



2026

# STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK



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Please refer to [www.globalstudio.uwa.edu.au](http://www.globalstudio.uwa.edu.au) for up-to-date information.



# INTRODUCTION

WELCOME  
MESSAGE

Congratulations for opening this guide. You are one-step closer to the experience of lifetime!

Spending some part of your UWA degree abroad is one of the most enriching experiences in your UWA journey. Participating in a Learning Abroad opportunity offers a wide range of personal, academic, and professional benefits: You will gain a global perspective and receive quality education from some of the most prestigious universities in the world; you will improve your language skills – who doesn't want to order a Pain au chocolat in French in Grenoble! Or a Kanelnegle in Danish in Aarhus! Let alone a Stroopwafel in Dutch in Maastricht. You will grow personally and get the opportunity to travel to parts of the world you may have only dreamed of. And: You make yourself more employable! You will create a network of friends and may meet future career or business partners. You will gain a competitive edge in the job market with your international experience and build a global network of professional contacts. You may return to your host country to work after completing your experience.

Speak with friends that have been abroad. No doubt they have many stories to tell! Wherever you go, however long you spend abroad – you won't regret it. Jump onto our website today and get excited about all things Global Learning. We're super excited to have you become of the UWA Global Learning family!

A presto / ¡Hasta pronto!

Jeannette

**Jeannette Geesmann**

Manager, Global Learning and Sponsored Students  
Global Learning Office  
[globalstudio.uwa.edu.au](http://globalstudio.uwa.edu.au)

Studying abroad is one of the most enriching experiences you can have during your studies here at the University of Western Australia (UWA). It's an opportunity to immerse yourself in a new culture, challenge your perspectives, and connect your academic learning with real-world experiences, transcending borders. Whether you choose a semester-long or a short-term program, the journey will leave you with lifelong memories, friendships, and skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

Having personally gone on a short-term program to Indonesia, I can say that the experience reshaped how I viewed both my studies and the world around me. It wasn't just about lectures or coursework, it was about learning to navigate new environments, adapt to different teaching styles, and appreciate the incredible diversity of people and ideas. There were challenges, of course: moments of culture shock, the occasional language barrier, and the balancing act between study and exploration. But those challenges were part of what made the experience so rewarding, they built confidence, resilience, and independence. I made life-long friends and memories on my exchange and encourage anyone thinking about it to take the plunge.

This handbook is designed to help you navigate your own global learning journey. Inside, you'll find (almost) everything you need to know, from the application process and academic planning, to managing finances, preparing for departure, and settling into life overseas. You'll also find advice and tips to help you make the most of every opportunity abroad. This is by no means a perfect or completely comprehensive guide, it's more a general handbook to assist you in the scary exchange process. My best advice would be to do lots of research and planning depending on where your placement is!

Studying overseas or participating in any other overseas learning opportunities such as interning or volunteering can be transformative, but it's also a deeply personal experience. No two experiences are the same. My hope is that you approach yours with openness, curiosity, and courage. Embrace the unfamiliar, engage meaningfully with your host community, and take every opportunity to learn from the people around you.

On behalf of the Education Council and the UWA Student Guild, I wish you all the best as you take this exciting step in your academic and personal journey. Wherever your global learning experience takes you, I hope you return with new knowledge, lasting friendships, and a renewed sense of possibility.

Also want to include a massive thank you to Insiah Riaz and Lauren Kohlen for their tireless efforts on this handbook!

**Jay Williams**

112th Guild Council Education Council President  
UWA Student Guild

Message from  
the Education  
Council President





My name is Archit Menon, the International Students' Department (ISD) President for 2025 and it is my absolute privilege to welcome you to the University of Western Australia. The International Students' Department is the peak representative body for all international students on campus, including students' who are on a semester exchange.

ISD aims to build a strong sense of community among all international students. Through our four departments Education, Public Relations, Welfare, and Social we've organized events that help students connect, unwind, and engage with one another. We also revived the International Students' Council, which works closely with faculty societies, cultural clubs, and residential colleges to ensure that the voices and concerns of international students are heard and supported.

Being an international student isn't always easy, but ISD strives to make sure everyone feels represented, supported, and valued. Personally, this community has been the highlight of my time at UWA. The university's vibrant club culture, the Guild's ongoing support, and the friendships I've made here have truly shaped who I am. As my favourite professor once said, "Help will always be available at ISD to those who ask for it."

It's been an honour to serve as your ISD President, and I hope that this department has supported you just as much as it has supported me.

Warm Regards,  
**Archit Menon**  
 ISD President 2025  
 UWA Student Guild



**Message from International Students Department**

Hello Fellow Exchange Students,

I'm Jeff, the 2025 Wellbeing Officer, hope you're all excited to enjoy your global learning trip around the world! It's such a great opportunity to explore new places, meet people, and experience a whole new culture.

While you're overseas, remember to take care of your wellbeing too. A few simple tips I have for you all:

**Keep active:** go for walks, join a local gym or sports club, explore your city on foot, do some weekend hikes, or even rent a bike to explore nearby towns.

**Stay connected:** check in with family and friends back home and reach out if you're feeling homesick. Can do this by scheduling weekly video calls or share photos of your adventures on your social media as it's a great way to stay grounded and supported.

