Study Abroad

Lismore, Australia
2020
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Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire study abroad program with the Southern Cross University (SCU) in Lismore, Australia. Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

- Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field
- Increasing understanding of different cultures
- Enhancing personal development
- Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture
- Gaining self-confidence and independence
- Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) How can you best prepare to meet your goals within the context of this program? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Australian culture, yet you are going with a group of UW-Eau Claire students, how can you insure that you do not spend too much time with other Americans?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.
**ACADEMICS**

Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UW-Eau Claire, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Pre-departure Planning**

Please see the Lismore, Australia Academics Page for details on how to plan your courses at SCU. The final courses for when you will be abroad may not be out at this time, so be sure to have backups.

If you are taking "Outdoor Education," (usually offered both terms) it has been evaluated as a Geography Elective, Upper Division, GE 3, LE K-2. It will not be evaluated again.

If you are taking “MNG10476: Professional Development for the Workplace” (usually offered in our fall term) you will receive BSAD lower division elective credit. If you’re a business student, upon your return, you can let the business department at UWEC know that you took this course and they can record that you have completed a workshop for the required Student Professional Development Program.

**Credits and Course Load**

You will enroll in 36 SCU credits (12 UWEC credits). If you decide you want to take an additional course, you will have to pay the additional tuition to SCU.

12 SCU credits = 4 UWEC credits

Due to visa changes, students can now take one of the three courses online, however SCU strongly recommends students do NOT take online courses, due to the low number of hours you will be in class.

Keep in mind:
- The credits you earn abroad are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.
- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and must be approved in advance by the CIE and SCU.

**Registration at SCU**

While you will enroll in your units shortly after you are accepted by SCU, you won’t officially be registered in the unit until later. These two steps are different. SCU will email you instructions on how to enroll and register usually in later October/November for spring students and later April for fall students.

1. **Enrolling** ensures that you have met pre-requisites.

2. **Registering** will assign times to your units and secure a seat for you. You will actually register a few weeks prior to your departure and may continue registering upon arrival in Australia. It will all be done online but know that at SCU, it isn’t as competitive to get into courses, so don’t worry about the timeline.

**Dropping/Adding Courses**

You will be able to drop/add courses during orientation or "O" week, when you will have an opportunity to talk with advisors from various departments in making final decisions about appropriate courses.

**Reporting Your Registration**

As soon as you confirm your final registration at SCU, log in to your BlugoldsAbroad account.
and complete the Course Descriptions questionnaire.

If a course you are taking is not already in the UW-Eau Claire Transfer Wizard, you will need to provide the following information:

- course title
- course number
- course description
- number of credits
- name of the department you would like credit in

Once equivalencies have been established by all department chairs involved, the courses will be posted to the Transfer Credit Wizard, and you will be able to see them there.

**Equivalency timeline**: The process of determining an equivalency can take four to six weeks. In other words, we cannot process courses that you want evaluated for curiosity sake.

**Syllabi and Academic Work**

SCU trimesters include 12 teaching weeks, a short "study break" between classes and exams, and a two-week exam period. At the beginning of each unit, you'll receive a "unit outline," somewhat similar to a syllabus. It will have an overview of the unit and general breakdown of topics (although rarely a daily breakdown as you may receive from UW-Eau Claire professors). It will also have a list of what you will be graded on and when assignments are due.

Typical assessment items (work that is graded) are essays of 5-15 pages, reports, class presentations, and exams. **If your lecturer mentions in class to do something, be sure to do it. You will not get constant reminders to do projects or assignments, and unit outlines in Australia may not be as detailed as syllabi you are used to here.** If you have questions, don’t hesitate to ask your lecturer.

If you need to turn in work late, you must have permission from your lecturer/tutor ahead of time. Extensions will not always be granted; that is up to the individual lecturer. If you are sick and therefore miss turning in an assignment or an exam, you may be required to present a doctor’s certificate.

**Class Schedule**

You can expect to have classes Monday-Friday. You may feel you don’t have class as much as you do at UWEC, but that means you need to be self-teaching yourself the content and then engaging in the class discussions. A few past students got caught up in not attending classes, because the notes were online, and ended up failing. Don’t be these people.

**Class Attendance**

You are required to attend all regularly scheduled classes and field trips unless illness or other unavoidable circumstances make this impossible. **Attendance is also a visa requirement.** Absences for personal travel must be approved in advance by the instructor and may result in lower grades.

You are required to take your final exams at the scheduled time and day of the exams (just as you are at UW-Eau Claire). This is SCU’s policy, and you are required to follow it. **You will often not find out the day/time of your final until six weeks before finals week.** Do not ask your lecturer or the International Office if you can take your exam early. Failure to take your exams as scheduled will result in failing your courses.

**Grades**

You will need to be self-motivated, as there is little of the “checking up” or "ongoing assessment" which is built into the U.S. system. **Grades are**
generally based on two assessments, often a paper and a final exam. In any graded work, you will be expected to develop your own ideas and arguments in relation to the topic; simply reproducing information you have read or heard in class is not enough.

Southern Cross grades convert to UW-Eau Claire grades according to the following scale. "C+"/Pass is truly "average" in the Australian system, and students are generally happy to receive one. **High Distinctions are very rare.** This is why the top two Australian grades equal a UW-Eau Claire "A."

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<td>C+</td>
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Note: UWEC students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail. Grades from SCU are figured into your UWEC GPA and posted to your UWEC transcript. No exceptions will be made.

