

International Exchange Program

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does it cost?

If you are accepted into the International Exchange Program you will be responsible for the following expenses:

- Higher Education Contribution (HECS) liability or
- Full tuition fees due to CSU (if you are enrolled as a fee paying student)
- CSU student activity fee
- Round trip airfare and transportation costs to the host university
- Medical and travel insurance
- Passport and visa
- Accommodation and meals
- Textbooks and personal incidentals

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for the program you must:

- Be currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree at CSU
- Have completed your first year at CSU at closing of application
- Have faculty and school approval to obtain full credit transfer from exchange studies towards your CSU degree
- Have a sound academic record with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 4.5
- Be enrolled as a full time student for the duration of the international exchange

The international exchange program is limited to undergraduate courses.

Does it add time on to my degree?

No. If your exchange is planned carefully you should be finishing your degree at the same time as your fellow CSU undergraduate students.

I can only speak English; can I still study in a non-English speaking country?

Yes. We have exchange programs with a number of partner universities in countries where English is not their first language. All the subjects available to exchange students at these universities are conducted in English. Where you are studying in an 'English as a Second Language' (ESL) country, you have the opportunity to undertake introductory language classes. The International Exchange program offers a unique opportunity immerse yourself in another culture without being proficient in the host language.

Is there any financial aid available?

Yes. There are a number of options for students to obtain finances to aid their exchange experience.

- Travel grants of up to \$1500 are available to internal students who meet the selection criteria.
- The Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) fund the University Mobility across Asia Pacific Program (UMAP Program). The awards are allocated to students participating in the International Exchange Program by the university on behalf of DEST. A UMAP award is valued at \$4,000.
- The government has a loan scheme (OS-HELP) for students undertaking part of their study overseas. It is available to students who are not in their first or last year (full time equivalent) of study. Students may receive up to \$5000 per six month study period, for one or two overseas sessions. A 20% fee is applied to each loan. And the debts are added to other higher education debts (such as HECS) that the student may have. For more information visit the Our Universities: Backing Australia's future website at:
http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/student_info.htm

If you are in receipt of Austudy/Youth Allowance you will continue to receive it.

How do I get a passport, visa and study permit?

Passport: Passport application forms are available from any Australia Post Office. Fill in the application form and submit it with a certified copy of your birth certificate, passport photos and your payment. After submitting your form you will be required to attend an interview. You should apply for a passport as soon as possible as your application can take around 6 weeks to be processed. If you do not have a certified birth certificate, you should also allocate an extra few weeks to receive this. An application fee for this also applies. Those already holding a valid passport must ensure it will not expire while you are overseas or for 6 months after you plan to return.

Student Visa: Most countries of our partner universities require you to obtain a study or residence permit/visa. The usual documents required are listed below:

- A valid passport
- A letter of acceptance from your host university
- Proof of enough money to live and study in the country of your host university
- A 'Certificate of Medical Clearance' or health insurance documents

If you plan to visit other destinations before or after your exchange experience you should also check the visa requirements of those countries before you leave Australia. Check the websites below for online applications and evidence required:

United States of America

<http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/consular/visastudy.html>

Canada

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/index.html>

Sweden

<http://www.embassyofsweden.org.au/>

The Netherlands

<http://www.netherlands.org.au/embassy.php?id=249>

Germany

<http://www.campus-germany.de/english>

South Africa

<http://www.rsa.emb.gov.au/consular.htm>

Japan

<http://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/>

What health/travel insurance will I need?

Medical insurance is compulsory for all students accepted into the CSU International Exchange program. Most partner universities will not accept students if they do not have appropriate health cover. Some have their own medical schemes or advise you to use the recommended national scheme. If this is the case, you should purchase travel and health insurance to cover you until you arrive at your host university and then buy the recommended insurance. You need to ensure you are covered for the whole period you are overseas.

When is the best time to study on exchange?

The second year of your degree is probably the ideal time to study for a semester or a year overseas. For those planning to go on exchange in your final year of study you must ensure you have a long enough period left in your course to retain full-time enrolment whilst overseas. Many CSU courses also have specialised final year subjects which may have to be completed at your CSU campus. Most partner universities start their exchange programs at the beginning of the academic year (usually late August to September in the Northern Hemisphere), or, at the beginning of the second semester (usually January in the Northern Hemisphere).

How do I choose the right subjects?

Follow the links to our partner universities or visit the International Office to view the current handbooks so you can accurately match the subjects you are studying now to complimentary ones at the exchange university of your choice. Talk to your lecturer or student advisor about any classes you are interested in taking to make sure they are suitable for your course.

How do I choose where to study?

Your most important consideration is to make sure your subject choices match your studies at CSU. You have a choice of more than 6 countries and 15 universities to study at. CSU's partner universities vary in setting, size, subject requirements and specialised areas. Use these factors to direct your choice. Language should not be a barrier, as all partner universities run the courses available for exchange students in English.

When should I start planning?

You should start planning as soon as possible. It is best to research your options and start organising your application at least six months before you intend to go on exchange. You can find out about CSU exchange partner institutions under locations on this website, which also provides direct links to the websites of each university. During this time you can meet with the international exchange contact at your campus, who can arrange for you to talk to other CSU students who have been on exchange as well as current exchange students at CSU.

