



Guide to Universities in Australia





Australian Universities: In a Nutshell

- ◇ Strong global ranking
- ◇ Friendly to international students
- ◇ A combination of depth and breadth
- ◇ Most livable cities in the world
- ◇ Lower cost than university education in the USA

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Setting the Scene

There are 43 universities in Australia, a much smaller number compared to the UK or USA (which has over 4,000!). However, Australia offers more options than other regional alternatives (such as Hong Kong and Singapore). It's a popular destination for international students from all over the world for a number of reasons:

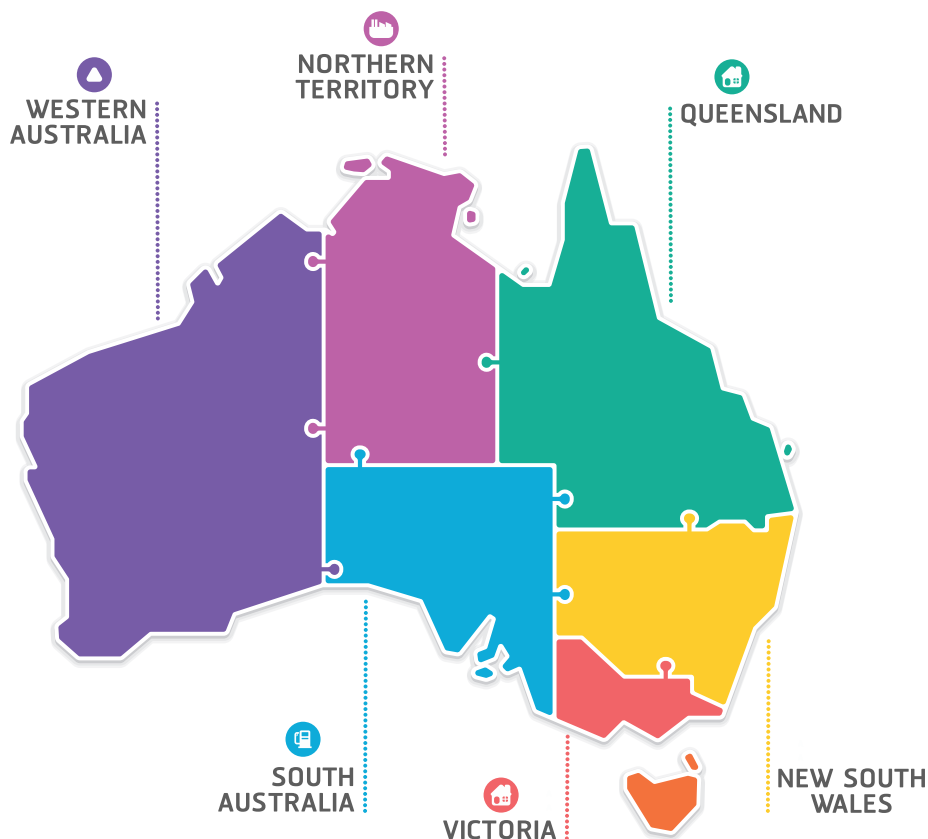
- It offers world-class education at a fraction of the cost of the US.
- It provides more flexibility in specialization compared to the UK.
- It has a diverse population and the potential to stay and work after studying.

Here are a few things for you to bear in mind as we go through the guide to applying to university in Australia:

1. As a country, Australia is huge, but the universities are clustered mainly on the coastal cities, with a couple of notable exceptions. Australia's coastal cities are very far from one another. This means that just because your friend is going to Australia doesn't mean you're likely to see them! Even Melbourne and Sydney, which look comparatively close on a map, are a flight away from each other.
2. The cities that several universities are in (e.g. Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide) are widely considered to be some of the most pleasant 'livable' cities in the world.
3. Similar to Canada, Australia can be seen as a hybrid between the flexibility of the US university system, and the specificity of the UK university system.
4. Canada's university system is not centralised, so the requirements and deadlines will vary from university to university.