**SCU & UWEC Transcripts**

Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.

A SCU transcript with SCU grades is sent to UW-Eau Claire, roughly 2-3 months after the end of the semester, as long as you don’t have any outstanding fees. Because SCU grades will arrive later than the end of the UW-Eau Claire semester, your MyBlugold CampS account will initially indicate “NR” (not reported). This will be changed once the transcript arrives.

**Australian Academic System**

**Australian Academic Vocab:**
- Assessment item = graded work
- Course = major
- Timetable = class schedule
- Unit = course/class
- School = school or college
- Lecturer = professor
- Course outline = syllabus
- Tutor = professor
- College = dormitory
- Tutorial = discussion class

**Independent Learning:** In the words of past participants, the Australian and U.S. systems of higher education are totally different. **The Australian system requires very independent learning.** Students are expected to come to class prepared to critically analyze all work, and ideas are meant to be challenged. Lecturers do hold office hours but are not often accessible outside of those hours; students should be ready to figure things out on their own using the texts, class lectures, and outside reading.

Past students have had mixed reviews on how they like the Australian academic system. Some have liked the change and done very well. Others have not preferred the style and maybe found it to be less challenging. Then there are some who have found it very challenging. Each student will have their own response to this change in academic styles.

From an Australian perspective, it is equally hard to understand the teaching methods used in U.S. higher education, with lots of direction from the professors, many small graded assignments, and the general "checking up" to be sure students are learning the assigned materials. **This is how Australian students learn in high school.** Once they enter university, they are expected to take responsibility for their own education.
One cultural difference to note between the U.S. and Australia is Australians like everyone to remain equal and not stand out from the crowd. They refer to this as “Tall Poppy Syndrome.” All the poppies should stay at the same level, and if one grows too tall, it is cut back to the size of the rest of the group.

So, what does that really mean? Basically, Australians are very hard workers, but they rarely admit it (they will almost NEVER discuss things like grades, if they are applying for a promotion, how much work they do, etc.) Also, in classes you may notice that the Australians do not ask as many questions as students in the U.S. ask. This is another aspect of Tall Poppy Syndrome. They don’t want to appear to know more, or not know as much, as the others.

An important thing to remember is you may not be aware of how much Australian students’ study, but they study A LOT. However, you probably won’t hear Aussies discussing how much they study, and if you comment on how hard someone studies, he/she will probably deny it.

Types of Classes: Units include lectures with tutorials, labs, and field study. Lectures are large, often 100 students, and generally meet once a week. Students from the lecture are then divided into smaller tutorial groups, which also meet once a week. Lectures generally meet once/week for two hours and tutorials meet once/week for two hours, for a total of four hours/week/course in class. Study expectation is that you spend three to four hours studying for each hour in class.

Small group discussions, presentations, etc., are done in the tutorial. 10-20% of the grade for a course may be attendance at the tutorial. Some lecturers will also take attendance at lecture. Note that your lecturer and your tutor may be different people for the same class. Also note that different people may be grading your assignments at different times.

Contacting Faculty: Professors (Lecturers) are generally more laid-back than in the U.S., and most of them prefer to be called by their first names. Take note that many people are teaching on part-time contracts at SCU and may only be on campus when they are teaching. Find out at the beginning of the semester when you can get in touch with your lecturer for questions outside of class, and if it is permissible to call at home. Past students have said that e-mail has worked well to get in touch with professors.

Be sure to ASK QUESTIONS if you are not sure you understand an assignment or need direction in studying for an exam or writing a paper.

Service Learning
The Lismore Volunteer Centre will come to campus during "O" week and will let you know about different volunteer opportunities in Lismore.

SCU offers a unit called COM30001: Community Engagement Project (comes back as ELEC 980 Upper Division Elective, R3) (usually in session I).

In order to have the course count for a portion (or all – it will depend on how many hours you complete) of your service-learning requirement at UWEC, you will need to complete the service learning forms online once you have your volunteer assignment.

To do so, go to: https://www.uwec.edu/service-learning/students/

• Click on “Create a Project”.
• The UWEC Australia study abroad coordinator, Jenna Krosch, will be your UWEC Mentor. Enter her username on the form: kroschjm
• For the question, “How would you like your mentor to be involved in your project?” state that your mentor will read and comment on your reflection paper and may ask you follow-up questions as necessary.

**Money Matters**

UWEC information about making payments, when they are due, withdrawal and refund deadlines, financial aid, general scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in the Money Matters section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Cost Estimate**

You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the Lismore brochure page. Be sure you are looking at the correct term. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC and what you pay directly to other vendors.

**Housing Costs**

Housing costs from SCU are billed to UWEC. We will then apply your housing to your UWEC bill.

**SCU Refunds**

Included in the housing fees that SCU bills UWEC for, there is a housing deposit. Should you not have any damages or outstanding fees at the end of your time at SCU, SCU will refund us the deposit (minus the mandatory cleaning fee). Once UWEC receives the refund (usually 3-4 months after the program ends), we will process it and Blugold Central will issue you a check refund.

**Currency Exchange**

The currency of Australia is the Australian dollar (AUD) which comes in polymer (plastic) bills of $5, $10, $20, $50, $100. Coins come in 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent denominations as well as $1 and $2. The bills are waterproof and are in a variety of fun colors. Don’t forget about your $1 and $2 coins as they can add up at times.

You can find current exchange rates at http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.

