

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study Abroad



LISMORE, AUSTRALIA
FALL 2019

Program Guide

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CONGRATULATIONS on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire study abroad program with Southern Cross University in Lismore, Australia. Living and studying in a foreign 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

This program guide is to be used together with the general Study Abroad Handbook. The handbook has information that is valid for all study abroad programs. This guide will provide you with specific information for the Lismore study abroad program. It is designed to complement the handbook, study abroad orientation, and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that although this guide contains all of the information available at the time of publishing, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will e-mail additional information throughout the semester. Please contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff, your peer advisor, and past program participants with your specific questions. You should also make use of the additional written and web resources listed towards the end of this guide.

Basic questions only you can answer include:

- 1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common objectives of student travelers include advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.
- 2) Given the way the program is set up; how can you best prepare to meet your goals? 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 ensure that you do not spend too much time with other U.S. Americans?

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Program

UW-Eau Claire and Southern Cross University (SCU) first began exchanging students in 1995, making this one of our longer standing partnerships. In this program, UW-Eau Claire participants become students at (SCU) in Lismore, Australia. UW-Eau Claire students enroll directly in classes with Australian students, are taught by SCU instructors, and live in university housing. Lismore also has a unique relationship with Eau Claire as they are sister cities.

The University

Southern Cross University has four campuses. UW-Eau Claire students study at the main campus in Lismore. The Lismore campus enrolls 6,000 students in a variety of faculties (schools), including Arts, Business, Education, Health Sciences, Law, and Environmental Sciences. Two groups, UniLife and the Lismore & External Student Association (LEXSA), take care of the social, cultural, and sporting activities of university life.

The Location

Lismore, a city of 30,000, is on the east coast of Australia in northern New South Wales. It is 785 kilometers north of Sydney and 225 kilometers south of Brisbane, and has air, bus, and train links to both cities. Located on the Wilson River, Lismore is the commercial, sporting, and cultural capital of the North Coast. It is set in an area of unsurpassed natural beauty, taking advantage of both the rainforest and the sea. The beach is 30 minutes away by car, and 45-60 minutes by bus.

Program Calendar

Being in the Southern Hemisphere, SCU runs on an opposite academic calendar from U.S. institutions. In addition, it runs on a trimester system. UW-Eau Claire students can study at SCU for Session One (our spring) or Session two (our fall, although it begins during our summer).

SESSION TWO (fall) 2019 Students:

Depart U.S.	June 26
Arrive in Lismore	June 28
Mandatory Orientation	July 1-5
Classes Begin	July 8
Study Break 1	August 19-23
Classes End	October 2
Exam Period	October 8-18
Move out of housing	November 10

Do not book airfare until you have been officially accepted by Southern Cross.

Depending on your exam schedule, you may be done before move out date. However, you won't know this until after you arrive at Southern Cross; exam schedules are generally posted six weeks before the end of the semester. **You cannot change the time of your final exams, and you will not be allowed to take exams early.** Therefore, if you want to give yourself the option of leaving earlier if your exams are done earlier, **be sure to get a plane ticket with a low change fee.** Even if you end finals early, your housing contract goes longer, so you are welcome to stay until the end of your housing contract.

ACADEMICS

There is additional information on maintaining program eligibility, as well as topics such as registration, class attendance, credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-

Eau Claire library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Pre-departure Academic Planning

Please note that "enrolling" and "registering" for a course are two separate steps in the Australian system. **Enrolling** basically ensures you meet the pre-requisites. **Registering** means you select which time table you want and solidify your seat in the course. Information on registering will be sent to you directly from SCU and usually does not occur until closer to your departure.

SCU will email you instructions on how to enroll usually in later October for spring students and later April for fall students.

If you have asked to enroll in a course with pre-requisites, you may be required to provide additional information before the course is approved. **Watch for, and respond quickly to, requests from SCU for additional information!**

Course Equivalencies

To plan for your semester at SCU, you need to discuss the units you wish to take with your academic advisor.

You will find information on how to choose courses & determine how they will transfer back to UW-Eau Claire in the "Learning Content" area of your BlugoldsAbroad account.

Please keep in mind that the transfer credit wizard is a historical record of past course equivalencies. There is no guarantee that the same courses will be offered in the future, or that they will be offered during the term in which you are abroad.