Getting to Know Australia



Western Australia is home to famous universities such as the University of Western Australia, among others. Most of the population is clustered around the coastal area of the south-west, where the climate is mild with hot, dry summers and mild and rainy winters.

Northern Territory despite its large area, the Northern Territory is sparsely populated. The northern part of the territory, which includes Darwin, has a tropical climate (think hot, dry summers and monsoons!). Lower down, it is desert-like.

Queensland is home to Queensland University, QUT is the third most populous state (after Victoria and New South Wales). It has tropical weather, including thunderstorms with hot summers and mild winters. Depending on the area of Queensland, it may be very humid or very dry. The state is famous for the national beauty, the Great Barrier Reef.

New South Wales boasts top ranked universities such as the University of Sydney, and the University of New South Wales. New South Wales has four distinct seasons and has a thriving surf and rugby culture.

South Australia experiences what is known as a 'Mediterranean' climate (dry, hot summers; mild, wet winters). It is home to world renowned universities such as the University of Adelaide, and University of South Australia.

Victoria enjoys warm summers, mild springs and autumns and crisp winters. It is home to Australian Rules Football and one of the world's most livable cities: Melbourne, which has a thriving arts and restaurant scene.

Why Study in Australia?



Quality & International Recognition

Australia is gaining a strong reputation in academic excellence. At the time of writing, 5 Universities in Australia (over 10% of the total number!) are recognised in the world's top 50 by QS, and 9 in the top 200.

Research and Innovation

Australia is in the top 10 countries for government spending on research and development (0.71% of GDP), and publishes around 250,000 scientific papers in a decade. This puts it at the forefront of new technology and innovations.

Not so Test and Transcript-Heavy!

The Australian admissions system, similar to the UK and Canada can be good for 'late bloomers' compared to the US. If your test scores weren't so hot in grade 9 and 10, but they've been getting stronger and stronger in recent years, you can still get into a top university in Australia because more recent grades are typically given more weighting compared to the US admissions process. Australian universities do not require SAT or ACT, so if your skills aren't best shown through those tests, Australia could be a great option for you.

Work While You Study

When you study in Australia, you get a student visa - this allows you to work up to 20 hours a week, which means you can help to fund your study and potentially get work experience in areas you are interested in. This can be particularly helpful since Australia's minimum wage is over US\$13 (AU\$18).

Natural Beauty

Australia's nature is dramatic and varied. From lush coral reefs and stunning wildlife (think kangaroos, koalas and crocodiles!), to deserts, the bush and the outback, seaside tropical paradises and modern cities- it has so much to explore for the intrepid adventurer. It's also an excellent launch pad for exploring the natural and cultural beauties of New Zealand and Indonesia.

Lifestyle

Australia is famous for its highly 'livable' cities, as defined by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide all made the Top 10 in 2018.

With their sprawling layout, they have plenty of space, easy access to a beautiful coastline, great transport access and plenty of excellent food and a thriving coffee shop scene.

GO REMOTE!

Two of Australia's universities are remote campuses for top brands from the US and UK: Carnegie Mellon and UCL.

Admissions Requirements



Completed Application Form

Each university has its own process and form, so unfortunately you'll need to fill these out separately.

Academic Documents

If you took them, submit original certificates (GCSE or AS) for middle year exams. Predicted grades for IB/ A Level in an official letter from your school. If you are applying with your final results then you will need to provide your original exam certificates.

Language tests

To ensure your English language is at the right level to benefit from university in Australia, you may need to take a TOEFL (580-600) or IELTS (usually 6-6.5).

Personal Statement

Although these are not mandatory, they're recommended to help you stand out from the crowd by highlighting why you are a good fit for the program, and to highlight any achievements outside of the classroom.

Student Visa

You can apply for a student visa once you are accepted onto a registered course (this essentially means any provided by a recognised university).

Evidence of Financial Capability

Australian degrees are expensive for international students, with fewer financial support options compared to Canada or the US. Australian universities typically require evidence that you/ your family have the financial resources to cover return airfare, tuition costs. Loans, parent financial history, and bank accounts are considered as evidence.