**Money on Arrival**

A general recommendation is to travel with the equivalent of $100-$200 dollars in your host country currency in the event something comes up and you miss the airport pick up. It can take time to obtain Australian dollars from a bank in the US, so plan accordingly.

**Cost of Living**

For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website: https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Brisbane

**Banking**

You aren’t required to open a bank account in Australia. One to two weeks after opening an account, you will receive an Australian ATM card.

An option for getting money to your account is through a wire transfer, but these funds can take three to four weeks to clear and the charge is usually $35-40.

Information on opening an account in Lismore will be provided during orientation at SCU.

**Credit Cards and ATMs**

Credit cards are widely accepted in Australia. You will want to make sure you have either Visa or MasterCard as those are the most widely accepted. It is strongly recommended that all of your credit/debit cards have a chip in them. Most places in Australia have the chip reader technology and swiping your card is less common.
If using a debit card from the U.S., make sure you understand how much the withdrawal fees are. Also note that there may be an international fee assessed every time you use your card. ATMs are located in Goodman Plaza on Lismore’s campus. There are also several ATMs in the main business district in Lismore, Lismore Central Shopping complex and Lismore Shopping Square.

When withdrawing money from the ATM, always use caution.

Make sure you notify your bank and credit card companies before your travel. They will want to know your travel itinerary to the best that you have it planned out. Also make a copy of all of your credit cards so that in the event they are lost, stolen, or eaten by an ATM, you have the contact information to call and cancel.

**Traveler’s Checks**

Traveler’s checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use. They generally must be cashed at a major bank, although, in some countries, post offices also offer this service, and you must have your passport with you. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, ASK what the fee is.

**Work Information**

International student visa holders can work part-time during the semester. Talk with the SCU Careers Counselor in Student Services (on the Plaza) about finding a job if you are interested. But don’t count on finding work to supplement your income while in Lismore as it is very difficult to find "casual" (part-time) employment in the Lismore area. The best possibility is tutoring in an academic area, either for SCU students or high school students.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health & Insurance and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Centers for Disease Control**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to Australia. You can review the CDC site for Australia here.

Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases worldwide, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

**Water**

The water in Australia is potable (drinkable). Please see the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommendations on eating and drinking safely in Australia (link above).

**Insect Bites**

Just as you would in the US, you should try to avoid bug bites when outside. The CDC link above has good information on how to avoid bug bites.

**Overseas Student Health Cover**

In addition to CISI insurance, students going to Australia on student visas have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). Your Australian university will enroll you in this. It is required by the Australian government for all student visa holders and will cover most of your insurance needs there. Your coverage is valid from the arrival date stamped in your passport, even though you will not receive the card for approximately six weeks. This process will be explained during orientation in
Australia. (Note that without OSHC, the Australian government will not issue a student visa.)

**Healthcare & Mental Health Facilities**
There is a full counseling staff on campus, as well as a doctor four days/week. You will need to pay upfront, then file for reimbursement with Medibank/OSHC or CISI so be sure to keep your receipt!

For bigger medical issues, there is a hospital right down the hill from campus. You are also able to take advantage of the naturopathy clinic SCU has on campus.

**Additional Counseling Resources:** If you would like to see a therapist while abroad, that is not on SCU’s campus, we can work with CISI to identify a therapist in Lismore. Start this process before you go, or afterwards, by contacting your UWEC study abroad coordinator.

**Medical Supplies/Medications:** You can find basic medical supplies or medications in local pharmacies (also known as chemists in Australia). They are plentiful around Lismore.

**CISI Insurance in Australia**
If you have an accident or become ill while studying in Australia, you must pay the price of the medical service up front. You will then file a claim through CISI, the insurance provided through the UW System for partial or full reimbursement in accordance with plan coverages.

**Services for Students with Disabilities**
SCU has a Student Access and Inclusion office on campus that helps to create an inclusive learning environment. It is a free and confidential service that can provide a wide range of support services to students who have a disability or medical condition. More information can be found on SCU’s site. In addition, the SCU international office can help refer you if you have questions on what services are available.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in Australia in general. To find more information on this topic, please see the Local Laws & Special Circumstances section of the U.S. State Department Country Information page.

**Safety in Australia**

**Security at SCU**
Security staff can be contacted at SCU 24 hours a day. They will provide you with an escort to your car or the bus stop. There are also emergency phones located in every block on campus. The Lismore campus security can be contacted by calling (02) 6620 3628. Make sure that if you are calling this number with an American phone that you dial 61 before this number.

**Australia Safety**
Information on crime, specific safety issues, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Australia is included in the U.S. State Department’s Australia Info page. Specific safety in and around Lismore will be discussed during orientation in Eau Claire and in Lismore.

**Pick-Pocketing:** Pick-pocketing is common on public transportation and at popular tourist sites throughout Australia. To reduce the risk, do not have your phone or other valuables out in public spaces. An iPhone is a target for pick-pockets. If you carry a purse, make sure it is across the body and has zippers. Keep your wallet in a front pocket, not a back pocket. Only carry small amounts of cash on you to minimize loss. Using a money belt under your clothing is another way to prevent valuables from being stolen.

**Beach Safety:** When swimming on the beach, be sure to mind the flags and only swim in areas that
are marked as safe. The lifeguards always mark a safe space (if any) each day as rip currents change frequently. The riptides are very dangerous and even the strongest swimmers can get swept out. Also, be mindful of jellyfish. If no one is in the water, there is probably a reason for that. Some other things to know:

- Don’t dive into water of unknown depths.
- Don’t swim alone, especially at isolated beaches.
- Avoid the consumption of alcohol while swimming.
- Don’t swim at night – you don’t know what is in the water.

