

UNSW Fall 2013 Study Abroad

This semester at the University of New South Wales was a great experience, and I would highly recommend it to any student considering studying abroad. I initially chose Australia because of the great weather, beautiful beaches, and because I have a funky fascination with koalas. However, this experience was much more than I could have imagined. A few tips for students considering UNSW:

Housing

I would recommend living on campus because it is a great opportunity to get to know people studying at the University on a personal level. The dorms participate in intercollegiate sports, competitions, and socials that give you a unique opportunity to meet people. I stayed in Shalom College which is a catered Jewish dorm. Although there were lots of non-Jewish students living in Shalom, they do adhere to all kosher rules (including not having hot food all day Saturday and not being able to bring anything in or take anything out of the café). While I was not particularly fond of the food, it was convenient to not have to buy pots and cook every day. Having said that, I did enjoy celebrating Jewish holidays with the students and learning more about their traditions.

Housing is competitive, so I would apply as early as possible. One of the cheaper dorms is the International House, and I was informed by previous students that it is a great place to meet people. If you can't secure housing on campus there are lots of people who rent out rooms in their apartments or houses around the school (Similar to SF). Use gumtree.com (their version of craigslist) to look for alternative housing options.

Classes

When you are registering for classes I would recommend checking to see whether the classes are intensives (they meet all day but only for a few times a semester) or semester long courses. Personally, I would recommend the intensives because that would open your schedule up for traveling and exploring the rest of Australia and surrounding countries.

I thoroughly enjoyed all of the classes I was able to take at UNSW. I am interested in children and the law, and unfortunately Hastings doesn't offer many classes dealing with children. However, at UNSW all of the classes I took dealt with children in some capacity (Juvenile Justice, Dispute Resolution in Family Law, Indigenous Children & the Law, and Restorative Justice). From the conversations I had with other students studying abroad they also enjoyed the variety of courses offered.

One thing I didn't realize when I came to Australia was that law is offered as an undergraduate degree. For this reason, most of the courses I took were Masters level courses. This meant there weren't any in-class finals; all of the final assessments were 25-30 page papers. I enjoyed the break from in-class exams and the ability to hone my research and writing skills, but it is something to keep in mind while applying. The other added bonus of taking Masters level courses was that most people were practitioners in the field so it brought a depth of knowledge and experience to the discussions.

Financial Aid/Budgeting

One thing I cannot stress enough is budgeting for this trip! Although you pay Hastings' tuition, Financial Aid does not adjust your loans to reflect the cost of living in Sydney which is incredibly expensive. Of course being a tourist in another country is expensive as well. So plan

ahead! Additionally, depending on the semester you travel to Sydney, your funds may not be released from Hastings when you start school. For example, UNSW begins school at the end of July, but Hastings doesn't disburse our refund checks until a few days before school starts in August, so I had to front money for books and housing. However, Victor Ho (Financial Aid Officer) was a great help and resource to me so I would recommend conferring with him before you leave the country in regards to financial aid matters.

Fall 2011 - UNSW

Deciding to study abroad in Australia at the University of New South Wales was truly one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life: one that I will carry close with me in my heart forever. It has enriched my perspective of the world and of different cultures like I never would have imagined. I am adamant that anyone who has the opportunity to live abroad should do so because it is a memorable experience and a perfect way to spend a semester of law school.

The courses I was enrolled in were ones not available at Hastings. For that reason alone, I believe attending a different school for one semester is a valuable learning experience. I learned about Australia as a country: its history, its international importance for the Asia-Pacific region, its politics and about the diverse cultures that are represented there. I took a wide variety of elective courses because core legal courses were reserved for fulltime students. In my Contempt and the Media course, I discovered that Australia is the only westernized democratic country that does not have a Bill of Rights in its constitution. My Law in Indigenous Communities course traced the historical tensions between Australia's Aboriginal communities and its European colonizers and taught me about the recent reconciliation efforts made by the Australian government to right the legal wrongs done to the Aboriginal people. My Chinese Corporations and Securities and International Trade Law courses were the two that gave me a broader focus than Australian law, but were two that I enjoyed very much because of the Professors that taught them and the subject matter itself.