Additional Requirements

- If you are applying to study medicine or dentistry, you will be required to sit an admissions test.
- For creative programs such as art or music, you may be required to submit a portfolio or perform a piece.
- You may need to provide health references and/or health insurance coverage proof.

Double-check the requirements for the universities you are applying to to avoid any surprises!





Getting to Know Popular Parts of Australia to Study

Queensland



Climate

Queensland is known for its tropical weather, including thunderstorms with hot summers and mild winters. Depending on the area of Queensland, it may be very humid or very dry.

Living in Queensland

Queensland is known for its sun, sand and sealife. In fact, 5 of the 8 universities are based on the coastal strip from the Sunshine Coast (University of the Sunshine Coast), through to the Brisbane universities, and further down to the Gold Coast (Bond University and Griffith University). Queensland is known for its vibrant urban precincts, outdoor lifestyle, friendly locals, superb climate and natural beauty, particularly the Great Barrier Reef.

Profiles of Top Universities in New South Wales



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

The state capital of Queensland is Brisbane is home to the top ranked university in the state: the University of Queensland is ranked 48th in the world, and has been responsible for a number of recent research innovations, such as the cervical cancer vaccine.



US\$26-28K annual tuition fees
for international students



~29K undergraduate students
~11K international undergraduate students
~3.1K total staff

Ranked 244th in the world, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has a reputation for combining academic excellence with 'real world' relevance. Through connections with industry, students gain practical workplace experience. Alumni of QUT include NASA astrobiologist and Mars 2020 mission leader, Dr. Abigail All-



Queensland University
of Technology



US\$20-22K annual tuition fees
for international students



~30K undergraduate students
~3.2K international undergraduate students
~1.8K total staff

There are many other great universities in Queensland, including Bond University, Central Queensland University, Griffith University, James Cook, University of Southern Queensland, and Southern Cross University, to name a few.



New South Wales (& Australian Capital Territory)



Climate

New South Wales enjoys all four seasons and is known particularly for its glorious, intensely sunny summers. In fact, in the state capital, Sydney, there are only 23 days a year when the sun doesn't shine!

Living in New South Wales


The quality of life in NSW is consistently rated among the best in the world, with excellent healthcare, temperate weather and relatively low cost of living. New South Wales gives access to a wide variety of natural beauties and activities. You can go hiking in the Blue Mountains, skiing and snowboarding in Jindabyne, near the Snowy Mountains, surfing on Bondi Beach, or even Palm Beach (where 'Home and Away' is filmed), or stopping for coffees in the heart of Sydney's central business district. New South Wales has a thriving sports scene and a state-wide obsession with Rugby League (although Rugby Union and Australian Rules Football have smaller yet loyal followings!).



Profiles of Top Universities in New South Wales

Australian National University is consistently the top ranked university in Australia, located in the capital city, Canberra. ANU is part of the International Alliance of Research Universities which includes Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, Berkeley, among others.




 US\$32-34K annual tuition fees for international students



~10K undergraduate students
~2.7K international undergraduate students
~1.6K total staff



Consistently in the top 100 in the world (currently QS#45), the University of New South Wales has one of Australia's largest research communities (over 4,300). With a reputation as a world leader in photovoltaics, HIV/AIDS research and quantum computing, UNSW prides itself on its culture of innovation.


 US\$30-32K annual tuition fees for international students



~29K undergraduate students
~7K international undergraduate students
~2.9K total staff

The University of Sydney prides itself on its unique 'Sydney Undergraduate Experience' through which they provide a large amount of flexibility to students to design their own university program, including opportunities to participate in real-world projects and research. Sydney was one of the first universities in the world to admit students solely on academic merit, and to open our doors to women on the same basis as men.



 US\$30-32K annual tuition fees for international students



~28K undergraduate students
~11K international undergraduate students
~3.3K total staff

There are other great universities, such as Macquarie, University of Technology Sydney, University of Wollongong, among others!

