

Australian National University 2016 - Canberra

If you are reading this report, that must mean you are interested in an exchange in Australia. To be completely honest, before I left, I had a lot of doubt about Canberra. When I told people around me that I was applying for Canberra, mostly their responses were 'Don't go! Canberra is boring' or 'Canberra?' (A lot of people don't know that it is the capital of Australia). I have to tell you; they could not have been more wrong. Though Canberra definitely is a destination that is not as interesting to tourists or backpackers in the way that Melbourne and Sydney are, it is the perfect destination for an exchange. The university is absolutely beautiful, the short distance to the city centre and the on campus accommodation make it very easy to meet people and get to experience Australian university life. I never would have thought, but even Canberra nightlife is amazing! In the end I was glad that I ended up in Canberra instead of Sydney or Melbourne (which were my original choices) because my exchange was absolutely perfect. I know it sounds super cliché, but it has been the best thing I ever did and I know that when you choose to go to Canberra, your exchange is going to be as great as mine was.

General Information

University: Australian National University

Where: Canberra, Australia

When: 5 July 2016 – 12 December 2016

Be aware that this is the Second Semester in Australia and that their summer break starts in December. So your exchange semester starts early but also finishes quite early!

Preparation

After being selected to go to Canberra, ANU was pretty quick with the application procedure. The procedure itself is very straightforward and easy. If you have any questions at all don't hesitate to contact the ANU Global Programs office, they are very helpful and friendly. Since I am an IBEB student and did IB English in high school, my level of English was sufficient to meet the entry requirements. After you receive your Confirmation of Enrolment you can apply for your Visa. An Australian Visa is pretty expensive but not hard to obtain. ANU requires you to have a passport that is valid till half a year after your return, make sure that you have a valid passport before you apply for your visa.

As soon as you have been fully accepted at ANU, buy your plane ticket! Tickets will only get more expensive. I booked mine in April through Emirates. Connecting domestic flights to Canberra can be quite expensive. I can advise you to go to Canberra from Sydney by bus, you can book your ticket through Murrays Australia. It is a 3-hour non-stop journey from the International Terminal to Canberra. The bus stop is super close to ANU and the campus, can definitely recommend it!

ANU offers all international students accommodation on campus. This does not mean that you get to choose. You get one offer and it is take it or leave it. There is a serious shortage of accommodation on campus, so don't be surprised to get a studio instead of a multishare in a completely different building than you applied for. Take this into account when you are budgeting your expenses, because rent can turn out to be more expensive than you expected. However, I can strongly advise you to accept whatever offer you may get. Living on campus is part of what made my exchange experience so great. I lived in a 5-share apartment in Davey Lodge, which is one of the four buildings operated by UniLodge. UniLodge is a company that takes care of some of the accommodation for ANU. So you get to live on campus, but the

building is not owned by ANU. A lot of exchange students want to live in Burton & Garran Hall, which is more dorm like. UniLodge gives the opportunity to buy a whole kit caboodle from them. This means that upon arrival there is a box in your room with everything you need (sheets, towels, cutlery, plates etc.). Though it is very convenient to have everything when you arrive (trust me you will be very very tired), it is better to go to Target (or IKEA or BigW) on your first day and buy everything there, it saves you a lot of money and you get way better quality.

Be aware: it is cold in Canberra! When you arrive in July it is winter and you will need your winter jacket and a lot of warm clothes. Do not make the same mistake as I did by thinking that it is always warm and sunny in Australia.

Arrival

ANU offers a free airport pickup from the Canberra airport. I received an email from the Global Programs office and you could simply apply online. This was super convenient as Canberra public transport is not exactly as good as ours, to say the least. Students from ANU were waiting at the luggage belt and would guide you to the taxi stand (and pay for it). However, if you choose to travel by bus to Canberra, the campus is on walking distance. In my case, I arrived in Canberra on the 7th of July and could move into my campus accommodation the 8th of July. I booked a hotel close to the campus for the first night. In your first couple of days you need to do two things: get an Australian sim card and an Australian bank account. I got my bank account at Westpac, it is free for students and widely used across Australia. Transferring money from a Dutch to Australian bank is really really expensive, I used to get money from an ATM with my Dutch card and deposit that on my Australian account, since this was cheaper. Since our fall semester is the second semester for the Australian academic calendar, introduction activities are not on the same scale as at the start of the year. Both the university and your accommodation (in my case UniLodge) organize several introduction events. Sign up for everything and just go because this is where you will meet most people. Mostly it were the other exchange students that I hung out with. The ANU Global Programs office wanted to set up some sort of exchange society, so probably by the time you get there they will be organizing events targeting only exchange students.