The SCU units on the transfer wizard have been approved by UW-Eau Claire department chairs. Equivalencies may change if the course number and/or title change at either institution.

If a unit is not listed on the transfer wizard site, **the unit has not been evaluated but will be evaluated when you are registered for it.**

Please note that if an equivalency has not been established, you cannot assume that a unit you are taking will transfer back in the way you want it to just because the course description sounds similar to a course taught at UW-Eau Claire. All course equivalency decisions are made by UW-Eau Claire department chairs.

If a unit is on the transfer wizard but is not on the list generated by the SCU course database, it means the **unit is no longer available or is not available during the term you will be abroad.**

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 and counts towards physical activity credit as well.

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.

Registration in Lismore

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. **Enrolling** ensures that you have met pre-requisites. **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. 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. Registration is similar to registration at UW- Eau Claire, it's all done online. You go to a computer lab where there will be students or workers able to help you out if you have any problems registering.

In case of scheduling conflicts, have a few back-up class options in mind. Be sure to bring the list of courses you discussed with your UW- Eau Claire academic advisor, as well as your degree audit, to aid in determining your schedule.

As soon as you are registered for classes at SCU, **log in to your BugoldsAbroad account and complete the Course Descriptions questionnaire.** You will find it at <https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu> Choose LOGIN from the top toolbar and login with your UW-Eau Claire username and password. You will need the:

- course title
- course number
- description (just cut-and-paste from the on-line catalog)
- number of credits

For each of the classes you are taking IF no equivalency has previously been established.

Once all UW-Eau Claire students at SCU have submitted the questionnaire, the information will be forwarded to the Admission's Office.

Please note: The process of determining an equivalency can take four to six weeks or more. In other words, you will not be able to ask to have equivalencies established for three or four courses so that you can choose which one you wish to take.

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 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.

Credits and Course Load

At Southern Cross, most SCU "units," or courses, are worth 12 SCU credit points and are the equivalent of a 4-credit UW-Eau Claire course. Meaning you will take three units in the semester. Note that some SCU units are considered "double units," meaning that they

are 24 credit points and will transfer back to UW-Eau Claire as an 8-credit class.

Please note that three units are included in the program cost; a fourth unit will have additional charges to be paid at SCU. UW-Eau Claire students who take five courses (20 credits) will have to pay additional costs **both** at SCU and at home, since you cannot take more than 18 UWEC credits in a semester without paying for an overload.

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

Dropping/Adding Courses

Students will have about two weeks after orientation week in Lismore to drop/add. Changes after that point are with permission only; a change fee will be assessed.

Grades

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."

Southern Cross	UW-Eau Claire
High distinction	A
Distinction	A
Credit	B+
Pass	C+
Fail	F

Transcripts & Credit Transfer

If you are attending Session Two (our fall semester), you will be able to see your SCU grades online from SCU long before they will be posted at UW-Eau Claire. SCU Session Two transcripts typically arrive in Eau Claire in late December and will be posted to your UW-Eau Claire transcript in January. For Session One (our spring semester), grades typically arrive in early August. If you have any outstanding fees at SCU, we will not receive your transcript until those are paid off.

If you are a senior and are studying abroad for your last UW-Eau Claire semester, please note that the different timelines in grade reporting will require you to delay your graduation. Seniors planning a December graduation after studying at SCU June-October do not generally have a problem unless there are unusual issues with their transcript at SCU (for example, a hold due to fees not paid, etc.)

Australian Academic Vocabulary

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

Academics in Lismore

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.

Teaching Outline: 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.

Graded Work: 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.

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.

Final 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.

Late Work: 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.

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.

Tutoring: During orientation at SCU, you will meet with someone from the **Learning Assistance Center** on campus. Like our Academic Skills Center advisers, this person is available to give you guidance on completing assignments/writing papers within the Australian system.

Tall Poppy Syndrome

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.

Service-Learning

The Lismore Volunteer Centre will come to campus during "O" week and will let you know about different volunteer opportunities in Lismore. You do need to file the appropriate paperwork at UW-Eau Claire if you want the work you do to count for your service-learning requirement. There is more information on completing your service-learning abroad in the Study Abroad Handbook.

SCU offers a unit called **COM30001: Community Engagement Project** (comes back as ELEC 980 Upper Division Elective, R3) (usually in session I). If you would like this course to count towards your service learning, you will want to make sure you work with the UWEC Service Learning office so that you do everything that is needed.