Victoria



Climate

The state of Victoria enjoys warm bright summers, beautiful colourful springs and autumns and crisp, chilly winters. Rainier than its nearby neighbour, New South Wales, Victoria is a little more 'European' in its climate.

Living in Victoria

Known as "Australia's Sporting Capital", this State is home to the Melbourne Cup, the Australian Open and the Australian Formula One Grand Prix, as well as of course being the home of 'aussie rules football' (AFL). Victoria's capitol, Melbourne, has a vibrant arts and cafe culture and has a world-famous comedy festival each year. With a mix of nationalities and a foodie culture to the city, Melbourne offers restaurants in a huge variety of cuisines. Melbourne's hip neighborhoods and street art are connected by an iconic tram network, that takes you from the center right out to the 'bush' where you can see kangaroos and kookaburras.

Profiles of Top Universities in Victoria

Placed at #39 in the QS world rankings, the University of Melbourne is set in the heart of Melbourne (one of the world's most livable cities!). The university offers 11 undergraduate degrees in nearly 100 major fields of study for undergraduates. Notable alumni include Peter Singer, Germaine Greer and Cate Blanchett.



~US\$30K annual tuition fees
for international students



~24K undergraduate students
~9K international undergraduate students
~3.4K total staff

Monash prides itself on being highly international, as well as Australia's largest university. Campuses are located throughout Victoria and international campuses operate in Malaysia and in South Africa, with centres in the People's Republic of China, Italy and India. A center of innovation, things that we take for granted now, such as seat belts in cars, Influenza drugs and IVF treatment, would not exist without the initial work of Monash researchers.



~US\$18K annual tuition fees
for international students



~45K undergraduate students
~13K international undergraduate students
~3.5K total staff

There are many other great universities in Victoria, such as Deakin, RMIT, La Trobe University, Victoria University and Swinburne University of Technology, among others!



South Australia



Climate

While South Australia is large and has a range of climates depending on whether you're north or south, we're going to focus on Adelaide, which is where the majority of universities in South Australia are situated (as well as the majority of the population). Adelaide's climate can be described as cool to mild winters with moderate rainfall and warm to hot, dry summers.

Living in Adelaide

Adelaide, like Melbourne and Sydney, is in the top 10 of the international 'most livable cities' list. But beyond the beautiful city, its cafe culture and temperate climate, South Australia offers a huge amount of travel opportunities to see the coastline, the dramatic red Outback, world-famous vineyards and beautiful old towns and villages.



Profiles of Top Universities in South Australia

Ranking in the QS top 150, the University of Adelaide is known for its attentive teaching with plenty of contact time and access to academics. Alumni from the university include five Nobel Laureates; more than 120 Fulbright Scholars; and over 100 Rhodes Scholars.



US\$28-32K annual tuition fees
for international students



~16K undergraduate students
~5K international undergraduate students
~1.7K total staff

In the QS top 300, the University of South Australia is also ranked 25% in the QS top 50 under 50 worldwide (meaning younger universities). With strong links to industry, the university self-defines as "Australia's university of enterprise". The business school has a particularly strong reputation.



University of
South Australia



~US\$30K annual tuition fees
for international students



~14K undergraduate students
~2.5K international undergraduate students
~1.3K total staff

Western Australia



Climate

As the second largest state (about half the size of Europe!), Western Australia has a number of different climates and terrains. Western Australia's capital city, Perth, is known for its consistent blue skies and sunshine, with average maximum summer temperature of 29 degrees centigrade.

Living in Western Australia

Boasting huge amounts of space, cities like Perth and Fremantle in Western Australia are ideal for people who want to be in a city, but not to be crammed in. Western Australia, like many other states, offers a wide range of different environments to explore, from the sunny beaches along the coast, to the arid deserts and rugged red landscapes of the north, to luscious green hills east of Perth, to the world-famous wine regions of Margaret River.

Profiles of Top Universities in Western Australia

Ranking in the QS top 150, the University of Adelaide is known for its attentive teaching with plenty of contact time and access to academics. Alumni from the university include five Nobel Laureates; more than 120 Fulbright Scholars; and over 100 Rhodes Scholars.