Courses

First of all, don't stress too much about finalizing your courses before you arrive. You apply for six courses and if you are accepted for all six, you have to choose four. However, it is possible that you are not accepted for some courses. During the first two weeks of the semester there is plenty of time to go to different faculties and ask for the permission code for the course. Even if you don't meet the specific requisites, the lecturer might be more flexible if you talk to his/her in person. Contact with lecturers and professors is way more informal than in the Netherlands. Also, if you don't like the course, you can still switch in the first two weeks. Most courses are worth 6 units, which transfers to 7,5 ECTS. In order to transfer these credits to my Erasmus bachelor degree 50% of the courses had to be economics related. I followed two courses at the College of Business & Economics and the other two courses at the College of Arts & Social Sciences.

FINM1001 Foundations of Finance

This is a beginning finance course. Part of it has been covered in Finance 1, but next to that it provides an introduction to derivatives. Quizzes during the tutorials count towards your grade. Besides the quizzes, the course had a midterm in September and a final exam in November. If you keep up with the work the course is not hard to pass. Overall, the speed of the courses is much slower compared to Erasmus. In 15 weeks they cover the same amount of material that would be covered in one 8-week block here at home. Books can be quite expensive. Instead of buying, you can also go to the library and see if it is available there.

BUSN1001 Business Reporting and Analysis

This is a very basic accounting course. It provides a fundamental financial management knowledge combined with an introduction to the use of business reports. If you pass the 1st and 2nd year accounting courses at the ESE, this course should not be hard at all. The course is graded on tutorial participation, tutorial quizzes, a midterm and final exam.

HIST1209 Terror to Terrorism: A History

This is one of the two history courses I followed at the College of Arts and Social Sciences. ANU is ranked #22 in the world, but it is mainly this particular College that makes it such a good university. This course starts with the French Revolution and ends with 9/11. Each week is a different case study on terrorism and covers a different event in history like Anarchism or the Second World War Terror Bombing. You have to write two essays, followed by a final exam. For the tutorials you get a participation grade. If you get a sufficient grade for your essays, you barely have to study for the final exam.

HIST2136 World at War: 1939-1945

Big advantage of the School of History is that you don't need to buy books. All material is uploaded only. This course is about the Second World War. It focuses on both the European and the Pacific conflict. The professor is really great and the lectures are super interesting. Together with the professor, we visited the Australian War Memorial, which is in Canberra. The grading system is the same as for HIST1209.

Finances

Australia is really really really expensive. Compared to the Netherlands, everything will cost you more. For me it was worth it, but be prepared to pay.

Accommodation	250 AUD per week
Cost of living	100 AUD per week
Australian Sim Card	35 AUD per month
Visa	375 Euro
Deposit + CSP + Application Fee + Whole Kit & Caboodle	1420 AUD
Overseas Health Insurance (OSHC)	270 Euro
Flight to and from Australia (including all domestic flights)	1700 Euro
Travelling	5000 Euro
Total	+/- 15.000 Euro

A big disadvantage of renting through UniLodge is that you have to pay till the end of the year. In my case, I left Canberra on November 19th but I had to pay rent till December 31st. It is a waste of money but it was either UniLodge or off-campus accommodation. The only thing cheaper in Australia is the night life, though this only holds for Canberra. On Thursdays entry is free all night. All bars and clubs are located closely to each other and are on walking distance from Campus. Make sure to go to Mooseheads for cheap drinks!

Daily Life

Though Canberra might not be a big metropolis like Sydney or Melbourne, in my opinion it is a perfect destination for an exchange. The 'smaller' city makes it easier to meet people and make friends. The campus is right in the city center and everything worthy is within walking distance, which is good because public transport in Canberra is absolutely terrible. Canberra is a beautiful modern city with lots of green and some impressive sites. Another advantage, both Sydney and Melbourne are relatively close and perfect for a weekend trip. Do keep in mind that the definition of 'close' is a little different in Australia. I can definitely say that Australia is an amazing country, the people are warm and friendly and spending half a year here has been an absolute pleasure. There is no way to better get to know a country than by living there for six months. If you make the journey to the other side of the world, go travel! After the semester was over, I went on a tour in Alice Springs and on the East Coast. Whether you go on a tour or just road trip with some new friends, there is so much to see. Going to Australia and just seeing Canberra is a waste, so make sure to include some travel money in your budget.

No matter what destination you choose, going on exchange is an amazing experience and I have never regretted my decision to go. Just remember that there is no wrong destination, all exchanges are amazing. Good luck with your choice!

If you have any questions about ANU or Canberra, don't hesitate to send me an email! (paulabiesheutel@live.nl)

Kind regards, Paula