**Adventure Sports:**

- Use caution and common sense if engaging in ALL adventure sports, and remember that they are NOT covered by CISI insurance, such as bungee jumping, sky diving, hiking, rappelling, climbing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, etc.
- Never participate in adventure sports alone. Always carry identification and let others know where you are at all times.
- When hiking, rappelling, or climbing, carry a first aid kit and know the location of the nearest rescue center.
- Observe all local or park regulations and exercise caution in unfamiliar surroundings.

**Driving in Australia:**

One main thing to remember about safety in Australia is that they drive on the opposite side of the road, so LOOK RIGHT before crossing the street.

Also, **do not drive or borrow cars.** Laws for driving are different in Australia, and they drive on the other side of the road. There are a number of ways for you to get places without having to drive.

**Wildlife in Australia:**

Most everyone hears that Australia is home to the most poisonous snakes and spiders. While Australia does have these, the probability of encountering them is slim. The best prevention is to not engage with any species you do not know how to comfortable handle. This goes with koalas and kangaroos. While they are fluffy and seem harmless, they can cause damage to your body.

In recent years, there has been a python that has been known to live around the student accommodations. The python is harmless to you if you let it be. The university and housing company will not rehome it or kill it as it is not hurting anyone. To avoid issues with the neighbor python, it is recommended that you keep your doors closed.

**Natural Disasters in Australia**

Lismore has been known to flood. If this were to happen, when you are abroad, the SCU international office will be in communication with you on what to do and areas to avoid. Never try to travel through a flood affected area as you do not know what is in the water (snakes, crocodiles and even sharks have been known to swim upstream from the ocean during floods). Thankfully campus and your accommodations are on top of a hill, so campus hasn’t been affected in the past. In fact, during the last big flood in 2017, campus is where they housed people displaced by the flood.

Australia has also seen an increase in wildfires due to drying conditions on the coasts. Should any wildfires develop in or around the Lismore area, again the SCU international office would be in touch regarding places to avoid. Never knowingly go into a wildfire area.

Australia has experienced some intense droughts in the past few years. Due to this, you may notice that it is dry. You will want to be aware of how
much water you are using. Australia is a large island and when droughts occur, that greatly impacts the water levels. Try to limit your showers and shut off water when not using it.

Australia also has cyclones. Cyclones consist of heavy rains, strong wind and large storm surges. The destruction of a cyclone can be like a tornado or hurricane, but it will depend on the size/intensity of the cyclone. Most often, when a cyclone hits the Northern River region, it amounts to a lot of rain and wind. Should a cyclone take form when you are in Australia, follow the instructions from the SCU staff and local meteorologists. It is recommended you don’t make any travel or camping plans when a cyclone is happening.

**Emergency Contacts**

General emergency procedures are described in the Safety Abroad section of the *Study Abroad Handbook*, and SCU has an international staff who are available for consultation if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at Orientation 2; be sure to keep it in your wallet. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

**911 Equivalent in Australia**

If you are in an emergency situation in Australia, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in Australia is **000 from landline (112 on cell phone)**. We suggest you save this number in your cell phone in case you need it to use it quickly.

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of [911 numbers abroad](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/visa/911.html). Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

**Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs**

**Note that marijuana is illegal in Australia.**

People may be more open about it, (especially in Nimbin, a village not far from Lismore) but the **possession and use of marijuana is illegal.**

Even carrying it on your person can be considered drug trafficking. U.S. citizenship offers no protection if you break an Australian law. There is** NOTHING the CIE, your host organization, or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation of Australian laws.

In addition to legal penalties, you are putting yourself at risk of robbery or assault, or you may get a much more dangerous combination of drugs than you thought you were buying.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

**Passport information is included in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

**Visa**

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. It is your responsibility to apply for and receive the appropriate visa for study in Australia, before you depart.

Please see the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook for an overview of the visa/immigration process, as well as the visa Learning Content in your BlugoldsAbroad account for more information about what documents you should bring with you for immigration. If there isn’t a visa document posted at this time, that means it is too early to apply. You will be notified when it is ready.
If you have family or friends who wish to visit you when you are abroad, they will need to research to see if they need a tourist visa for travel to Australia (hint, they do!).

**Visas for Travel to Other Countries**

If you plan to travel outside your host country while abroad, you should verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency.

**PACKING TIPS**

There is general packing information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook, and you will get a suggested packing list for Australia at Orientation 2. In addition, you should know the following:

**Weather**

Lismore offers mild winters and warm summers. **Summer (November-January)** temperatures average 24 degrees Celsius (75 F); with **winter (June-August)** averaging 15 degrees C (59 F). Average highs and lows are 35 degrees C (95 F) and 4 degrees C (39 F), respectively. There is no insulation in the buildings, so at night it gets cooler.

If you are arriving to Australia in February, it will be hot and humid. But by the end of your program, it will cool off. If you decide to travel to New Zealand, you can expect cooler temps.

If you are arriving to Australia in June, it will be cooler and warm up by the end of your program. “Winter” is never going to be as harsh as in Wisconsin, but when you are in a warm climate, you’ll be surprised at what “cold” starts to mean to you and others.