US\$28-32K annual tuition fees for international students



~16K undergraduate students
~5K international undergraduate students
~1.7K total staff

Curtin University is a large university based in Bentley, a residential suburb of Perth (about 8 km from the city centre). Curtin is a technology university ranked in the QS top 250 world-wide.



~US\$26-28K annual tuition fees for international students



~21K undergraduate students
~3K international undergraduate students
~1.8K total staff





The Group of 8 (“Go8”)

The Group of Eight (Go8) is a coalition of high ranked, research intensive Australian universities. The Go8 universities are some of the largest and the oldest universities in Australia. All Go8 Universities rank in the top 120 worldwide at the time of writing, with 5 of them in world top 50.

Go8 Universities are a ‘league’ similar to the Ivy League or Russell Group - it doesn’t mean there aren’t great options outside of them, but within the Go8, you’re assured of a good quality education across different disciplines. This is because Go8 universities feature in the top 100 places for every subject area in the QS world university subject rankings. For example, all Go8 Universities are in the QS top 100 for literature, biological sciences, environmental sciences, accounting and finance, anthropology, law and education.



University	Location	QS World Rank
Australian National University	Canberra	#24
University of Melbourne	Melbourne, Victoria	#39
University of Sydney	Sydney, New South Wales	#42
University of New South Wales	Sydney, New South Wales	#45
University of Queensland	Brisbane, Queensland	#48
Monash University	Melbourne, Victoria	#59
University of Western Australia	Perth, Western Australia	#91
University of Adelaide	Adelaide, South Australia	#114

Finding University Fit





Different Types of Degree

Universities vs. Vocational Schools

Generally speaking, vocational schools enable students to gain qualifications such as Certificates, Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas (in line with Australia's Vocational Education and Training sector). In certain areas of study, some vocational schools also award Bachelor's degrees, but this is typically only available at universities.

In this guide, we will focus on university degrees as these are the most popular with international students.

Apply to an Area; Then Choose a Major

The Australian system of higher education is probably most similar to the Canadian one, in that it borrows from the US and the UK. You may be studying a 'Bachelor of Arts' or 'Law' or 'Science', but you will specialize within that and will have flexibility to mould it to your interests.

3 Year Bachelor's Degree Structure

An Australian bachelor degree is typically a three-year study in a general area, within which students choose a specific area to focus on. Rather like the US system, this specific area is called their 'major,' and students will be required to complete a minimum number of subjects within it in order to complete their studies.

There are also often options for students to complete a 'minor,' which can take the place of other electives students may choose. An example of a general degree would be a Bachelor of Arts (BA), in which a student could major in an arts discipline such as Psychology, and minor in another such as linguistics. Some universities offer students the option to minor or take 'breadth' subjects from other faculties. If this is important to you, you should contact institutions you're interested in and find out which courses allow such flexibility, as it will be on a course-by-course basis.

4th Year 'Honours'

As part of your bachelor's degree, you will typically have an option to do a fourth year called an 'Honours year'. You will not automatically be able to take the fourth year - acceptance into honours is based on academic merit. During the fourth year, you will be expected to submit a thesis. Honours is a qualification that is then reflected in the title of your achieved degree i.e. Bachelor of Chemistry (Honours). Thesis word length varies across faculty and institution but is generally around the 10,000-15,000 word mark.

Double Degrees

Some universities also offer double degree programs, similar to 'double majors' in the US, where students major in two fields of study at once. This will often take longer than the standard 3 years.



Academic Culture in Australia

Speaking up

Students are encouraged to speak up in lectures, ask questions and offer opinions, contrary to those of the professor. Challenging and debating actively is valued much more than simply listening or regurgitating notes.

Thinking, not just memorising

This is reflected in how students are assessed: they are evaluated on their ability to apply critical thinking, and cannot simply rely on memorising lecture notes if they are going to succeed.