The way the courses were taught was different than at Hastings. Many of the Professors used power point slides and engaged the class through class activities, group work, and student presentations. I appreciated the change in teaching style because I felt the use of technology and

forced student interaction not simply through discussion but classroom activities was a more modern way of teaching not used as often by Hastings professors.

The way in which we were assessed was different as well. Rather than having final exams at the end of the semester, we were assigned research papers equivalent to writing a journal note. Though professors and lecturers were available by email if questions arose, for the most part students were left to conduct independent research on an approved topic of their choice without much guidance. I liked the fact that I was able to write about what I was interested in writing about, and it allowed me to be much more engaged in my work. At times, I felt there was not enough direction, but in the end, I take pride in having completed and received the marks that I did in what was the equivalent of writing four notes in one semester, from research to completion, on my own while also surviving in a foreign country and acclimating myself to an unfamiliar grading system.

On a personal level, being in Australia was an eye-opening experience because it enabled me to meet and become good friends with people of so many different cultures from all around the world. Much of what I have to take away from the overall experience were the experiences I gained outside of the classroom. I not only became good friends with people from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Dubai, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India, Hong Kong, England, Korea, Tasmania, and Indonesia to name a few, but also learned about their cultures, their daily lives, their religions, and made long-lasting memories exploring Australia with them when time permitted. Everyday I learned something new about their culture: whether it was how life is like for them back at home, the types of foods they eat, their religious practices, or simply their cultural traditions and holiday celebrations. Having lived only in the Bay Area, this experience allowed me to feel connected with the rest of the world and realize that the San Francisco Bay

Area is only a minute sliver of what the world has to offer. My friends, though of different backgrounds, surprised me by exemplifying to me how people can be so different, yet at the same time, so similar that they can overcome those cultural differences to become good friends.

The city of Sydney will always be there, and the material I learned in my courses was very interesting and different than subjects taught at Hastings, but in reflecting on my experience, I cannot ignore the fact that meeting my friends colored my life and it was the best part of studying abroad in Sydney. It broadened my understanding of different cultures, how smaller countries in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere are interdependent, and the importance of cultural sensitivity in the professional environment and life. Having lived only in the Bay Area, studying abroad was a truly eye-opening experience for me because it allowed me to connect with the rest of the world, and realize that the San Francisco Bay Area is only a minute sliver of what the world has to offer. Though it was only five months of my life, it was an experience like none other and one that I will never forget.

University of New South Wales

The University of New South Wales is located in Kensington only 4km south of downtown Sydney. The location is excellent if you want to go site seeing. The Opera House and the Harbour Bridge are located a train ride or a bus ride away. UNSW requires that you submit an application for exchange usually in mid-October of the previous year. It is an online application where you have to include your work history as well as which classes you want to take for semester or year you are at UNSW. UNSW exchange office will correspond through email mainly and because they have over 500 exchange students to look after with only about 6 exchange administration members, it might be difficult to reach them at times. For some that do not know, exchange is different than study abroad. For exchange you are switching students with a partnering school in another country and therefore receive perks like half price transportation costs called student concession stickers. This gives you the benefits of student pricing. However, if you are labelled an international student or study abroad student you would not get these benefits.

Arrival and orientation

UNSW requires that those who are entering at least first semester arrive one week before the school-wide orientation week nicknamed O-week. So do not buy your plane ticket until after you have knowledge of when that date will occur. I had to pay an extra change flight fee because I did not know that the mandatory orientation would occur one week prior to O-week. After arrival students should go to the Global Education and Student Exchange office at the Red Centre Building (located in mid-campus on level 2) to attend a registration session and collect a Welcome Pack. At reception you should speak to either Kate, Roberta, Amy, or Kaye and ask them where the exchange office is. They will treat you very well and answer all questions or refer you to the right resources.