**Clothing**

Students in Australia dress casually, jeans, casual pants, shorts, casual dresses, casual shirts, or t-shirts. You will notice a style difference as Australia is ahead of American in terms of styles. Students do not wear hoodies/sweatpants/loungewear to class – expect Aussie students to be more put together. The SCU International Office suggests you also bring a sweatshirt/long pants, one or two dressy outfits, and a raincoat or umbrella. A fall-weight jacket is recommended.

Take clothing that is machine washable and does not wrinkle easily. Bring garments that can be worn interchangeably and which you can layer. Past students suggest choosing a color scheme and bringing mix-and-match clothing. Dark colors show dirt less quickly.

Your peer advisor will give you a packing list at the second orientation later in the semester prior to departure.

If you are participating in the Outdoor Education course, a list of what you will need to pack will also be included. Students on Outdoor Education can either bring some items with them or purchase/borrow them once they’re in Australia. We include the list in case you already own items and want to bring them with, but it isn’t necessary to buy all the items ahead of time.

**Converters & Adapters**

The standard electric current in Australia is 240 volts, different from the U.S., and Australian outlets require a different shape of plug.

If you plan to bring a hair dryer, razor or other appliance from the US, you will need to buy both a voltage converter and a plug adapter. Another option is to buy the appliances after you arrive. (It is **not** recommended to bring these to Australia.)
Past students have mentioned how their hair straighteners or dryers have over heated or stopped working.

If you plan to bring your laptop abroad, check the power cord to see acceptable voltage inputs and outputs. If it includes 240 volts, you will only need to use a plug adapter, not a voltage converter.

If you have several US appliances you plan to use abroad, consider bringing a power strip, also. You will still need to have a voltage converter in order to plug it into the wall. Or again, purchase a power strip when you arrive and have several adapters to use.

**Do Not Bring**

Do not bring expensive cell phones, jewelry, or other luxury items that can be lost or stolen. If you do decide to bring items that are expensive to replace, you may want to consider personal property insurance for your time in Australia.

**Getting to Australia**

There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Travel Arrangements**

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Lismore, Australia. You will be directed to book flights to Brisbane, Australia. SCU will set a time and date for you to arrive by. In the past, this has been before 11am on the designated date. Confirm the time/date on your official acceptance email from SCU.

In past semesters, some students have chosen to travel together prior to the beginning of the program. If you choose to do this, please make clear to your parents and other interested parties that this is not an official part of the program and is not organized or overseen by the CIE. Make sure you leave your itinerary, a copy of your ticket, the name, phone and fax number of where you will be staying prior to arriving at SCU with someone at home.

**Buying a Changeable Ticket**

The exam schedule at SCU will cover a few weeks and we advise you book your flight for the last possible day. You should not purchase your ticket for an earlier date and expect to take your finals before then. SCU will not accommodate early test taking. You won’t find out your exam schedule until after you arrive to SCU. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you buy a roundtrip ticket with a low change fee in the event you determine that all your finals will be held before your expected departure and you want to return home earlier (not required). Note that trip insurance does not cover flight changes if you buy a non-changeable, non-refundable ticket.

**Getting to Lismore**

From Brisbane: The SCU International Office strongly recommends that you fly into Brisbane, and they will give you an official arrival day after you are accepted. SCU will have a bus for this day that will take you directly to your college in Lismore (~3-hour drive). There is an AUD $60 cost, but this is the most hassle-free way for you to get there (you have paid the fee in your tuition costs and it is non-refundable should you decide to find your own way to campus).

Whatever way you choose to get there, please notify the international office at SCU (studyabroad@scu.edu.au) of your arrival details no later than two weeks prior to arrival.

If you are not arriving on the SCU bus from Brisbane, the SCU staff will still make
arrangements to collect you from the Lismore airport, bus station or train station, provided you have notified them and that your arrival time in Lismore is during the Friday, Saturday or Sunday immediately before Orientation or during office hours (Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm).

If your arrival is not on the designated arrival days, or is outside office hours, you will need to book a hotel for the night (at your own expense).

**Early, Late or Delayed Arrival**
At Orientation 2, you will discuss a back-up arrival plan in case your flight is delayed, and you will be arriving outside of check-in hours. If you are arriving in the middle of the night, you should plan to stay in a hotel and contact SCU in the morning. All students will have SCU’s contact information and that is why it is important to send SCU your flight details.

**Immigration & Customs**
It is important to keep in mind that when you enter Australia for the first time, you will go through immigration and customs. At this time, you cannot bring in ANY fruit or vegetables. Australia is VERY tedious about this. Be sure to throw any of these foods away before you board your flight into Australia.

**SETTLING IN**

**Orientation**
During the first few days at SCU you will have a required orientation program for study abroad students. The sessions include an introduction to the International Office staff, the special facilities, support and counseling services, safety, the Australian educational system, and the city of Lismore. A campus tour is included, and registration procedures are also explained. There is also an introduction to surf safety. At the end of the week you will take a trip in the region, often to the Currumbin Sanctuary (a wildlife park).

**On-Site Support**
The SCU international office will be your main point of contact. James, Kim and Emily will most likely be the people you engage with most. Their contact information is on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

**Local Transportation**
Navigating Lismore is easy. You will need to take public transportation to get most places off campus. Buses are normally about AUD$2/ride (AUD$4 round-trip) in town and more to get to the coast.

