English was sufficient, though this can differ between all universities. Check this on their information page. TOEFL or IELTS tests cost about 250 Euros and it takes about a month/2 months due to a minimal amount of tests they provide. Plan this well ahead if you see you need this! Discuss with UU counsellors.

finances

Yes, Australia is expensive. Even more expensive than you think. If you think you have enough money, think again because you don't.

It sounds very depressive when I say it like that but please be advised. You are able to survive without a job but I don't recommend doing so, wages are very high too. A couple of examples.

Cheapest room on campus (5bedroom townhouse, own room): \$175 a week

A shared bedroom in the city (Sydney): \$200-\$400 (look on Gumtree, there is cheaper stuff but soooo hard to find)

A Beer in a bar: \$4-10 depending where you go. Usually roughly 7 dollars.

Groceries: about twice as expensive in Holland, even more if you like chips, chocolate and other 'bad' food.



<p>Healthy food is the way to go here and it's about as expensive/cheaper. Ticket to the movies: \$20/25</p> <p>Especially daytrips and adventures you book whilst travelling (assuming you won't be there just to study) are expensive. I calculated a rough 10.000 euros for this semester and I think I spend even more. I can't stress enough how good it is to get a job here (working at a bar/McDonalds will get you roughly \$20 an hour. I know it doesn't sound to appealing to work while you're on holiday but I regret it a lot that I didn't)</p>
<p>study/placement abroad period</p>
<p>study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)</p>
<p>As I mentioned, I did electives while here. Contextualizing Indigenous Australia, Introductory to Music Performance and Digital Design Production (see unit guide of UWS). Uni is set up very similar to UU. Very informal which I find nice.</p>
<p>academic quality of education/placement activities</p>
<p>The quality of the education is good, but not as high as Utrecht University. I didn't consider myself challenged to my full potential while here. Something I didn't realize: University in foreign countries is the equivalent of HBO and University combined. They don't have a distinction in most countries so the overall rating of your university gives a rough estimate on how good your university is. Look this up!</p>
<p>counselling/support at host institution/organisation</p>
<p>Excellent. Orientation provided all the information I needed and it was easy to figure the rest out by myself</p>
<p>transfer of credits</p>
<p>Can't say anything about this yet. Have not put this in at this moment.</p>
<p>student life</p>
<p>welcome/orientation programme</p>
<p>Nice, but not compulsory. Good to be there for the hello-speech and stuff but if you're travelling at that moment it's fine too. You find out all the information you want to know while running around on campus anyway. Talking to students, locals and academics is the best way to learn about the place where you are going to spend your semester. Use their knowledge, just ask!</p>
<p>accommodation</p>
<p>When I arrived in Australia, I had nothing planned out. I booked a hostel at Bondi Beach for the first couple of nights and that was it. I considered living off campus for a long time, but ended up living on campus, something I don't regret. Penrith campus is quite a travel from the city (from campus to the city CBD about 1.5-2hours) and travelling up and down every time could be a pain in the ass. Life around Penrith isn't to interesting though so make sure you get yourself a good group of friends on campus to hang out with! I found that they took me in like I was one of them straight away. Everyone is very open and kind, You'll feel at home in no-time! Leaving here feels like I'm leaving my family behind, though I've only met them 4 months ago.</p>
<p>leisure/culture</p>
<p>I stayed in hostels in Sydney (Bondi, Manly, Kings Cross, Darling Harbour) when I arrived which was an amazing experience. You meet so many interesting people who travel Australia/the world which definitely triggered my travel urge. Go scope out the city, visit some museums on indigenous culture and go crazy in Kings Cross. Don't worry about the lockouts which bars have in Sydney at the moment (no entrance after 1:30 AM), this just shifts the nightlife to earlier at night (people go to clubs at 9ish/10 which is totally normal). Nightlife is more expensive than in Holland and by far not as good. Australians know how to drink but not how to dance (or choose good electronic music). They have a lot of Indie bands who play in small venues which I would recommend much more though.</p>



Don't forget to bring some money to travel around Australia as well! I travelled the whole east coast in 5 weeks, went to Melbourne and did a campervan trip around New Zealand. There are so many cool places to travel and you'll find heaps while you're here! New Zealand is amazing, something I'd never seen before. The east coast is a road travelled by many, where you will find loads of backpackers your age who are keen for an adventure or a drink. Travelling is expensive though, prepare to spend money on one of your best experiences ever!