Where to live

For accommodation references you should either use gumtree.com.au . It is similar to Craigslist and also you should join the facebook group for UNSW exchange students. There are students leaving Australia selling books, furniture, bikes, appliances as well as trying to find people to rent rooms. In Australia you usually pay rent each week or fortnightly (biweekly). You can get private rooms which are fairly small from 180-300+ in the Kensington area which is the suburb where UNSW is located. On that note Sydney is a huge city I want to say at least 20 miles in circumference. This means that when someone asked you within Sydney where you live they are asking you which suburb do you live in. It might also be a good idea to live in the colleges which means dorms. Colleges in Australia mean on-campus dorms not universities. At the colleges utility as well as food is covered in your weekly rent. I had some friends live at International House which they described as great fun and reasonable in pricing. I think it might be about \$250 including food for a small private room.

Health Insurance and Visa

As an exchange student, it is a visa requirement/compulsory that you have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of your visa not just the duration of your stay. For instance the duration of my Visa was through July 29, however I expected to leave before that date but had to purchase the OSHC before I received my student visa. Health insurance obtained in America is not sufficient. Speaking of Visas, it is better to obtain a one year working Visa rather than a student Visa because a student Visa will cost about \$550 while as a working Visa you are still allowed to go to school and work but only pay \$260. The working-holiday visa will also allow you to spend a year in Australia.

If you would like to know more please email me and I will give you more information.

Please enjoy your trip.

UNSW

I had a great time in Sydney, and while there were several challenges I found my study abroad experience to be rewarding.

Travel to and from Sydney involved long flights, but I found relatively cheap routes through Hawaii using Jetstar.

The visa application process was thorough and rigorous. I was required to take a full medical exam, including blood work and chest x-rays in order to be sure that I didn't bring tuberculosis into the closed ecosystem. They take their quarantine process very seriously and customs officials are not kidding around with their inspections.

The cost of living was generally quite high, although in the summer/fall of 2008 the worldwide economic chaos meant the exchange rate fluctuated rapidly from day to day. In the 5 or so months I was there the Australian dollar went from being \$1.15 U.S. to as low as \$0.50 U.S. and back again several times. These swings ended up putting a damper on some travel plans and made it hard to create an accurate budget.

For my accommodation, I stayed in University housing in Bondi Beach. In terms of cost, it was roughly on par with finding similar private accommodation but I appreciated the convenience of doing everything through the UNSW study abroad office. Bondi Beach is a fair distance from UNSW's law school, but the breathtaking beauty of the Coastal Walk and energy of the youthful neighborhood were easily worth the commute. I was assigned to live with two roommates.

Academically, the classes were top notch. My instructors were engaged, energetic, and accessible. Once I had signed up for all my classes I had an excellent learning experience. I tried to take mostly international law type classes, since I didn't want to focus on too many Australia-centric legal doctrines. This was a good idea, because it let me operate as a de facto American Ambassador in many of my classes. I think this program works best for those interested in concentrating on International Law.

Registering was slightly opaque, however. I had some difficulty navigating the prerequisites and class levels. It helps to understand that in Australia, law is an undergraduate degree like any other. What I had some trouble dealing with was the fact that they still teach graduate level classes, for people seeking a Master's or Doctorate. I ended up taking a slew of graduate courses, which involve strange schedules and intensive writing requirements. There isn't much hand-holding and the impetus is on you to stay in contact with your instructors and on top of your assignments. My understanding (gleaned from instructors and fellow students) is that the undergrad courses are less intensive and less challenging.

I did some travelling, mostly on the East Coast. Hobart, Newcastle, the Blue Mountains, and Brisbane were all great but Melbourne was far and away the coolest city I visited. I was there for a rugby championship and the streets were teeming with super-pumped fans. The energy was palpable. The city feels very European. Sydney is more cosmopolitan but suffers from the "Big-City-Genericism" that plagues all the great world capitals.

The fact that the semester starts in July and ends in November was a little off-putting and did create challenges in terms of financing the trip until financial aid kicked in when the Hastings semester started in August. It also made finding a summer job a bit of a tricky task. I was able to work as a research assistant for a professor who let me work remotely, so that was nice.

