

**EXCHANGE REPORT – UNSW (AGSM)
JAN 2017 – APR 2017**

Visa Process:

To start off, you will need a Passport. Make sure that the expiry date of the passport is well after you expect to return home. Before you can start applying for your visa the first step is to be accepted by University of New South Wales (UNSW) after which you will receive a confirmation of enrolment. (CoE) Attaining an acceptance from Schulich does not guarantee that you will be expected by UNSW. UNSW will send you an email and provide you with a login onto their portal. Here you will fill out details about yourself. You will be asked to upload a few documents (Transcript, passport, financial information etc) It is very straight forward and you should have no issues in doing so. It could be time consuming with all the school work but be sure to submit it on time in order to receive your CoE.

Now the final step is to get your visa! The first requirement for this is to receive your CoE from the university which you will have got before you go on to apply for your visa. Unlike a lot of other places, you go to where you don't need a visa in particular, the cost of applying for a student visa for Australia is quite high. (\$550) The process to apply for a visa is straight forward and not difficult at all. You simply go to the Australian website and apply electronically. You will be required to fill the basic details and asked to give your CoE number which will be given to you by UNSW. You could also get a travel visa, for a cheaper cost (if you plan on working part time however, this visa will not do the trick). If you're not going to be working and staying in Australia for a long period of time, travel visa is the play! Make sure you apply for your visa well in advance as you do not want to have issues close to your departure day.

Insurance:

You need to buy Medibank Health Insurance prior to applying for a Student Visa. This is around \$250 AUD and allows you to claim bills from doctor's visits and certain medication. Once you get confirmation of your insurance, you are required to visit the Medibank office on-campus to provide your address to receive a card. This card will have the necessary information for you to make claims and get back money you spend on health services. Walk-in clinics can be found on-campus and in Randwick (10 minute walk from UNSW), so you should not have any issues finding a doctor if you need one.

Financial:

It is advisable that you bring approximately \$500.00 in cash with you when you're off to Sydney just to be safe. Once you're settled in you should make sure you set up a bank account as soon as possible to be able to pay your accommodation fees etc. The two major banks are both situated on campus (ANZ and Commonwealth) and offer similar banking services to students. It is required you bring two pieces of I.D. and they will ask verification for the local address you will be staying at in Sydney. Once opened it will be a lot easier to transfer in money from Toronto, make payments online. Commonwealth Bank was my choice and the popular choice amongst most exchange students. The process of opening an account is similar to Canada and should be done very quickly and efficiently. (Will not take more than 20 minutes)

Arrival / Airport

Nothing out of the ordinary to mention here. Can either take a public transport or cab to your planned destination. This also a great spot to get your cell phone set up (kiosks will be set up).

Academics/Courses:

Lisa, the exchange coordinator, will reach out to you a few months in advance and send you the courses available, be quick to respond! Your proposed study plan can (and probably will) change upon arrival, (mine did) be sure to let Cheryl know! When selecting courses, you should try to look up course outlines so that you can prepare yourself for the workload. Aside from course content, plan your course selection so that your schedule is compact to just a few days per week. Keep in mind that workload for school is much lighter in Australia. Try and squeeze your schedule into 2-3 days so you can travel Wed/Thurs --> Sunday.

Classroom / Teaching:

As is the case at Schulich, the format of each class will vary based on the professor. Also, most courses will have a lecture and a tutorial. Although attending lectures is not mandatory, tutorial attendance is a must (must attend at least 80% to pass the course).

With regards to course materials, most professors in marketing courses will base their final examination on lecture slides. Thus, it is not necessary to get textbooks (save your money because every dollar matters). If the textbook is not mandatory, you can easily find it at the UNSW library. Aside from that, some professors will upload cases and readings onto a portal called Blackboard. You should check this regularly, as this is how professors will primarily communicate with you. Professors are easily accessible through email or office hours, and will address questions or concerns pretty quickly.