Don't book too many trips in advance with travel agencies. Sometimes it is smart to do this but I found that you can find deals anywhere. I travelled mostly by myself and being very flexible and go-with-the-flow was my strength. It is sweet not having such a tight schedule if you meet people on your travels who you want to travel with/chill with.

suggestions/tips

- Travel! Make the most out of your time here!
- Get a job. Make some extra money to make the most out of your travels/study. Start straight away with looking for a job because this will take time.
- Get out of your comfort zone! Do stuff you'd normally never do
- Meet friends! I met loads of amazing people while here and I'm convinced I'll meet a bunch of them on my future expeditions and my experience here wouldn't be the same without them.
- Make pictures and videos. You know, for your granny and uncle. Maybe some personal ones for your scrap book and diary.
- Buy a Lonely Planet. A very compact guide to take with you everywhere you go. Has been my best friend next to google while I was here, has everything you want to know about Australia!
- Ask! Don't be too afraid to ask people stuff, it's the best way to get around and learn where you should best spend your valuable time. The Australians are very friendly and always keen to help.
- Don't underestimate distances. If they say around the corner, it could still be a 30minute drive. Everything in Australia is far away, it's a big country.

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

I had a great time at UWS and an amazing time in Sydney. I'd definitely recommend Australia and Sydney as a place to go, UWS not particularly. It's an alright place but I found that it didn't have too much to offer in a challenging way. I originally applied for Griffith University at the Gold Coast, unfortunately didn't end up there.

If you choose to stay at UWS or end up at UWS, you are gonna have a great time! I'd recommend staying at Parramatta and taking your classes there. This campus is closer to the city and there is more going on in that suburb. Plus, most of the internationals stay here.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Make the most out of your travels! I had an amazing time here and can't wait to start travelling again! Most of my tips can be found in former answers, but if you still have questions feel free to contact me, I'd love to help!!! Hope to hear from you! Contact info available at IO.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	University Utrecht
level	bachelor
name degree programme	Bachelor Biology
destination city & country	Sydney, Australia
name host institution and/or company/organization	University of Western Sydney, Parramatta Campus
purpose of exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> study/courses
departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	15 / 07 / 2013
return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	29 / 02 / 2014

preparation

exchange/placement application process

The application process was quite intensive, which I was warned for many times by other students who just returned from study abroad programs. The most important thing is that you HAVE to print/copy every form you fill in, information you receive and to write down student numbers/addresses/phone numbers. I ended up with 200 pages of information, but that saved me a lot of trouble during the visa application and application online for UWS (and also when you are there you have to fill in many forms which can be dealt with easily if you have all your information with you).

counselling/support at home university

The pre-departure meetings were very helpful, because you hear about tips and tricks, which visa you need, where to find cheap tickets, what you have to do to get a job, how to apply for visa/college abroad, but also what their expenses were (rent, travelling, food etc.) It easy to think you can find it online, but many students who go to Australia do not realize how crazy expensive life over there is. They ended up working half the time to support themselves instead of taking precautions/loans and enjoy the time you have there.

academic preparation

I choose courses which would fit in my biology study program. I was not allowed to take one course, because I did not fit the prerequisites. After some intensive emailing and begging they let me anyway. Once you get there, UWS is very easy in changing your selection of courses . Friends of mine could very easily switch. On top of that, Aussies can actually get administrative things done in a week instead of University of Utrecht where things take 4 months to get done. So, no worries mate!

UWS did not require a GPA of 3.0 for application process, so I was off the hook. Still it helps to have on your resume a lot of extra activities that make you stand out (whenever you still want to apply for a course you were denied), like internships or projects.

language preparation

In Australia they speak English with their beautiful accent. Many courses at the University of Utrecht were given in English and most study materials (books, lectures, articles) are written in English. Preparation was not necessary. In the beginning it is a bit difficult to speak English all the time and to find the words, but after a month I lost my Dutch accent and started to speak with an American/Canadian/Aussie accent. After 5 months It was getting more difficult to speak Dutch on Skype.