Spending a semester away from Hastings meant that I did not attend Fall OCI, which is something I knew going in and was fine with but that could be a deal-breaker for more career-minded folks than myself. It also made participation on a journal harder than it needed to be. Again, I could do some things remotely but I ended up feeling very isolated from my fellow staffers when I returned in the spring.

All in all, I am grateful for the opportunity to go a-vagabonding in the midst of my legal education. The intangible rewards of learning international law in a global context and meeting like minded students are hard to quantify but undeniable. I enjoyed my time at UNSW and I made contacts with some definite up-and-comers on the world stage. I also think I gained a new perspective on the way that America moves through the world.

Post-Travel Report
UNSW (July-October 2007)

General Information

My name is [REDACTED] and I spent the Fall Semester of 2007 at UNSW in Sydney, Australia during my 3L year.

Considerations

The seasons are inverted in the Southern Hemisphere and this presents some considerations in deciding to study at UNSW. Our Fall Semester is the Spring Semester in Australia and the semester at UNSW begins in mid-July and ends in early-November. For many people this interferes with their 2L summer work plans. I made the decision to forgo working during my 2L summer so I could participate in the exchange at UNSW. During my time in Sydney I contacted Bay Area law firms and was able to schedule interviews for mid-December when I returned to San Francisco and had a job before Christmas. I think not working your 2L summer is something to consider very carefully, but deciding to forgo summer work isn't necessarily fatal to your job search.

Travel & Visas

I used www.studentuniverse.com to purchase a student ticket to Sydney and was able to fly direct from San Francisco to Sydney and back.

It is easy to apply for a student visa to Australia using their online application at <http://www.immi.gov.au/e-visa/>. You should contact UNSW to determine the exact type of student visa you need. I think it cost around \$450. Be aware that if you apply for the visa in our Fall it will automatically expire of December 31. If you plan to stay in Australia past December 31 I recommend contacting the embassy before applying for the visa because they can arrange for a later expiration date without any additional charges. (If you have already applied on line and want an extension there will be an additional cost).

Financial Details

Because Hastings Fall Semester begins after the UNSW Semester for the same time period, there is about a month gap between when UNSW begins and when Hastings financial aid is disbursed. It is definitely something to be aware of and plan for, but if you plan in advance it shouldn't pose an insurmountable obstacle to attending UNSW.

Arrival & Orientation

I arrived almost two weeks before classes began per UNSW recommendation. UNSW has a good system in place for exchange student arrivals (they meet you at the airport and escort you to campus) and you can apply for temporary housing on the UNSW campus.

Accommodation & Living

The temporary accommodation at UNSW is fine, but I would not recommend living on campus for the entire semester. The UNSW exchange office provides postings of available housing. I chose to look for housing on my own and primarily used a website called www.domain.com.au and searched under shared housing in the Eastern Suburbs. I lived in a

shared house in Bondi Junction which was about a 15 minute bus ride to campus and a 10 minute walk to the beach. Bondi Junction is a bus and train hub so it is very easy to get everywhere in Sydney from Bondi Junction and I would recommend living there. Other good choices are Coogee, Randwick, Kensington, Paddington, etc.

Academic Details

I took three classes while I was at UNSW, each worth 4 Hastings credits. I enrolled in Dispute Resolution, International Humanitarian Law and Contemporary Issues in Human Rights Law. All of my classes were good and I would recommend them all. When choosing classes be sure to find out what post-graduate classes are being offered because you might be able to enroll in them. Contemporary Issues in Human Rights Law was a post-grad course. I had to write papers for each of my classes, and had no exams.

Additional Information

Please feel free to contact me if you are considering studying at UNSW. My email address is mollyarico@yahoo.com and I would be happy to talk more about my experience and answer any questions you have.