**Student Clubs & Organizations**
There is a "clubs and societies day" in week two of every semester where you can learn more about the various clubs/orrganizations on campus. Dues are generally very low. The UniLife office organizes these and many other activities. You can find out about the various activities at [http://scu.edu.au/students/index.php/50](http://scu.edu.au/students/index.php/50/)

**Activities/Events on Campus**

**Barbecues:** "Barbecues" are big social events in Australia and at Southern Cross. There is a big welcome barbecue at the beginning of the semester. The university also puts on a Commencement Dinner (welcoming dinner) for SCU students around the beginning of the semester. Both are great opportunities to meet people. The colleges may also host barbecues and other fun activities for you.

**LEXSA:** The Lismore & External Student Association can also help you get involved in student and community life. Check out their website at [http://lexsa.com.au/](http://lexsa.com.au/) for information on student clubs and organizations, sports, volunteer opportunities, religious organizations, and more.
You can access the online resources free; there is an AUD $5 membership fee. They also provide free lunches one day a week – so be on the lookout for those!

**Intramurals:** SCU has many social sports (including netball, ping pong, water polo and more) just like the intramurals we have at UW-Eau Claire! There’s a fee per team but if you sign your team up, you (team captain), can get a free one-month SCU gym and pool pass. No experience is required! Check out this website for the full list of social sports: [http://scu.edu.au/students/index.php/128](http://scu.edu.au/students/index.php/128)

**SCU Gym/Pool:** All students will receive a membership to the gym and pool on campus. This is included in your program fees and cannot be refunded. SCU has a really nice fitness area, pool and gym. They also have yoga and other fitness classes ([http://gymandpool.scu.edu.au/](http://gymandpool.scu.edu.au/)).

**Campus Services:** Aside from accommodation and academic facilities, SCU also offers the following services:
- Learning Assistance Center
- University Bookshop
- Banking facilities
- Live Music venue
- Sporting facilities
- Eateries and a Uni Bar

**Volunteer**
Volunteering is a wonderful way to get involved in the local community and make meaningful relationships.

Hosting a volunteer requires time on the part of the organization to plan projects for and supervise that volunteer, so please take your commitment seriously. Otherwise, community partners may not be willing to host volunteers in the future. Also, volunteering requires you to take initiative. The more you are willing to invest in the experience the more rewarding it will be!

Students have a unique opportunity to volunteer with the **Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)** program and help indigenous high school students overcome challenges. Students who volunteer regularly might be able to count the hours towards the service-learning requirement. More information on how to volunteer will be given at orientation in Lismore.

**COM30001: Community Engagement Project:**
Students participating in session one have the opportunity to enroll in this unit. This unit provides students with an opportunity to undertake a local community project. Throughout the semester, a student would work with a local organization to identify a project and earn credit. Students can apply to fulfill service learning at UWEC.

**HOUSING**

**Living Situation**
SCU guarantees housing on campus for study abroad students in six-bedroom apartments, with each student having a single bedroom. You share kitchen, living and bathroom areas with your flatmates. Recently, there has been a change and there isn’t a housing application. Instead, the SCU international office sends the housing office a list of all students and they will accommodate you. **No deposits have to be made as they will all be billed to UWEC.** You will be responsible for any utility bills while living in your flat.

UWEC will post a questionnaire to your BlugoldsAbroad account asking if there are any housing requests (i.e. living with someone, preferred roommates, etc.). Any submissions will be forwarded to SCU. There is no guaranteed the submissions will be honored.
Students will receive their housing assignments a couple of weeks prior to arrival in Australia.

Instead of having a different name for each dorm building, a group of residential buildings in one area is called a college, and the entire group of buildings has the same name.

All students will be housed in Orion College. Orion College is part of a group of colleges managed by SCU Village. Students do not have the opportunity to live in other villages, as the price in Orion College has been negotiated with SCU. Orion is roughly a 5-minute walk to campus.

**Heads up: all student housing in Orion College is co-ed.** If you would like to request an all-female or male apartment, you can list that on your housing questionnaire, but it isn’t guaranteed.

**Roommates:** While SCU will attempt to house you with local and other international students, it isn’t guaranteed. In session one, there is a strong chance that you will be placed with other Americans, even other UWEC students. This is because so many Americans are studying there during session I.

If you are studying in session II, the chances of being with other Americans/UWEC students is lower as there are less students who participate on this program.

**Living in a Sub-Tropical Region**

**You are going to a sub-tropical region.** Walls are thinner (they don't need insulation), and insects are larger (they live year-round!) than they are in the Midwest. Cockroaches are common, as are other large insects. In addition, snakes are also present – don’t be surprised if the Orion python greets you. He has been said to live in the Orion area. While harmless, do not leave your doors open as he may be looking for a cuddle. This part of life often requires some adjustment for students from colder climates! On a similar note, **walls in Australia are generally not insulated, and it will get cold** (relatively speaking) at night in the winter.

**What's Provided?**

Your rooms are furnished with a bed, desk, and chair. There are built-in closets (known as wardrobes in Australia). **You will need to provide your own sheets, pillowcases, and blankets for your room, as well as cooking and eating utensils for the kitchen.**

The SCU staff will arrange a shopping trip on arrival so that you can pick up the essentials. They suggest you get the bare minimum at first, until your Australian roommates (if you have any) arrive, and you see what they may be willing to share! Some students have suggested using your sleeping bag as a comforter, rather than buying one in Australia.