finances



<p>It is really important to have a buffer you can use if you get into trouble. You don't want to end up working all the time, because you forgot to calculate some things into your finance plan. My finances consisted of the monthly study grant (270 euro), OV travel grant (90 euro), and rest was a loan from my parents. You will need 1800-2000 Aussie Dollars a month to live in Australia. It is a lot of money, but you will spend most of it on rent, food and travels/public transportation. In the beginning I bought a travelcard for 450 dollars which allowed me to travel unlimited with bus, train, boat in and around Sydney for 3 months. I saved me a lot of money because I had to travel between two campuses and I went to the city 3 times a week.</p>
<p>study/placement abroad period</p>
<p>study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)</p>
<p>In the courses I had chosen I was the only International Student. Fun, because they want to know everything about Europe and if it really snows there. On the other hand, all the teachers know you so if you don't show up they will send you emails asking where you were. That was quite interesting. In Utrecht teachers do not really care if you show up or not. It is your choice if you want to fail or succeed. Biology at the UWS Parramatta was sort of going back to high school, with assignments every week, checking your homework, 100% attendance (they have lists). Made me feel a bit rebellious when I missed a lecture Monday morning, because I flew back with cheap flights from amazing places in Australia.</p> <p>Back home in the Netherlands I have to work really hard to earn good grades (more theoretically oriented), but UWS science program is more about showing you how it is done instead of learning from a book. I stood in the lab 15 hours a week working on different experiments. Even though it were easy experiments you still learned so much about keeping a labjournal, working in a sterile environment and keeping your workplace organized.</p>
<p>academic quality of education/placement activities</p>
<p>The quality of the Science Program of UWS is not really good. You can compare it with HBO in the Netherlands. It was very easy for me to do homework and the tests were not that hard. I finished all the courses with a 65-80 out of 100. In Utrecht I have to work really hard to earn good grades, but this was not the case at UWS. It gave me more time to explore the country in the weekends and do all my homework during the week.</p>
<p>counselling/support at host institution/organisation</p>
<p>UWS is very experienced with International students. Many students from Asia and Mid-east come over for a year or semester. They had a wonderful introduction week and I met a lot of students that week. Really important when you study abroad, is that you approach everyone with an open mind and that you are very active in establishing friendships. I had the best months at University, because I knew so many people who invited me to parties, trips and with who you are going to travel once semester is over. You have to remember that everyone is far from home and everyone is a bit homesick. To get over home sickness, you have to instantly call your friends and hang out. Do not be scared because you are on exchange, you will only stay in touch with a few people but you can still have a awesome time there while you are at it.</p>
<p>transfer of credits</p>
<p>Still waiting... finished in december.. now may... still waiting...</p>
<p>student life</p>
<p>welcome/orientation programme</p>
<p>-</p>
<p>accommodation</p>
<p>Very shit. Cockroaches, fungi, spiders, disgusting housemates. I lived on the Parramatta Campus Village and it was very expensive and very disgusting. Washing machines do not work and cost 3 bucks every load. Terrible woman behind the reception desk, not helpful at all and very rude. The only good thing about living on the village was that you are only for a short while attending the University and in this short time it was very easy to hang out</p>



with other international students who all live next door. If you want to study for a longer time in Sydney, I would highly recommend living in the city (just as expensive as living on campus) where public transportation is existent and you will live close to the beach. I had to travel an hour by bus from campus to city or half hour by train. That did not stop me from going to the city, but for a lot of people it did (and there is barely any transport at night). I know many people who lived the first month in a hostel in the city before finding a place but the troubles of living in a hostel were ten times worth it when they found their apartments in the city.

leisure/culture

The 'no worries mate' culture is real! People even walk slower on the streets. People are so much nicer there, like saying 'Thank you' to the bus driver when you hop off. First time I was in the city I was completely lost and even held the map upside down. It wasn't until a nice man in a suite came over (still on the phone) and took a moment to ask me if I was lost and if he could help before he continued his conversation on his phone. This made me very suspicious in the beginning, but I learned quickly that Aussies are very sincere. AND most Aussie boys love the gym and Aussie rules (real sport in Australia)! So let go of your European stress mode and take it easy in Sydney! Be open to the culture, sports and beachy life. Do not waste your precious time on just hanging out on the couch because there is always something going on in Sydney (festivals, parties, sports games) and time goes by so fast!

suggestions/tips

Check out Pie Face! Best meat pies in the world! I would suggest you go in travel mode and try to explore every corner and street in Sydney while enjoying the beautiful weather and easy lifestyle. Time flies faster than light, so do not waste your weekends only partying but travel along the Gold Coast, to Perth, to The Great Barrier Reef and to Melbourne. These are wonderful places that you can visit with many backpacking organizations and bus tours. I rented cars with Juicy Rentals during my stay in New Zealand and with Travellers Autobarn when I was at the West Coast. Driving in Australia is on the left side, but you will learn very quickly. Cycling on the other hand is very rare in Sydney. They do not understand that there are more bikes than people in Holland. I bought a bike in the beginning of my stay but it was stolen after a week and took the bus everywhere after that.