Independent learning

Australian universities expect students to take initiative and are focused on independent learning. In arts and humanities subjects, attending lectures is never mandatory and even tutorials can sometimes be optional. You are expected to have the maturity to manage your own time and be in charge of your fate. In lab-based and practical subjects, this may not be the case, however.

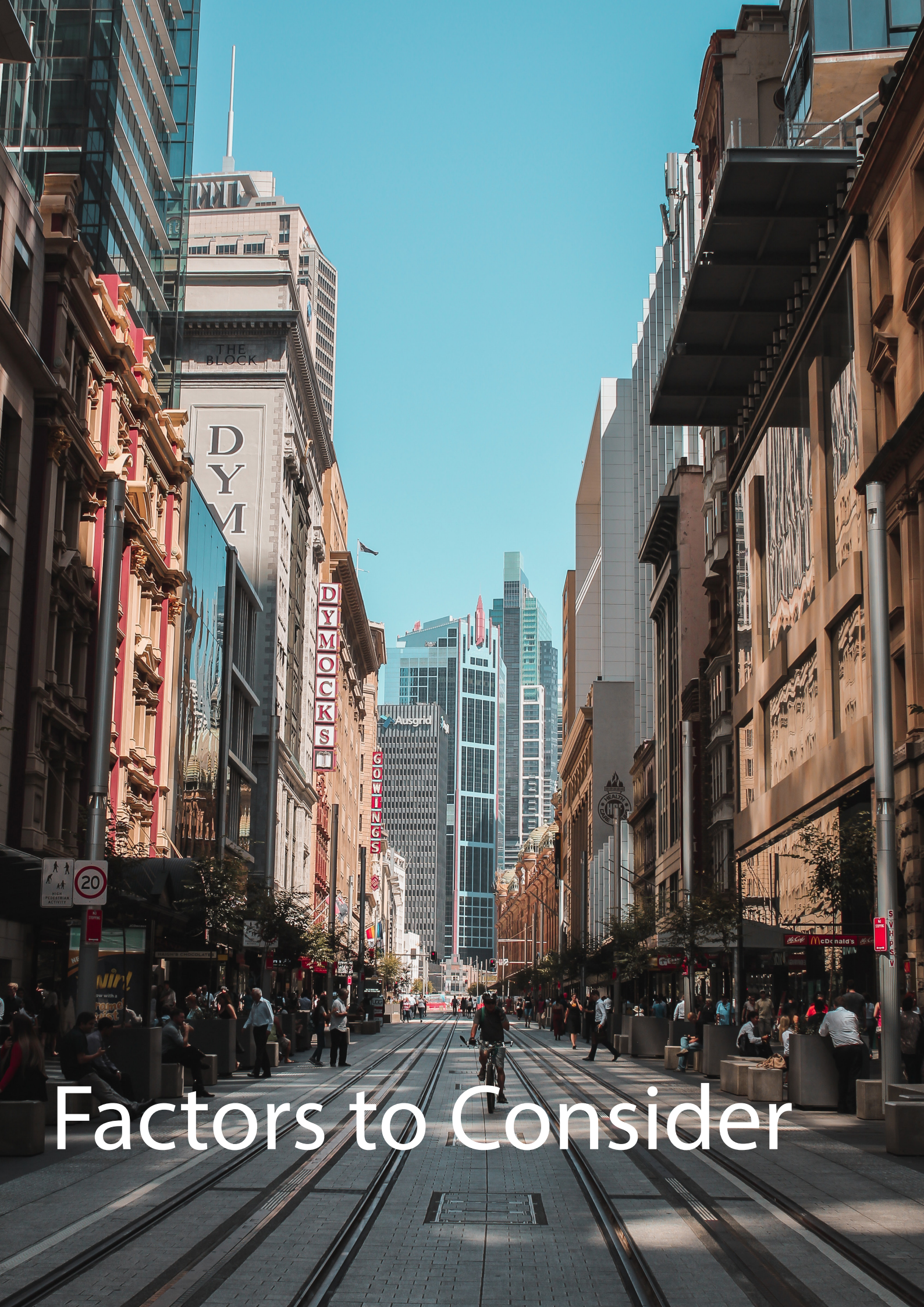
Coursework

Coursework in arts disciplines is generally research based, and assessment will usually centre on a few, long-form pieces of work as opposed to intermittent quizzes and testing. Missing deadlines by one day can attract a penalty of 10% of the grade you otherwise would have got. With each subsequent day, another 10% is removed, until you automatically fail the unit.

