Q&A session Australia and New Zealand

1. General Information

Culture / Educational system
On an exchange to Australia or New Zealand, you won't have a very big culture shock. However, the educational system is structured somewhat differently than in the Netherlands. You generally take four courses, but you take them simultaneously throughout the semester instead of in two blocks. Teaching is more interactive and more hands-on. People are generally very informal in Australia. Covid rules there are a bit stricter than in other countries, but right now the borders are open for exchange.

Campus life
In many Australian cities, you are almost guaranteed housing if you choose on-campus living. However, it is also possible (if you have connections) to find your own housing.

There are lots of activities for exchange students (including a Welcome Week). There are also sports clubs etc. that you can join.

Language & GPA requirements
All Australian institutions and Auckland have minimum GPA (grade point average) and/or Language requirements. Generally, you take a language test, but there are often exceptions at each institution such as if you are doing an English UU program, or if you got an 8 or higher for VWO 6 English. On the destinations page you will find the requirements, please click on the link to the host university for the most current language and GPA requirements.

Subject listings
You take courses throughout the whole semester (no block system). Semesters are mirrored and start early. Do you have overlap? Arrange with your faculty/teacher ahead of time!

Convert credits to ECTS: https://students.uu.nl/en/credit-conversion-table

The subject offering is extremely broad, you can really choose from a wide range of things and often including more fieldwork-like courses.

Academic Calendar
Note that the year is mirrored. SM2 there starts in mid-July and SM1 starts in early February. There is no overlap with the Dutch semesters. Block system that UU has is not used there, it is a semester distribution.
Traveling before or after you exchange
If you want to travel after your student visa has expired, you can apply for a tourist visa. You will then briefly leave the country (e.g. trip to Bali) and then return.

Finances
Australia and New Zealand are not the cheapest countries to go to. For costs by destination, check the destinations page. Fixed costs you should factor in are: Airfare (make sure you have good cancellation insurance), Housing, Visa (450-500 euros) and mandatory health insurance (200-250 euros).

For the destination University of Sydney, it is possible to apply for a Holland Scholarship scholarship. Check the website for more information on this: https://students.uu.nl/en/academics/study-abroad/funding-grants/holland-scholarship

Visa
Arranging a visa is easy online. Be careful not to wait too long to do this. Waiting times can exceed a month. You cannot start your visa application until you have submitted your application to the host university, they have checked it, and you have received an acceptance letter from them. With that document and proof of health insurance payment, you can apply for your visa.
2. **FAQ**

2.1. **Corona**

What about the COVID rules for Australia and New Zealand now? Since New Zealand still (I think) does not allow people from outside?

As of July 2022, students traveled again and since then the borders have been open "as usual".

2.2. **Language Requirements**

I see that many universities require you to meet certain English requirements, but I often find it difficult to find out when you meet these in the Netherlands. Is studying at UU already enough to prove this or should you take an English test?

Almost all universities have a strict language requirement. Basic rule is that you should take a TOEFL/IELTS or Cambridge test, but all universities have exceptions to this (for example: entire UU program is in English, or for some universities a grade of 8 or higher for VWO 6 English).

If you have a Cambridge certificate, is a language test still necessary?

Only if your Cambridge is older than 2 years at the time of application.

What if you don't have a HAVO or VWO degree due to no exams (I am coming from MBO through HAVO 4), but have a B2 certificate?

Unfortunately, Australia is strict and you should schedule a language test in this case.

Is an Anglia certificate enough?

This one, to my knowledge, is not accepted.

Is an IB also okay?

I would not dare to say. For some universities maybe, check the partner's website.

Should you take a language test in the UU application process (December 1) or when applying to the partner?

When registering with the partner. You schedule it in the Netherlands and you take it here. Most students pass it.

What happens if you fail the language test?

First of all, that rarely happens, but suppose it does, you can often do a retake.

2.3. **GPA requirements**

Do all the courses you took count toward the GPA? Also electives/minor?

For UU students, this does NOT count. For UCU and UCR students, this does count.

For the GPA, can you have a 7 rounded off or should it really be a 7 or higher?
For GPA requirements, we do not round off, you should really have a 7 or higher by December 1.

If you should have a certain average when you apply, should you have this average when you actually go as well?

Yes, you should meet the grade requirement both on December 1, but especially at the time of application to the host university.

2.4. Selection Process

In case of oversubscription, we look to see if you meet the GPA requirement, if any. If this is the case, you will enter a lottery. The motivation letter will not be the deciding factor, but to enter in a draw, you should submit a neat letter.

What are your chances in drawing lots?

If you want more insight into what you should put in places 1, 2 and 3, contact the coordinator. In any case, always put in spot 1 where you prefer to go and otherwise do choose a little strategically.

Can you be eliminated for all 3 of your destinations?

Yes, it is possible. If you have many popular destinations in your top 3 for example. If you are excluded from all 3 destinations, we will email you and give you priority for the remaining places. You can always go somewhere, but you should be a little more flexible.

Do you have any tips for where the focus of motivation letters should be? (e.g. subjects, or experience abroad etc.)

In your motivation, write down briefly (max. one A4 in English) why this destination suits you, what subjects they offer that you cannot do here and what it would bring you personally to go on exchange there.