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

Academic wise I would absolutely not. I have not learned a lot at this University. It was almost being back at high school and I did not feel mentally challenged. It gave me a lot of free time I used very well for all my travelling. I worked really hard the last two years at the University of Utrecht and it was nice to have a break for a semester. Australia is an amazing country for travelling because it is so big and there are so many places to go to that are totally different from each other. You can go diving in the Great Barrier Reef, camp in the Rainforest in the North, drive 600 km through the desert in West Australia, enjoy the European climate in Melbourne and fly to New Zealand for the Lord of the Rings movie locations. I came back with 8000 pictures and I still browse through them every day.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

1. Print every form you fill in and make sure you get it done in time.
2. Wear sunscreen every day. You will turn lobster red in 10 minutes.
3. Save money for travelling to see most of wonderful Australia. (and the distances are large, you will have to FLY to many places)
4. Australia is big! Aussies are used to take the car everywhere. An hour driving to the beach or supermarket or zoo is nothing for them. Make sure you calculate expenses for public transportation into your financial plan (100 dollars a month for normal public transportation in Sydney)
5. You are only here for a short while, do not waste energy on people you do not get along with and do not start any drama. It will make your stay worse because the Village is very small. Just shake it off and continue living the



happy life.

6. Go climbing, swimming, tanning, rollerblading, festival going, picture taking, ice cream eating.. do everything to keep you from saying that you are bored! You can be bored at home, not in Sydney.

Contact details:

Student Services / International Office

- Postal address: P.O. Box 80125, NL-3508 TC Utrecht
- Visitors' address: Bestuursgebouw, Heidelberglaan 8, Utrecht
- T: +31-(0)30-253 7000
- F: +31-(0)30-253 2627
- E: exchange@qdesk.uu.nl (information)
- verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl (report)
- I: www.uu.nl/students/exchange



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	University of Utrecht
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
name degree programme	Psychology
destination city & country	Sydney, Australia
name host institution and/or company/organization	University of Western Sydney Parramatta Campus
purpose of exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	15 / 07 / 2013
return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	28 / 01 / 2014

Preparation

exchange/placement application process

I had to arrange flights, all the right documents needed to be filled in and of course I needed to pack my stuff. Actually the last one was the hardest part.. If you know that you are not travelling light during holidays, I would recommend you to pay for an extra suitcase, so you don't have to worry about that. Besides, you are probably gonna buy a lot of stuff over there (souvenirs and clothes etc.). The paperwork was also kind of a pain in the ass, so please start on time with all the preps. Try to keep all the documents and information in one place (so buy an organizer or something). This will save you from a lot of stress and you know where to find anything you need. Also, try to find an accommodation before you arrive, it will save you a lot of stress as well!

counselling/support at home university

The support at the home university was pretty good. Whenever I had a question, I could just email someone. The pre-departure meeting was very helpful, because it gave you a lot of information about practical stuff like what to do with your mobile phone, living costs etc. For people going to Australia: IT IS EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE! Take that into account! The only thing I kind of missed was help with finding an accommodation.

academic preparation

The only thing we had to do for academic preparation was sending some documents. For some universities you will have to do an English test, so be prepared if you have to. This may take a long time to receive and it is still possible that you fail the first time. Take that into account. Also be prepared to talk and write in English (or whatever language you are gonna have to write in). If your English is questionable, be prepared to take some extra courses to succeed! It is really easy to change units if you want to. I would recommend to choose units that will match your degree, even though I didn't. It is also a good opportunity to try something new and get out of your comfort zone!:)

language preparation

Since a lot of my courses are in English, I just assumed my English would be good enough. I was pretty nervous though, but to be honest I kind of liked it. It wasn't hard at all. I probably would have received kind of the same grades if I would have written it in Dutch. On top of that, it was pretty strange to speak English all the time. But you definitely get used to it. Skyping with friends and family got a little bit weird, since I kept saying stuff like 'you know', 'no worries'.

finances



This is a really big thing. Be prepared to spend a lot of money over there! You are gonna make trips, travel a lot and even buy other stuff there. It's gonna be your home for a couple of months, and you don't want to feel nervous about money when you are there. Mostly, it's an option to work over there. I chose not to, because I saved enough money to truly enjoy my time. If you have to work, it's still fine. The experience is definitely worth it! The only advice here is: be prepared to spend money!

study/placement abroad period

Studying abroad was actually easier than I expected it to be. Since the standards at Utrecht seem to be higher than in a lot of other places in the world, it was pretty easy. It was a piece of cake to follow the classes and have a lot of spare time (and fun!) at the same time. I think it's the most important thing that you enjoy yourself and have fun while you are out there! The only thing you can never turn back is time!