Language Courses:

No comment.

Language Outside Classroom:

There are plenty of people from all around the world travelling Sydney, you will meet many people from many different countries. I am able to speak French, so I used this as an opportunity to practice with some friends I met. English is of course the dominant language and you will get by fine with English only.

International Services:

Once you accept your offer at UNSW within a few weeks you will be invited to join a Facebook group that will have all the exchange/study abroad students that will be there with you for that semester. That and WhatsApp groups were most useful as a lot of the general queries were answered in the group and you can also reach out to a lot of students regarding housing/courses etc.

Housing Arrangements:

It is definitely a good idea to do some research and get an idea of where you want to stay when in Sydney. UNSW is located close to beautiful beaches, so my first recommendation would be to find a place off-campus by the beach. However, there are a few options for housing facilities.

On-Campus Residence:

There are many options for on-campus residences, but keep in mind that although they are convenient for attending classes, they are also very expensive. If that does not concern you, then there are options. Most will range from \$350+ AUD per week.

Off-campus housing:

This would be my recommendation for those of you who are looking to spend less than \$5000 AUD on accommodation. If you are planning on travelling, chances are you will want to allocate more of your budget towards that. However, off-campus housing should be researched when you arrive in Sydney so that you can check out the place and ensure that it is appropriate for you. The best places to look for accommodation are www.gumtree.com.au (Australia's version of Kijiji) or a Facebook group titled **UNSW Students Rent/Sublet Accommodation**. I recommend conducting some research prior to leaving so you are aware of the options, but do not pay a deposit on a place without seeing it first.

The most popular areas for students to live are Coogee, Bondi, and Randwick. Also, this is a central place for public transportation, so you will always have a direct bus or taxi to get you home at any time of day or night. Furthermore, living in one of these areas will allow you to truly experience Australian culture and enjoy activities such as surfing, swimming, or just relaxing on the beach. With regards to price, you can find a shared room for roughly \$200 AUD per week. Single rooms are a bit more in price, so if you prefer the privacy, definitely go for a single room.

Most importantly, if you do not have accommodation prior to leaving, do not panic. This is the case for most exchange students and it just requires research during your first few days in Sydney to secure a place.

Costs/Expenses:

This is by far the most important thing to consider when coming to Australia. You may have heard that Australia is expensive, and yes, the rumors are true. I strongly suggest creating a budget of at least \$12,000 AUD for your term abroad. This should allow you to comfortably get through your time in Sydney, and can vary depending on how much travelling you are looking to do. Be advised that this budget does not include your initial return flight for which you can be expected to pay around \$2000+ CAD. This, along with your accommodation will be your biggest expense that you should set aside beforehand. You should consider the following costs, as they are pretty much applicable to all exchange students.

Food and Drinks:

If you normally eat out for most of your meals, you will find a huge portion of your budget go towards this. Eating out is very expensive, including fast food, and you can expect to pay around \$15 AUD for a decently proportioned meal. Also, if you are used to grabbing coffee in the morning, a regular coffee and muffin will cost you \$7-\$8 AUD each day. This can add up very quickly, so I would recommend making your meals from home. Grocery stores, such as Woolworths and Coles are the best for good deals. Also, avoid convenience stores or gas stations, as everything is extremely overpriced and a regular bottle of Coke will cost you \$4 AUD.

Alcohol is another material expense in Australia. Prices are about 1.5-2x the price you find in Canada, which means that many students resort to cheap boxed wine that is \$10 AUD for 4 litres. Although it is at an attractive price, it tastes horrible. Thus, the best option is to pick up some at duty free when you land, and if you travel outside of Australia, grab some more whenever you get the chance.

Cell phone:

If you don't have a smartphone, it's highly recommended that you get one. It is the best way to access bus times and search things in the area. The biggest carriers are Vodafone and Optus, and you can easily get a phone plan with minutes, texting, and data for \$40 or less. Most students prefer Optus because it has the best network range.