What about lotteries for destinations that are both UU-wide and faculty?

Upon application, for destinations with both a UU-wide and faculty contract, we look at your study plan. If it contains subjects from within your faculty, you will be included in the selection of the faculty contract. If it contains courses from outside your faculty, you will be included in the selection of the UU-wide contract. This is managed by us on the back end.

Can I put multiple Australian destinations in my top 3?

Yes. You may choose 3 Australian destinations if you wish.

If you put only destinations in Australia/New Zealand in your top 3, and get through the draw at none, does that mean you can't go abroad at all?

No, if we can’t place you for a destination in your top 3 we’ll email you and you’ll get priority on our remaining spots. Every year we always have more spots than applications, so you can always go somewhere.

Can you also put the same university but for different semesters in your top 3?
Unfortunately, this is not possible. You can only apply for 1 semester.

**If you have a university-wide choice at spot 1 and a faculty-specific one at spot 3, what should your motivation letter focus on?**

You always focus your motivation letter on choice 1, regardless of whether it is UU-wide or faculty. Should you be passed on for choice 2 to faculty, they will still read your letter.

2.5. **Finances**

**Is there an overview of costs students incur on average in Australia/New Zealand?**

For each destination, there is an overview of the costs for each host university. You should also think about airfare, visa costs and health insurance costs in Australia/New Zealand.

**Is it possible to work in Australia?**

Yes, this is allowed up to 20 hours per week.

**Are you allowed to work in New Zealand?**

Yes, you may work there for x number of hours as a student.

**Do you pay tuition to the partner?**

No, just to UU.

2.6. **Visa**

**Should you apply for another visa to work?**

No, you may work on your student visa for a maximum number of hours.

**If you want to travel during the Australian summer vacations (November to February) before or after you study there, do you need a different visa for that travel period?**

Usually not. You are often allowed to stay on your student visa for a month after your last class. After that, you can stay longer through a loophole by traveling to a neighboring country first and applying for a tourist visa from there.

2.7. **Semesters**

**Is the first semester already in July? Here, semester 1 doesn't start until September, right?**

The semesters in Australia are mirrored and there is no overlap in semesters. Their semester 2 starts in mid-July and semester 1 starts in early February.

**Is there a summer semester as well?**

You can take a summer semester at 1 university in Brisbane. They have a trimester system so then you may go one of those trimesters.

**How do you fill out your study plan with the mirrored semesters?**
Always enter the UU semester you want to leave. So you follow the Dutch semester system.

2.8. Course selection

If you don’t necessarily need the credits, is there a minimum number of courses you should take?

Yes, you should register for 30 ECTS. For your visa, you should obtain a minimum of 22.5 ECTS.

What happens if you fail courses on your exchange?

This is best discussed with your study advisor. One student may need the courses more for the UU program than a student who is already nearing completion of the bachelor’s or master’s degree.

If you are doing a science degree, could you also choose to take a course or several in the area of medicine and health?

Medicine and Health is often very limited in terms of courses on exchange, but if you find them on offer and they don’t require too much prior knowledge, feel free to take that.

Can you write a thesis abroad?

That’s a very complicated construction. If you really have an insanely thought out plan and already have a supervisor, for example, then you can try it, but there is a small chance of it succeeding.

2.9. AEN Network

I saw that, for example, the University of Wollongong and Edith Cowan University are affiliated with the AEN network and you should choose 3 out of their 5 universities in your motivation letter from this network. So does this still only count as 1 destination choice in terms of UU and that you can choose 2 more in addition to AEN?

If you are interested in AEN, you sign up for the network, write your motivation only for choice 1 and briefly mention in the letter what choices 2 and 3 are. After selection, your top 3 will go to AEN and they will do the final selection.

I thought you normally hear in January whether you are selected, but with the AEN, you don’t hear about this until March?

Yes. UU will let you know in January if you can be selected for the network. The network then lets you know in March which university they can place you at.

Will you be placed in an AEN spot for sure if you choose AEN?

Yes, but they make the puzzle. You may not get placed on your first choice, but usually you will be.

Does AEN require a minimum GPA?

This differs per university. Check this on the destination page. If you are selected for a different AEN destination than your first choice and there is a GPA requirement, this does apply to you.
2.10. Other

Many studies do not allow you to take extra credits within your bachelor's degree. Studying abroad is an exception, right? So could you complete your entire degree, including thesis, and then go abroad for another six months?

Yes this is allowed. This is called postponing graduation. The courses from abroad will then appear as additional courses on your grade list.

At the University of Queensland it says they have 4-8 spots per year, but how many spots do they actually have?

If there is an estimate, negotiations are ongoing. Unfortunately, sometimes we can't get that done before the deadline.

What university(s) would you recommend as a "safe choice"?

That is hard to say every year and I dare not make a statement on that.

There are lots of options within Australia - how do I choose among them?

Come to the workshop "how to choose". A criteria form from this workshop will also be posted online. Look through that as well and/or make an appointment with the coordinator.

I want to go to an institution that is not in the partner list. Is that possible?

Yes, but this is not recommended. You will have to pay double tuition and you will have to arrange everything yourself. UU can't guide you then.