Closing dates for applications are generally around mid session break for the following session, but check this website or any campus student exchange contact person for an exact closing date.

While planning for the exchange program please take into account the following considerations:

- Academic and Career goals
- Personal objectives
- Financial needs and limitations
- How to finance a semester or a year overseas

Is it better to go for a semester or a year?

In making this decision you will have to factor in your financial situation and the requirements of your degree. Your experience overseas will pass quickly; many students find that a year studying abroad gives them a greater opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture and lifestyle of their host university's country, whereas one semester goes by too fast and they leave regretting missed possibilities.

Where will I live?

Most exchange students live in on-campus housing whilst studying overseas. The majority of accommodation at CSU's partner universities is made up of shared rooms so be prepared for a room mate. While private rooms are available in some universities they are significantly more expensive than shared accommodation. Some partner universities insist you submit your housing application before your exchange application, while others recommend you submit your forms together. The International Office will assist you in applying for on campus accommodation. Some partner universities also have accommodation offices to assist students in locating off campus accommodation upon arrival.

Can I work when I'm on Exchange?

If you intend working whilst overseas you must check the guidelines of the country you intend to visit and obtain the correct visa. In some countries, international students are only allowed to seek employment within the university where they are studying. If you are only going on exchange for one semester, we recommend that you concentrate on keeping up your grades as well as enjoying the social aspects of university life. Living overseas is an adjustment, so focus your energies on making the most of your time abroad.

What contact do I have with my host university before departure?

Once accepted into the Exchange Program you will be sent a 'letter of acceptance' and pre-departure information. This will assist you in matters such as accommodation, health insurance requirements, airport/bus reception service, orientation and life in your host country. Again, the International Office both at home and overseas will be able to assist you with this material.

Do I make my own travel arrangements?

Yes. You are responsible for your travel arrangements and obtaining your student visa/passport etc. You should purchase your plane ticket only after you have received your 'Letter of Acceptance'. Once you've received your letter you should apply for your passport and visa immediately as this can be a lengthy process.

What is expected of me as a Charles Sturt University Exchange student?

While on the International Exchange Program you are an ambassador for Charles Sturt University. It is important to remember that your conduct and behaviour are a continual example of Australia and CSU. Be aware that there are different laws in different countries and you are subject to the laws of your destination country while you are there. Universities also have disciplinary committees and students can be fined and reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour.

On the International Exchange Program form you are required to sign the student declaration which outlines your responsibilities while abroad. On your return you are required to:

- Submit a student report outlining your Exchange Program experience
- Assist and advise Exchange Program candidates for the duration of your studies at CSU

How do I apply?

By following the procedures below you should find all the information necessary to submit your form accurately and before the closing dates.

a. Register your interest

Make an appointment to see the exchange contact at the International Office on your campus. The exchange contact will give you the CSU student exchange program application form and explain what information you need to provide in order to complete the application. Check the exchange contact for your campus below:

Albury: Lynn Furze lfurze@csu.edu.au
Bathurst: Nuala Grundy ngrundy@csu.edu.au
Louise Haberecht lhabeerecht@csu.edu.au
Wagga Wagga: Barbara Slade bslade@csu.edu.au
Dubbo: Terry Noonan tnoonan@csu.edu.au

b. Research

Research exchange options through partner institution websites or handbooks and information available through exchange contacts at the International Office on your campus.

c. Talk to your faculty

Choose two exchange partner university preferences, construct an academic program for each one and talk to your faculty. You will need to take a copy of the subject descriptions to your course coordinator for approval. Your course coordinator will need to sign the credit transfer form on your application in order for you to gain credit for the subjects that you intend to study while on exchange.

d. Submit your CSU application

To complete the CSU exchange program application form, you will need to include the following documentation:

- Proof of financial resources for the duration of the exchange
- Two academic references from a CSU lecturer or tutor
- A current official academic transcript
- An approved credit transfer form
- Proof of citizenship (for UMAP OS-HELP schemes)

e. Application assessment

Once your application is assessed, you will be invited to an interview. If your application is successful, you will be notified in writing by CSU.

f. Formal application

If you are successful, you will then complete the application form of your nominated universities. The application will be forwarded to the partner institution where it will be processed. This generally takes at least six to eight weeks. If you are accepted, you will receive a letter of offer. Once you accept the offer you will receive a letter of acceptance and appropriate forms needed to apply for a student visa. You can obtain information on visa applications through the relevant consulates and embassies.

Application form; International Exchange Program application

Useful links

The links provide on this website are to be used as a guide only and are not endorsed by Charles Sturt University

Passport information: www.passports.gov.au

Travel advice notices: www.dfat.gov.au/travel

Travel assistance: www.statravel.com/

www.travel.com

www.webjet.com.au/

www.flightcentre.com.au/

www.studentflights.com.au/

Travel insurance: www.travelinsurance.com.au/

www.hic.gov.au/medicare/travel

Currency converter; www.x-rates.com/

www.xe.com/ucc/

Weather; www.weather.com/