In addition to the actual living units, Orion College has a swimming pool, a student lounge with a walk-out patio/deck, pool table, ping pong table, soda/snack machines, a computer lab/study center, coin-operated laundry facilities, and a TV lounge. [http://www.mystudentvillage.com/au/scu-village/lismore/](http://www.mystudentvillage.com/au/scu-village/lismore/)

**Meals & Snacks**

University housing is self-catering, meaning that **you buy and cook your own food.** When grocery shopping, remember that if you buy deli meats, cheeses, or fruit, you are buying in kilos, not pounds!

Students sharing a kitchen may also get into the habit of cooking together. Bring some of your favorite U.S. recipes to share. You may need to help provide silverware, dishes, and basic kitchen utensils. Again, wait until your roommates arrive before purchasing major items.
When you are tired of cooking, there are a few places open in the campus plaza area for all three meals. And of course, Lismore has restaurants! But the most cost-effective way to eat will be to go to a grocery store in town and cook in your flat.

**Internet Access**
A data fee is included in your housing fees so you will have access to the internet. It may be slower at times so do expect that. Campus will have computers that you can also use.

**COMMUNICATION**
*Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on computer app-based phone services (SKYPE, What's App, Facetime, etc) is in the Contacts & Communication section of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

**Time Difference**
Lismore is 15-16 hours ahead of Eau Claire, depending on daylight savings. For example, when it is 10:00 a.m. on Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 1:00 a.m. on Friday in Lismore. Note: the time difference changes at daylight savings time. When the U.S. goes forward one hour, Australia goes back.
To see the current time in Australia visit: (find appropriate list); https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/australia/lismore

**Email/Internet Access**
After you are accepted by SCU, they will give you information on how to log-in and set up your SCU email account. It is your responsibility to check that account as they will send further communication to you on that email account. Many students set their SCU account to forward to their UWEC account, but that is at your discretion.

At SCU, they have a number of networked PCs for student use. E-mail access is available from locations around campus. The computer lab has wireless connection if you would like to bring a laptop, although past students note that it cuts out frequently. There is also a computer lab in Orion.

**Cell Phone Information**
There are no landlines offered in the student village, so it is recommended that you get a cell phone or bring one with you. If you bring a phone from the U.S., be sure to have it unlocked by your U.S. carrier and then you can buy an Australian SIM card to put into your phone so that you can make calls and texts in Australia. You will have to do this in order for your phone to work in Australia. Without a SIM card from Australia, your data will not work and you will not be able to use any of the features on your phone that require data. This means that any free international messaging apps that you could download to use on your phone will not work without the Australian SIM card. With the SIM card, you will have to purchase a phone plan or use a pay-as-you-go plan to pay for data, calling and texting.

You can also buy an Australian or international phone once you get there. You can also purchase a phone plan or just use a pay-as-you-go plan. These are usually for sale during orientation week on campus, if you decide to buy a phone or SIM card.

A SIM card costs between $15 and $30 depending on the company you purchase it from. If you decide to buy a pre-paid smartphone it could cost between $100 and $200. A simpler pre-paid phone would be more like $50. To purchase a plan for either your SIM card or your new phone would cost between $50 and $90. A popular phone company in Australia is Telstra. You can look at their website for more information, or you can look up other phone companies.
Incoming calls for most carriers are free, but your family/friends pay the more expensive rates to Australia. And outgoing calls on cell phones are quite expensive.

**Calling from the U.S.**
To call someone in Australia, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you dial 61, the country code for Australia, and the rest of the number. (The area code for New South Wales is 02. If you are in Australia you will dial 02, if you are outside of Australia you will dial 2.)

**Courteous Communication**
If Skyping/Facetiming/using other communication apps in your room, use headphones, close the door to your room, speak softly, and be mindful of the time.

**Snail Mail**
You will have a mailbox in the SCU international office. Your address will be:

YOUR NAME  
c/o International Office  
Southern Cross U-Lismore Campus  
PO Box 157  
Lismore NSW 2480  
Australia

International airmail takes 10-14 days to cross the Pacific in either direction. Anything sent to/from you will go through customs so don’t send valuables or illegal items.

**TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD**
See additional information in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.](#)

**Organized Travel**
During orientation at SCU, you’ll learn about optional travel organized through the SCU International Office. In past years, three trips were offered: Fraser Island, Central Australia (Uluru and Alice Springs), and diving or surfing lessons. You’ll learn about costs and dates for these optional trips upon arrival in Lismore*. Note that the trips run by the international office have limited spaces & fill up quickly, so sign up early if you want to participate. These trips are NOT included in your program fees so you will pay them directly to SCU.

Student organizations at SCU often do weekend trips. And, if you take Outdoor Education, two optional field trips are offered. (It is highly recommended that you go on the trips if you take Outdoor Education.)

*Note that some study abroad students from other institutions pay for these trips in their study abroad fees. UW-Eau Claire stopped including the trips several years ago, as students indicated that they preferred to make their own decisions about whether or not to participate. The cost charged by SCU is the same either way.

**Planning Your Own Travel**
Right on the SCU campus at Campus Central, there is a travel agent to help you plan independent trips. The services are free and can be a huge help in finding the least expensive options and to find activities fit for you and your personality/comforts, etc. Past students recommend them highly.