Post-Travel Reports UNSW Fall 2006

Intro: I am a third year law student who went abroad first semester to University of New South Wales. I did it for many reasons. One, travel is really important to me. Two, I thought it would help me academically and professionally to get out of the Hastings box and experience law school and legal thinking elsewhere. Third, to be honest, I needed a bit of a break.

In terms of things you should know:

- **Travel & visas:** You need a student visa before you go. Before you get your visa, you will need to buy student health insurance from UNSW. The school will be helpful in telling you what you need to do about the visa.
- **Financial details:** Australia is more expensive for everyday expenses like food, travel, drinks, etc. However, rent is about half of what it is in San Francisco and you don't need to tip so it balances out.
- **Arrival and orientation:** UNSW is really good about getting you when you arrive if you've asked for temporary accommodation. When you get there, you will have a "home base," which is your temporary accommodation, from which you can look for a place to live.
- **Accommodation & living:** I lived in an apartment off campus. I have bad rental luck so it was hard for me to find a place. All other people I spoke to had an easy time. Unlike San Francisco, you can find a lease that will only last as long as your stay. I recommend Bondi or Coogee if the beaches are where you are interested in living.
- **Academic details:** The school has great, engaging professors and very nice, friendly students. Not to mention a beautiful campus. The caliber of teaching, I would say, is on par with Hastings, however, the students *are* only in undergrad so you don't have to study, read, or work generally anywhere near as much as at Hastings so you can definitely relax. Note, however, that there is an 80% mandatory attendance policy. I'm not sure how strictly this is enforced though, and it turns out to allowing you to miss about 4 classes.
- **Country information (culture, weather, places to visit, etc.):** The weather is a bit cold (like San Francisco) in the winter, hot in the summer. The culture shock is pretty much nonexistent. There is not a huge cultural gap between Australia and America. I didn't travel much in Australia but I LOVED New Zealand.
- **Social and extra-curricular activities:** I really liked playing ultimate Frisbee with the school's team.

Post Travel Report for UNSW Exchange Program Fall 2006

I went on exchange because I thought it would be a nice break from the demanding schedule of Hastings, and because I wanted to spend a semester in another part of the world. I would highly recommend spending a semester abroad. I went to Sydney at UNSW and had a great time, but had friends who went to London, Copenhagen, and Budapest and everyone really enjoyed their experience, so you can't go wrong. Go abroad!

UNSW was fairly helpful in terms of setting things up academically. In April, I listed 8 classes I preferred to take, and in June I received my class schedule via email and my 3 classes were all from my preferred list. When I arrived at the airport in Sydney, a representative from the school picked me up and drove me to my temporary housing which was a hostel near school for \$40 / night. From that point on though, you have to figure out housing on your own. Almost all students at UNSW live at home with their families (this is common in Australia) so there is little to no on-campus housing. I lived in Bondi Beach area which I would recommend if you like the beach. I looked online a bit for ads but ended up answering an ad for a spare room that was posted in a health food store near the beach. If you want to live in Bondi, there are a lot of postings in windows along Campbell Parade (the street along the beach) and Hall Street. The downside of Bondi is that it takes about 45 minutes to an hour to get to school by bus, but I only had class usually twice a week so this wasn't too bad. The other thing is that it's more of an international community than an Australian community (my three closest friends were Irish, Dutch, and American). Having said that, I'd definitely recommend it. The beach is beautiful and is a decent beach for beginning surfers. I bought a board when I arrived and sold it back at the end for 75% of what I paid for it. I got it at Surf Culture at Bondi Junction which is a great store with honest, helpful employees. The rent near the beach is reasonable. I lived in a 2 BR with two others and had my own room to myself and was a five-minute walk to the beach and I paid about U.S.\$550/month. So rent in most parts of Sydney is significantly cheaper than SF. Food/going out is also a little cheaper.

