Need to Know: Australia

Objective of the “Need to Know” Document
The Need to Know document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad adviser to review program specific details that may impact a student’s decision to apply for an EAP program. The document is not a summary of eligibility requirements, academic, housing, application and other logistical details freely available to students on the UCEAP and BSA website, and reviewed by a student in the Program Self-Assessment. The best source of detailed program information is always the UCEAP Program Guide from the prior academic cycle. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website, in the Program Guide or Need to Know document, please contact the BSA adviser for this program.

Advisor Contact Information
For BSA Adviser name, email and drop-in advising hours, visit http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/contact/advising

Marine Biology & Terrestrial Ecology, University of Queensland, Brisbane

The MBTE program is small due to the nature of the course work and field activities. While the Marine Bio program has sometimes been impacted in the past, it has not been the case in recent semesters and we have been able to accept all qualified applicants.

In the event that the program is impacted, we will inform students shortly after the application deadline. You can likely obtain permission to apply for another EAP program as an alternative option. There are a few programs in particular you are encouraged to consider:

- Barbados, University of the West Indies. Biology, environmental, and ecological studies majors will find laboratories in which to investigate marine resource management and preservation and tropical horticulture. Past students have taken courses with fieldwork components.
- Singapore, National University of Singapore. The Biological Sciences department at NUS offers various courses in MCB, Marine Ecology, Environmental Biology, etc. throughout the year. In addition, there is also a new summer option through UCEAP to study at NUS in a program with a Biodiversity focus.
- Australian Universities. Most of the host universities offer courses in Marine Biology and many of these courses have fieldwork components.

You may also want to consider applying for an independent study abroad program as a backup. There are important differences between EAP and independent study abroad programs that you should research before making a decision.

Selection Criteria
There are a variety of criteria used to select students on this program. Among them are:

- GPA
- Statement of Purpose: this is your opportunity to convey what you will gain academically, professionally and personally from the program and why it is a good fit for you.
- Prior biological sciences course work
  - Preferred: One year of lower division biology (Biology 1A; Biology 1B; Biology 11; AP Biology test with score of 4 or greater)
  - Additional Coursework in biological sciences, ecology and statistics is recommended.

If you are unsure about the fit of this program, please contact the Australia EAP Adviser before you apply.

Curriculum
The program is administered by the University of Queensland’s Centre for Marine Studies. The program was designed for EAP students so there are only UC students in the classes. The program consists of two courses:

| Marine Biology | BIO 160 | 8.7 units |

Course Articulation

Courses on this program have been articulated by the Integrative Biology department for satisfying certain requirements in the major.

**Integrative Biology:** Biol 106 Human and Terrestrial Ecology (5.7 units) and Bio 160 Marine Biology count towards Group B with Field Lab.

Special Demands of the Program

During field activities students will be housed in field stations with full amenities. While attending classes on the University of Queensland campus, students will be assigned to homestays in Brisbane. Students should be prepared for the physical challenges as well as residential limitations of the program.

EAP Alums

EAP alumni are one of your best resources for information about the program. If you would like to be put in touch with alums, simply send the BSA Adviser an email requesting to be put in touch with former students.

Australian Universities

Host University Preference and Placement

When applying to the Australia Universities program, you apply to an exchange network as opposed to a particular university. In your application, you are asked to rank six of the Australian host universities in order of preference. Please be aware that space at your first choice host university is not guaranteed.

Whereas the decision to select you for the Australia Universities program is made by the campus EAP office (i.e. Berkeley Study Abroad), the decision to place you at a particular host university is made by the UC EAP Program Officer in Australia.

GPA Requirement

**What are my chances of being placed at my first choice of host university?**

The good news is that in the past, the majority of students have been placed at their first or second choice host universities. The placement decisions made by the UC Program Officer in Australia are based primarily on academic fit. Additional information on the factors that can play a role are:

- **Academic fit:** because your academic focus is the main criterion host university placement decisions are based on, it’s important that you think about whether the host universities you are interested in are a good match for you academically.

- **Non-academic concerns:** geographical preference, relatives who live in a certain city, employment opportunities, etc. are also taken into consideration, but to a lesser extent.

- **Popularity of host university:** roughly half of the applicants to the program rank the University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland or the University of Melbourne as their first or second choice. It is recommended that you seriously consider all of the universities available and we encourage you to take the time to research all of your options before applying for the program.

If placement at any institution other than your first choice host university is not acceptable to you, you can consider a non-UC sponsored independent study abroad programs or look into applying directly to the university.

Selection Timeline and Terminology

Selection into the Australian Universities program happens at the campus level. Your application is then forwarded to UCEAP and Australia for further review. The Program Officer in Australia will select your application for “referral” to a specific host university. The UCEAP office will then notify you via email to check your “referral” status on MyEAP. After students complete all necessary predeparture paperwork and procedures, their status will be changed to “placed.” In almost instances, your “referral” equals your “placement.”

Academics
• **Flexibility is important.** Keep in mind that the courses you find in the EAP Course Catalog or on the host university’s web site may not be offered the semester(s) you will be abroad. Often times you will not have concrete information about what courses will be offered until a couple months before departure or even until upon arrival in Australia. Be prepared for the possibility that you will have to modify your plans.

• **How many courses/units will I take?** Students are required to take a minimum of 16 (semester) units each semester. The usual course load is about four classes per semester, but this can vary by university and the specific courses selected.

• **Do Australian universities have “Fall” and “Spring” semesters?** When researching courses on the host university web sites, be aware that “Semester 1” is the equivalent of Berkeley’s Spring semester and “Semester 2” is equivalent to Fall.

• **Which courses will transfer as upper/lower division?** First year Australian courses are considered lower-division by UC, while second and third year courses will translate as upper-division. Third year courses can be considered similar to first-year graduate coursework in the US.

• Use the following Glossary of Academic Terms to make your course search on the host university web sites easier.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the U.S.</th>
<th>In Australia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / College (e.g., School of Engineering)</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course (e.g., History 40a)</td>
<td>Unit / topic / subject / class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor / Faculty</td>
<td>Member Academic Staff, Lecturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Marks</td>
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<td>College / School/University</td>
<td>Uni</td>
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**Cost of the Australian Visa**

Before departure you will receive instructions from UCEAP on how to apply for your student visa. The Australian visa is expensive. At the time of writing, the visa application fee is $550 Australian dollars (AUD). You can pay this fee by credit card (and since you will apply for your visa online, this is also the easiest way to pay the application fee).

**EAP Alums and Reciprocal Exchange students**

EAP alumni are one of your best resources for information about the program. If you would like to be put in touch with alums, simply send the BSA Adviser an email with your list of questions and the contact information of returnees who have agreed to be contacted will be shared.

**Faculty Contacts**

UC Berkeley Plant Biology Professor Russell L. Jones was Director of the UC Study Center in Australia for two years, up until December 2008. As the former Study Center Director, Professor Jones is an excellent resource for information about everything from housing, to the Australian higher education system, to what feedback students have given about each university. He is an especially good source of information about doing research with faculty in Australia, something he strongly encouraged students to do while he was Study Center Director. You can email him your questions or request an appointment with him via email (rjones@nature.berkeley.edu).