MONEY MATTERS

Information about how payments are made, when they are due, the UW-Eau Claire withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Cost Estimate

You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE Lismore webpage](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. Remember that the cost estimate includes what you pay to UW-Eau Claire, what you pay to SCU, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

Currency Exchange

The currency of Australia is the Australian dollar (AUD). The exchange rate as of January 2019 was 1 USD = 1.38823 AUD. You can find current exchange rates at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>. All costs are estimated and may change due to exchange rate fluctuations.

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 or train; 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."

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.

MONEY ABROAD

In addition to the information about bringing money abroad in the Study Abroad Handbook, past participants report the following about Australia.

Bank Account

You aren't required to open a bank account in Australia. If you bring traveler's checks or a foreign bank draft **in Australian dollars**, you

can then deposit them into an account at a local bank. If you bring traveler's checks, you will have immediate access to your funds. A bank draft can take several weeks to clear. One to two weeks after opening an account, you will receive an Australian ATM card.

Another 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.

ATMs

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.

Credit/Debit Cards

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 your card doesn't have a chip, you can call your credit card or bank and ask to be given a chip card. All credit/debit cards in the U.S. will eventually have a chip, so it's okay to ask for one earlier.

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.

Make sure you record your check numbers and keep the numbers separate from the checks, in case you need to get them replaced.

HEALTH & SAFETY

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

On-Campus Medical & 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.

On-Campus Security

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.

Overseas Student Health Cover

In addition to CISI insurance, students going to Australia on student visas have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). 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.)

Emergency Contacts

General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook and SCU staff are available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at orientation; be sure to keep it in your wallet always. 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](#). Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

Safety 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.

When swimming on the beach, be sure to mind the flags and only swim in areas that are marked as safe. 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.

Note that marijuana is illegal in Australia.

People may be more open about it, (especially in Nimbin, a village not far from Lismore), but it is still illegal. Any student found to be in possession of marijuana will be dismissed from the program immediately and need to cover any costs of returning. Safety in and around Lismore will be discussed during orientation in Australia.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Passport information is included in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Visa

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. The CIE will post basic information about the current visa options for U.S. citizens for study in Australia to the Learning Content section of your BlugoldsAbroad account during the semester prior to departure. **However, it is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for Australia, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from an Australian embassy in a timely manner.** Please read the "Visa" section of your Study Abroad Handbook for more information about what you should do to keep up-to-date on visa requirements.

All U.S. citizens studying in Australia are required to have a student visa before traveling to Australia.

PACKING TIPS

In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about Australia.

Clothing/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.

In the words of a past student, "I arrived in July, which was the smack dab middle of winter, and remember those first two months wishing I would have brought more warm clothes. It was

in the 50s and 60s. This may not seem cold compared to what we are used to, but it can get chilly with rain and wind."

Students in Australia dress casually, jeans, casual pants, shorts, casual dresses, casual shirts, or t-shirts. 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.

Drought

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.

What to Pack

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.

Appliances

The standard electric current in Australia is 240 volts. U.S. appliances such as hair dryers and razors run on 110 volts. If you plan to bring these appliances, you will need to buy **both a converter and a plug adapter**. Past participants suggest buying converters and adapters in the United States since they are very difficult to find in Australia. You may also choose to buy the appliances in Australia.

GETTING TO AUSTRALIA

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to SCU. **You will want to make sure you arrive in Brisbane on the designated pick-up day and before 11am.** SCU will confirm the arrival date once you are officially accepted by them. There is also information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the online Study Abroad Handbook.

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.

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).

Getting to Southern Cross

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.

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).

HOUSING

Housing Arrangements

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 flat mates. Recently, there has been a change and there isn't a housing application. Instead, the SCU international office send 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 BugoldsAbroad 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. It provides single rooms, arranged in six-bedroom units (flats). **Heads up: all student housing in Orion College is co-ed.** Everyone has their own bedroom, but the rest of the apartment (kitchen, living room, and bathroom) is shared. If you would like to request an all-female or male apartment, you can list that on your housing application, but it isn't guaranteed.

What's Provided for Your Room

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/>

Living in a Sub-Tropical Region

Note that 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. Again, bringing a sleeping bag to use as a comforter and for Outdoor Education trips, or buying a comforter there, may be necessary.