Since I lived in Bondi and met most of my friends in Bondi, I wasn't that active in the UNSW community. I did play ultimate Frisbee on Wednesday nights at school, but that was about it. This was in part because I arrived on August 5, so I missed orientation and the first two weeks of school (I screwed up; I thought I would be able to start/end my summer job earlier but was not able to). In terms of falling behind in class this was not a problem at all, and my professors were nice about it. However, I had to literally beg the UNSW administration all summer long to let me come. They finally agreed but for a while I didn't think it would work out. So if you are thinking about UNSW, just know that orientation starts July 17 and classes start July 24. School is mellow – it's the best law school in Australia but is laid back compared to Hastings. The cool thing about school starting early is that you get a huge winter break. My last exam was November 20.

The weather is a little bit like SF but slightly colder in the winter (August) and slightly warmer in the summer (Dec).

I spent most of my time in Bondi Beach. A lot of the exchange students there also lived in Coogee Beach. Downtown Sydney (where the Harbour Bridge and Opera House are) is gorgeous but is a lot more expensive. Most international students live in the Eastern Suburbs (which comprises Bondi and Coogee).

All in all going abroad to UNSW was a great experience.





UNSW Semester Abroad
UC Hastings Study Abroad Program

Study Abroad Travel Report

Here is my short list of suggestions I wanted to share in order to help future students prepare for the semester and Sydney living.

Mobile Phone

It is important for students to establish a bank account if they want to get a mobile phone here. Most places that sell sim cards and offer phone plans will not sell you a sim card or offer you a mobile phone plan without having established a bank account first. The easiest bank to sign up with is **Commonwealth Bank**, which is the biggest branch in Australia, and offers branches and services in other countries such as Thailand. For example, I had to open up a bank account with Commonwealth Bank before I could buy a sim card for my Android phone from Vodafone AU.

Students will find that Vodafone (and other carriers) offer similar phone and data rates that are available in the U.S. If you are going to be traveling, I suggest getting a big data plan, as it will be cheaper for you in the long run (the U.S./Australia dollar exchange rate is working towards Americans' favor) and very useful for finding your way to whichever travel destination. However, be aware that Australia is a vast but empty country, and you will not receive mobile phone service everywhere (i.e. on country roads in between cities).

Student Accommodations

During the semester, I lived in UNSW Hall, as it was the cheapest option available WITH catering (basically a dormitory meal plan). These dorms are called **Colleges**, and you cannot eat at other colleges but your own. In my college, I lived with students that were either in their first, second, or last year of university. So you will be living with people aged from 18-22. I had fun living in this environment

because I was surrounded by energetic university students that were willing to travel and explore Sydney with me. However, some older study abroad students from UC Hastings may find this accommodation too loud/disruptive for their studies, since young college students tend to get rowdy and loud on Friday and Saturday nights. This college is old so it seems that more huntsman spiders find their way in here (they're as big as your palm). You will find, however, that things will quiet down when final exams approach, as students here take their studies seriously. There are other student accommodations that are less "dorm-like" and offer more apartment-style living arrangements. There are other accommodations that house graduate students that are older and more mature, thus quieter.

Classes

I suggest meeting with staff from the Law department to help you choose your classes. I chose and registered for a preliminary list of classes before I arrived in Sydney, and I found myself changing classes because I was interested in the ones I ended up taking for the semester. Here, it is useful to talk to the Law department faculty to help you out.

Classes are taught in the same way that classes are taught at UC Hastings: Lecture or seminar-style, with some professors using the Socratic method to engage with the class. I felt comfortable in my classes because it felt like I was taking courses at UC Hastings, but it is cool that I get to learn the laws of a different country. The professors are helpful, kind, and offer office hours. Australia is a common law country, so I picked up learning foreign laws pretty easily.

Bank Accounts

Paying for things in Australia is pretty simple. I used my Wells Fargo debit card to pay for mostly everything, as the chip and the magnetic stripe on my card was compatible with the card readers there. However, Wells Fargo charges a 10-15% foreign transaction fee per purchase. I used a separate Bank of America debit card to withdraw money from Bank of America's sister bank, Commonwealth Bank at

their ATM locations. With a Bank of America debit card, you can withdraw money from Commonwealth Bank ATMs without incurring an ATM fee.