Plagiarism

Australian universities are stringent with penalties for plagiarism. In many cases, the student will fail the unit, but in some cases they may also be expelled from the university. Plagiarism can be accidental if you do not use referencing properly, so students are advised to take those procedures very seriously and study them carefully before submitting work.





Factors to Consider



Environment & Setting

Universities in Australia cover a wide variety of different settings which will have a huge impact on student life, your experience there and whether it's the right fit for you. Some examples of this include:

Physical Setting

The area you spend the next 3-4 years in is worth very careful consideration! Do you like nature walks, skiing, or being near the ocean? Do you love discovering big sprawling cities? If you can't visit the campuses of the universities you're considering, then think about what you enjoy and do your research.



Residential options

Many local students in Australian universities will either get a student house or remain living at home. This means that international students tend to dominate the campus housing. It means you'll meet other international students easily and be able to get to know the country (and city) together! Residential options and prices vary from university to university, so do your research before making any assumptions.

Living costs, travel costs and accessibility

The Australian government estimates the following for general budget for cost of living for students studying in Australia:

- On campus accommodation - US\$65 to US\$200 per week
- Groceries and eating out - US\$65 to US\$200 per week
- Phone and Internet - US\$15 to US\$40 per week
- Public transport - US\$10 to US\$40 per week
- Entertainment - US\$60 to US\$100 per week

Weather!

Australia is known for its fierce sun, beautiful beaches and desserts, but Australia has a huge amount of variety in terms of temperature and weather. Further south, you'll get more mediterranean or European 'four-season' climates, while further north, you're more likely to encounter dramatic storms alongside your year-round summer. Australia has blisteringly hot deserts, and snowy mountains to ski on, so think about what you want to be the most accessible as you're exploring the different states.

Your University Visit Checklist

Before You Visit / Kicking Off Your Research

- Talk to alumni from your school who have attended the university you're thinking about applying to.
- Read blogs and discussion forums to get insight into what it's like to study at the university.
- Read about the university and be fully prepared with questions when you go to visit.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE ON THE CAMPUS TOUR

- Sit in on a class to get a feel for the type of teaching and the learning environment.
- Talk to students and ask about their social and academic experience of the university. Probe areas you're interested in, such as extra-curriculars, support services or learning environment.
- Talk to academic staff members and ask them about what type of student thrive at the university - you'll get an interesting perspective from them. Try to speak to a member from the department (i.e.: engineering/ music) you are applying to.
- Walk around and 'use' the campus - go and sit on the lawn, go eat in the cafeteria and see if you can visit the dormitories. Try to imagine yourself living there!
- Go to see facilities that are important to you - it might be a laboratory, sports facility, art studio etc.
- If there is a town/ city nearby, go exploring! Make sure you can imagine yourself living not just on campus, but in the area.

VIRTUAL TOURS!

If you can't go to Australia to visit universities before you apply, don't panic! There are lots of virtual campus tours that you can access online that give you lots of information about the facilities and feel.

Example Questions to Ask Current Students

- How would you describe this university in 3 words? What makes it different from others that are in the same area/ similar on the surface?
- Why did you choose this university? Has it lived up to it?
- What do you do for fun/ on the weekends?
- What is the international student community like?
- How easy is it to travel to and from the campus?
- What is the social life like?
- What student support is there?
- What is the typical cost of living in this area?

Don't Ask about anything you can look up. Use your precious campus tour time to get information you *can't* get on the website. Examples of questions you don't need to ask during a tour are:

- Tuition fees
- Acceptance rate
- Number of students

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