Departure from Housing

Students generally need to leave university housing about a week after final exams have ended. It may be possible to make arrangements with the Head of Residential Services to stay on for a short time, or to store luggage if you plan to travel. You will need to ask about this after you arrive on campus.

FOOD

Self-Catering

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.

Other Places to Eat

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.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Student Life

"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.

Clubs and Organizations

There is a "clubs and societies day" in week two of every semester where you can learn more about the various clubs/organizations 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/>

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/> 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.

AIME Mentoring

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.

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>

SCU Gym and 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/>).

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

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire e-mail address is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Time Difference

Lismore is 16 hours ahead of Eau Claire. For example, when it is 10:00 a.m. on Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 2:00 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.

Telephone Information

From the U.S. to Australia: 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.)

Calling cards are not normally used any more but Skype, FaceTime and WhatsApp are great ways of keeping in touch with people back home. Read the [Computer Access/Email](#) section below to learn more about your internet access.

Cell Phones

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.

If you decide to NOT get an Australian SIM card but still want to use your smartphone, you can put it into "airplane mode" which turns off the data and roaming features. If you then turn on your Wi-Fi, anytime you have Wi-Fi access, you will be able to use any applications that only require Wi-Fi. Just be careful to keep your phone in airplane mode because if you turn that off, then your phone can accept and make text messages and phone calls and then that

will skyrocket your phone bill. Again, always check with your U.S. carrier to make sure your phone is capable of this. Any data or roaming fees are ultimately your responsibility.

Here is a recommendation from one past participant:

"Make sure if you bring your iPhone (or other smartphone) that it is unlocked BEFORE you get to Australia. Also make sure an Australian SIM card will fit into your phone. Your U.S. service provider should be able to tell you if it will work or not."

"Having a phone is great way to get a hold of Australian friends while you're there, to have for safety, and to be able to use to call back home. When you arrive at SCU there will most likely be people from Global Gossip there your first or second day you arrive. You can purchase a phone for about \$50 and then add minutes online as you go. There is also a Vodafone in the square, if you decide you want to get a phone plan later. The rates weren't too bad to call back home (they were about the same as just calling people in Australia) and it was nice and convenient."

"Since the Global Gossip phones have a SIM card, if you have a smart phone that uses a SIM card, you are able to use that smart phone in Australia and just replace your SIM with the Global Gossip SIM card. I did this when I went down there so that I didn't have to buy a new phone. However, if you do this, make sure to check with your phone company ahead of time because you will have to get it "unlocked" to use it internationally (and there could also be a fee to have it unlocked)."

Computer Access/E-mail

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.

Please note that computer access is LIMITED. Southern Cross has a download limit of 120 mb every four weeks. You can run through that in a day, a week or four weeks, but whenever you do, you will have extremely slow service until the beginning of the next four-week period, so budget your use wisely. Past students observe that e-mail does not use a lot of your space, but networking sites such as Facebook do.

A past participant comment:

"If you use SKYPE, one downside is that the internet isn't the best and most reliable in Lismore, so the video didn't always work. Also, it usually works best late at night or early in the morning when not as many people were trying to use the internet at the same time."

Snail-mail

You will have a mailbox in the SCU International Office. International airmail takes 10-14 days to cross the Pacific in either direction.

Packages can take longer to ship and you can expect them to be opened and inspected by customs.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD

See additional travel information in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Getting Around in Lismore

Buses are normally about AUD\$2/ride (AUD\$4 round-trip) in town and more to get to the coast.

Organized Travel

During orientation at SCU, you'll learn about optional travel organized through the SCU International Office. In 2018, 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 go in 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.

Travel Discounts

If you decide to purchase an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), you can receive 40% discounts on train (rail) travel in Australia and 20-25% discounts on coach (long distance bus) travel. It will also give you a 20% discount on air travel, but better deals can be found with 21-day advance purchase tickets. Check with the SCU travel consultant about air discounts. ISIC cards are available through most travel agencies.

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.

Trains

There is no longer an active train station in Lismore, but a bus will pick you up at the Lismore train station and take you to Casino, a short ride away. From Casino, you can access trains around the country. Trains are another inexpensive way to travel. The trains are set up somewhat like the inside of a small plane. Past students report that the seats are comfortable, even on the 12-hour trip to Sydney. If you have the time, trains can save you money.