**Air & Bus Travel**
**Planes:** Australia is a big country. If time is an issue, you will probably want to investigate flying for some of your travel

The closest airport to Lismore is Ballina. Both Virgin Blue and Jet Star (two discount airlines that
will take you all over Australia) are located there. The Gold Coast airport is a domestic and international airport so you can fly anywhere. The Gold Coast airport is about 1.25 hours from Lismore. The airport in Brisbane is also both international and domestic, so you can fly anywhere in Australia via Brisbane, which is only about a three-hour drive from Lismore (four hours by bus). There is also Qantas, which is another very popular airline in Australia. Flying is very convenient, but keep in mind that it is more expensive than taking a bus. It is your decision about how you will get around while traveling based on your budget, time, and personal preferences.

Restrictions on luggage is also different in Australia. Be sure to check the airline’s website to see how many bags you can carry on and what the weight limits are. Past students have had many issues when they arrive at the airport and learn that their bag is too heavy or too big (when it wasn’t in the U.S.).

**Buses:** There are a number of bus lines that will take you around in Australia. Kirkland’s buses are all around Lismore and up some of the east coast. Another company is McCafferty’s, which goes up to the way northern parts of the east coast up to Cairns. When you get to Lismore, you will get the contact numbers and addresses of these bus companies, and the on-campus travel agent can even set you up by booking your buses in advance. Keep in mind that bus services are much less expensive than flying.

There is a huge transport station in Brisbane where many of your buses will meet up and leave from, as well as flights, etc. You will usually take a Kirkland’s bus to Brisbane, and then get on another bus or plane from there.

Coach (long distance bus) companies, the Oz Experience, Greyhound and Kiwi Experience, run between major cities in Australia and New Zealand and stop at hostels ("backpacker accommodations"). Some coaches allow you to buy a ticket and hop-on/hop-off in various places along the route. The hostels also have lists of current events in the area you're visiting.

### Personal Travel Costs

These costs vary greatly! It depends on your budget and your priorities. Students who want to be involved in their host community generally spend less time (and money) traveling. Others who travel every weekend have with correspondingly higher costs and fewer close connections in their new home.

Past participants who responded to our money survey spent between $1,000 and $7,000 on personal travel. To give you an idea of what you can do:

- **$1,000:** "I spent six long weekends in various places in Australia, staying in hostels. I usually took the bus; once I flew."

- **$3,000:** "I went to New Zealand, Cairns, Whitsunday Islands, Surfers Paradise and Sydney. I flew the longer distances, otherwise took bus or train, and stayed in hostels."

- **$7,000:** "I traveled most weekends and both breaks. I went lots of places in Australia (Brisbane, Byron Bay [lots of times], Cairns, Surfers Paradise, Sydney, Whitsunday Islands. I also went to New Zealand and Thailand (after the semester ended). I went by air, bus or train, depending on the distance, and stayed in hostels."
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<th>CONTACT INFORMATION</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Cross</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emily Wolter</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim Manager, Study Abroad &amp; Exchange Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Emily.wolter@scu.edu.au">Emily.wolter@scu.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>James Harvey &amp; Kim Sainsbury</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:studyabroad@scu.edu.au">studyabroad@scu.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Cross University- Lismore Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO Box 157</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lismore NSW 2480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 011-61-266-20-3425</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax: 011-61-266-20-3227</td>
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| **U.S. Consulate in Australia** |
| Consulate General, United States |
| Level 10, MLC Centre |
| 19-29 Martin Place |
| Sydney, NSW 2000 |
| Phone: 61-2-9373-9200 |
| Fax: 61-2-9373-9184 |
| Web: https://au.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/syd |

| **UW-Eau Claire** |
| **Jenna Krosch** |
| Study Abroad Coordinator |
| Email: kroschjm@uwec.edu |
| 3 Schofield Hall |
| University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire |
| Eau Claire, WI 54702 |
| Phone: (715) 836-4411 |
| Fax: (715) 836-4948 |
| **After Hours Emergency** |
| (715)577-9045 |

Remember that in most cases, local contacts are best in local emergency situations.

If you have an after-hours emergency that can be helped on the U.S. side, please call University Police at the number above. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day.

You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require.
### Web Information: Lismore

#### City

#### Culture

#### Country
- **Bus Tour:** [http://www.ozexperience.com/](http://www.ozexperience.com/)
When past participants of the Lismore program were asked to sum up their experience, here is what they said:

I wish I knew how cold it gets towards the end (spring semester), it’s not Wisconsin cold but not as hot as I thought it would be.

Bring more socks. You will be living with 5 other people. It gets really hot when you first arrive but cools down. So, bring shorts but also a jacket. Aussie humor is terrible and you will have to get used to it.

Expect the unexpected. But most importantly, be open to what can happen. Keep a strong mind and have fun!

I wish I knew how much free time I actually would have because sometimes I feel like I am wasting time sitting around and not doing anything.

Harder grading.

The time difference had made it much more difficult to stay in touch with family than I expected. I also had to adjust to having a class once a week. It is difficult to stay focused when you only have classes three days a week.

The language slang – different but fun once you know it.

Not having an income for 4 months is difficult, I find myself stressing about money often.

I’ve had to adjust to using public transportation much more in Australia.

Travel in groups – it makes it easier booking hostels but also provides comfort knowing you’re with others you trust.

It was a great mix of culture, adventure and academics! I think most people would be able to adjust quite easily to Lismore and the rest of Australia.

It was an amazing experience, great way to meet really welcoming and fun people, experience a different culture and travel the world!

Traveling around Australia was amazing but honestly just spending time with people of all diverse cultures was by far the best part, whether they were from Canada, Sweden, England, or local Aussies.

Living in Australia has been one of the best experiences of my life. Learning in a new environment, making international friends, and exploring the country has been amazing.