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

I found it really interesting to follow courses in a different country. I wanted to start with law units (even though my degree is Psychology) and that turned out to be the worst idea ever. Since I don't know anything about law, this was too hard. Besides, law in Australia is one of the toughest things to study! So I just changed my units. It was fun to study units like 'Australia and the world' and 'Behaviour and environment'. It was totally different from what I am normally studying. Also, I found it a lot easier to study in Australia than it is in Holland. I could easily keep up, even though it is not my first language. The classes in Australia are very multicultural (since Australia itself is very multicultural). It was a fun experience! For example: someone who attended my class was from a total different culture, so it was the weirdest thing for her that I was so young and still living by myself on the other side of the world. While she couldn't even go out when she wanted to.

academic quality of education/placement activities

I feel like the quality of the units at UWS is definitely less than the quality of the units at UU. It was really easy to keep up, even though English is not my first language. Psychology units were a little bit better. They use APA references as well and plagiarism was the toughest part.. Since I am not used to write in English, I needed to learn how to avoid plagiarism. It took me one assignment to find out how to deal with it. But academically studying in Australia was the easiest thing I have done.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

UWS is very experienced with International students. Many students from Asia and Mid-east come over for a year or semester. The introduction week was fun, even though it wasn't that useful in my opinion. Try to make some new friends during introduction and especially with international students (we are all desperate to meet new people). Making friends is the most important thing during your whole experience, because this is breaking it or making it. Knowing people who will invite you to parties, trips and travelling with will make your time so much better. You are probably gonna get home sick sometime, but it will pass! And at the end you will have friends for a lifetime and you will be crying like a little baby because you are going back home and you are gonna have to let so many people you love behind. Stay in touch with your friends and family back home, but especially enjoy being there and spend most of your time with your new 'international family'. You will see your friends and family back home again, but you can never get back the time you spend with your international family.

transfer of credits

This was a disaster! I received my results from UWS at the first of December 2013 and it took till the end of May 2014 to get my credits transferred. Still don't know what the problem was, but it was awful!

student life

welcome/orientation programme

At first they were very nice at the accommodation. Everything was arranged really quickly and I was really happy



to finally take a shower after like 36 hours! So at first, I really liked living on campus. They had bbq's and everything.
accommodation
As I said before, at first I really liked living on campus. I could just walk to the Uni (which is pretty strange in Australian terms) and I got to meet a lot of new fun people. This was definitely one of the reasons to live on campus, because I wanted to meet as many new friends as possible. I really liked the swimming pool as well, where you could just hang out with all the new friends you just made. Later on it got a bit worse. There were a lot of cockroaches in my apartment and they didn't seem to do anything about it. Also, my roommates were not tidy at all and they weren't as fun as my roommates back home. Other than that the woman behind the reception is a bitch. The whole organization just wants to make the most money they can and they don't give a shit about you. Also, the public transport was kind of a pain in the ass. It's expensive and Parramatta is pretty far away from the city. I would recommend you to live in the city or at the beach. Unless you are afraid that you won't make enough friends, because on campus is the best to meet new people. I had a lot of fun because of campus. The only thing that really fails is the management over there.
leisure/culture
Remember watching Bondi Rescue and thinking: OMG they are amazing. I love these people, their culture and everything about them? Well, IT IS REAL! They really do have a 'no worries, mate' culture and I loved everything about it. They are so much friendlier than all the boring and annoyed people in Holland. I was lost one time and asked a stranger for directions and they just walked with me to where I had to be! Aussies are sincere and the most fun people I have met in my entire life. It is a very active country, people always surf or go to the gym or hiking, swimming or whatever. They are never stressed about anything and you can finally breathe and relax. The culture is relaxed and stressless. So pack your bags and go for a life without stressing. I would recommend you to do whatever you can with your time and minimize couch potato time! There is so much to do, that you don't want to miss a single thing!
suggestions/tips
Do whatever you can in the least amount of time! Do not focus on study, but for once in your life focus on fun! Check out pie face, because it is amazing! Best pies ever! The Great Barrier Reef was definitely one of the highlights of my trip and I visited the GBR twice! It was still breathtaking! DO NOT MISS OUT! Try to rent cars and go out! I went to shows at the Opera house twice and you just have to experience this.
conclusions
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
The destination is amazing! Whenever I can I will take the plane and fly back, because there is a hole in my heart now. Sydney is the best city in the entire world! I am not so sure about the University.. It was fine but if you have high academic values I would not recommend this uni! I thought it was fine, because I could spend all my time on having fun instead of studying!:)
do you have any additional advice or comments?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sunscreen is a must! Even the darkest skins can burn in less than 10 minutes. 2. Make sure you have a lot of money. 3. HAVE FUN! You can study hard when you come back home. 4. No worries, mate. 5. ENJOY, before you know it you will be crying your heart out back home (I KNOW)