Planes

Australia is a big country. If time is an issue, you will probably want to investigate flying for some of your travel. Past students suggest that you ask your U.S. travel agent about "walkabout passes" from Qantas Airlines, which allow you to fly to several cities as long as you return to the original city at the end. Prices are reasonable, but the passes can only be purchased outside Australia. Check with your travel agent in the U.S. for more information.

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 or train. 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.).

CULTURAL NOTES

A Brief History of Australia

The first inhabitants of Australia were the Aborigines. At the time of European settlement, there were 500,000 to 1 million Aborigines living in Australia. Today, there are about 350,000.

In 1770, Captain James Cook of Great Britain claimed possession of the land and called it New South Wales. In 1788, a British penal colony was set up in what is now Sydney. Between 1788 and 1839, about 160,000 English convicts were settled there. The convicts, along with free settlers, formed six colonies: New South Wales (1786), Tasmania (1825), Western Australia (1829), South Australia (1834), Victoria (1851), and Queensland (1859). The colonies then became states and in 1901, they federated in the Commonwealth of Australia with a constitution. Australia became known for its liberal legislation. The capital of Australia is Canberra.

<http://www.infoplease.com/country/australia.html>

Australian Government

The Prime Minister is Scott Morrison, appointed in 2018. The position of prime minister is the most powerful position in the Australian government, similar to our president. However, the prime minister is not elected but appointed by the governor-general.

Like the United States, Australia is a federation and the power is divided between a central government and the state governments.

<http://www.infoplease.com/country/australia.html>

Australian Population

The estimated 2017 population for Australia is about 24.6 million people.

The estimated ethnic make-up of Australia is 92% Caucasian, 7% Asian, and 1% Aboriginal and other. English is Australia's most popular language, followed by Chinese. There are also various Aboriginal languages in Australia.

<http://www.infoplease.com/country/australia.html>

Australian Cultural Basics

Australians are generally informal and greetings are generally casual. A smile and sometimes a handshake are all that is necessary. Because Australians value modesty and "being yourself," it is not necessary to use Australian vocabulary when meeting an Australian. Although an Australian may greet you with, "G' day!" it is perfectly okay for a visitor to the country to say, "Hi," or, "Hello!"

Australians may be very laid back and relaxed, but they place a high value on being timely and responsible. If you have a meeting or something set up with someone, be sure to be on time!

Eye contact during conversation is preferred by most Australians. There is not a big sense of a “personal bubble” or personal space with Australians; it is generally similar to the United States and can vary by individual.

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/australia.html>

CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES

GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK.

Southern Cross University

Emily Wolter
Interim Manager, Study Abroad & Exchange
Programs
Email: Emily.wolter@scu.edu.au

James Harvey & Kim Sainsbury
Student Support Officers
Email: studyabroad@scu.edu.au

Southern Cross University-Lismore Campus
PO Box 157
Lismore NSW 2480
Australia
Phone: 011-61-266-20-3425
Fax: 011-61-266-20-3227

Your Address in Lismore

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

UW-Eau Claire

Center for International Education

Jenna Krosch
Study Abroad Coordinator
E-mail: kroschjm@uwec.edu

3 Schofield Hall
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702
Phone: (715) 836-4411
Fax: (715) 836-4948

US Consulate General 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>

Other Resources

The U.S. Department of State offers useful travel information on the "Travel and Living Abroad" section of their web site - <http://www.state.gov/travel/>. Check the "Highlights" section.

We suggest you leave a copy of this page with your emergency contact and/or parents.

WEB RESOURCES: LISMORE

City
Weather/Time: http://www.weatherzone.com.au/
General Information: http://www.visitlismore.com.au/
What to do in Lismore: http://www.lonelyplanet.com/australia/new-south-wales/lismore
New South Wales: http://www.thingstodo.com/au/nsw/
Culture
Australian Culture: http://www.australia.com/en-us/things-to-do/art-music-culture.html
Australian Etiquette: http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/guides/guide-to-australia-etiquette-customs-culture-business/
Country
CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/as.html
Bus Tour: http://www.ozexperience.com/
Australian Government: http://www.australia.gov.au

PAST PARTICIPANT TIPS

WHAT THEY WISH THEY HAD KNOWN:

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.

THEY'RE SAFETY TIPS:

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

HOW THEY SUMMED IT UP:

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.



Revised January 2019
JMK