Bus Tickets:

The bus system in Sydney is very good and can be relied on at any time of the night. Other forms of commute can be much more expensive. Buy yourself an Opal card!

Leisure Activities:

This can vary per person, but spending a day at the beach, walking around Darling Harbour, or touring the city will not require an admission fee. This is normally what many people do on their time off. Also, you can minimize your expenditures on nightlife once you do research on what clubs have no cover on certain days. If you do plan on buying drinks at clubs however, be advised that this costs much more than a drink at a bar or club in Canada. Once you land in Sydney, make sure to pick up a Sydney travel book because it has coupons for the prominent attractions, such as the Wildlife Park, Aquarium, Sky Tower, and more.

School/Standard Fees:

You should not have any supplemental fees for any classes. However, be prepared to spend around \$750 AUD prior to departure on your Medibank Health Insurance and Visa application. You cannot avoid these costs at all if you want to be able to step foot in Australia. On the other hand, the primary expense for school was transportation. You can find most textbooks in the library for you to borrow as needed, so do not buy brand new books.

Travel:

If you are going to allocate your budget, try to maximize the amount you put into travelling outside of Sydney. You will realize very quickly that Sydney will feel like home as it is much like Toronto, so try to explore the rest of Australia and even surrounding countries for new cultural experiences. You should create a list of countries and cities you want to visit, and regularly check websites for Scoot Airlines, Tiger Airways, and Jetstar (the best budget airlines for travelling in and around Australia) to see how you can fit your travels around your school schedule. Remember, Sydney is a metropolitan city, but as soon as you step outside you will find rainforests, coral reefs, a desert, and the world's most beautiful beaches, all in one country. This is what makes Australia such a fascinating country, so do justice to the opportunity you have been given because Australia's atmosphere is truly diverse and a must-see!

Currency Exchange/Banking:

Do your research and plan ahead! The currency is almost always 1 to 1. My bank was Commonwealth, which I believe was the best choice. They have a fantastic and very easy to use app and there is a branch on campus.

Departure:

No departure tax. Nothing out of the ordinary to be aware of here.

Culture Shock:

I couldn't believe how in shape everyone was in Sydney. Hit the gym!

Things to Bring:

Cash - The entire exchange from school tuition to trips costs \$12,000 to \$15,000. The more cash you have to spend the more fun you have because you will be able to participate and enjoy a wider variety of things. It sucks but it is a reality and please remember that Sydney is third most expensive city in the world.

Sunscreen!

Unlocked Phone – Get your smartphones unlocked and then buy a prepaid sim with Optus they allow calls to Canada for the price of domestic calls. They also allow for free texts and calls between Optus members. 3G is also useful for google maps (this saved our lives on many occasions)

Travel bags for trips

Canadian things (show your Canadian pride) Aussie's love Canadians!

Travel Adaptors for electronic devices

Buy some alcohol duty free because once you get on Australian soil the prices of Alcohol will skyrocket and nights become that much more expensive (approximately \$40 for 750ml of vodka for example)

General Impressions:

Sydney is probably one of the best places on the planet. The country is absolutely gorgeous; there is plenty of city-life, great food, beautiful beaches, amazing campus life, great weather, and most importantly incredible people who will never be forgotten. Aside from the sometimes ridiculous prices for things Sydney has so much to offer and is worth every single cent. The city is so versatile and has something that everyone will for sure fall in love with. This exchange was priceless and can never be taken away from us. Make sure to do, see, and explore as much as possible in this beautiful nation and make friends that will last the test of time. We hope (and know) that if you choose UNSW you will fall in love with this university, this city, and this country.

Testimonial & Photo

My overall exchange experience was outstanding. I made tons of new friends from around the world, and had a chance to travel to some outstanding places that were so cool! I would highly recommend an exchange to Sydney (it was particularly nice skipping the Canadian winter for a nice warm Australian summer).



Gold Coast, Queensland