**Find balance:** it's okay to rest! Between travel and classes, make sure you have downtime to recharge, whether that's grabbing a local bite at a café, journaling at a park, or just sitting in the moment and soaking in your surroundings.

And remember, the Wellbeing Department is always here to support you, whether you're at UWA or abroad. If you ever need someone to talk to or want to reach out, you can contact us at [assist@guild.uwa.edu.au](mailto:assist@guild.uwa.edu.au) or [wellbeing@guild.uwa.edu.au](mailto:wellbeing@guild.uwa.edu.au) and we can keep you checked in and well!

Safe travels and take care of yourselves 🌍💙

**Jeff Tang**  
 Wellbeing Officer  
 UWA Student Guild



**Message from the UWA Guild Wellbeing Department**

# BRIEF OVERVIEW

## WHAT DIFFERENT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE?

### **Semester Exchange Programs**

Spend 1 or 2 semesters studying at one of UWA's 130 partner universities

To be eligible for the semester exchange program you must:

- » Have completed 36 credit points
- » Have a status of 'good standing' meaning you must have passed at least half of your enrolled units (This can be checked via studentconnect)
- » Have enough credit points remaining in your degree to allow for full time enrolment on exchange

### **Short Term Programs**

This can be as an exchange or a fee-paying study abroad program. Go abroad during your semester break and take one or two units and study intensive.

### **International Internships**

Work with an overseas organisation to gain valuable work experience and enhance your CV. There are options for Summer and Winter

### **Dual Degrees**

Get two degrees! One from UWA and one from a partner overseas institution.

### **UWA Units Abroad**

Take part in a school-led program with fellow UWA students and academic staff.

### **Online Programs**

Ideal for those who can't travel but still want to gain an international learning experience.

Note that different countries/universities may use different vocabulary to what UWA uses. For example credit points may be referred to as 'units', 'credit', 'credit hours'.





# SEMESTER EXCHANGE

# APPLICATION PROCESS

Going on exchange is an exciting opportunity to experience new cultures whilst continuing your academic journey. However, it requires careful planning to ensure that the courses you take align with UWAs completion requirements and your personal academic goals. The UWA **Global Learning Office (GLO)** manages all semester exchange applications through the **GLO Applicant Portal**. The process takes time, so plan ahead and set aside enough time to complete it carefully.

## Step 1: Begin your application

Apply online via the **GLO Applicant Website**:  
[www.globalstudio.uwa.edu.au](http://www.globalstudio.uwa.edu.au)

Allow several days to complete the full application.

Be prepared to submit supporting materials such as your **academic transcript**, and **passport copy**.

## Step 2: Choosing your Universities

You'll need to select and rank **six universities** you'd like to attend. When researching and deciding on programs and university selection, take into account what will actually be feasible and which program/university best aligns with your goals.

### Where to find the list of partner universities:

Go to [globalstudio.uwa.edu.au](http://globalstudio.uwa.edu.au) › **Site Home** › **Semester Exchange Programs** › **Exchange Partner Brochures** (under the *Eligibility* subheading).

- » Ensure that the universities you pick accept UWA students
- » Check for any restrictions: Some partner universities have caps/limits on UWA students or on specific faculties/units. You can find the restrictions on each university brochure under 'Academics'
- » Keep in mind that placement is not guaranteed so be prepared and open to attending any of your six choices.

### When choosing, consider:

**Costs:** living expenses, accommodation, and travel.

**Culture and Lifestyle:** language, local customs, and student life.

**Safety:** review SmartTraveller advisories and host country resources.

**Feasibility:** unit availability, academic calendar, visa requirements, how competitive the university is.

## Step 3: Creating Your Study Plans

You must create a **study plan for each of your six chosen universities**. Note that a full study load is not always 4 units and may vary in different universities. When reviewing a potential host institution, check the course catalogue (often called "modules" or "credits" abroad) and map them to your UWA course requirements (unit, credit points, prerequisites).

### Tips for planning your units:

Review each university's **unit or course catalogue** (sometimes called *programs*). Remember catalogues may not always be fully updated so go with the most recent one! You can always double-check with the host university's international office if unsure. Check that units are **available in the semester you'll be abroad** and that they are **taught in English**.

Ensure that the units you are choosing are **open to international or exchange students**.

Try to leave **electives or flexible units** in your UWA degree plan before exchange. This makes it easier to match overseas courses with your current degree requirements.

Please be mindful of semesters being reversed in the northern hemisphere: Most of UWA's Exchange partner universities run from Semester 1 in the second half of the year (commencing between August and October) to Semester 2 in the first half of the following year (commencing between January and April).

## Step 4: Submit your study plans to the GLO

As part of your application for the semester exchange program you will need to submit a study plan.

The **Student Advising Office** will confirm your unit approvals. Once approved, email GLO with a screenshot of your confirmation.

Expect to hear back from GLO within **2-3 months**, though processing times can vary.

## Ensuring Credits Transfer

GLO handles the administration of the outbound exchange for UWA students. Your UWA Student Advising Office must approve your study-abroad plan so that units taken overseas count towards your UWA degree. After you return, you must submit your official transcript from the host university directly to the GLO before UWA will process the credit. There will be no transfer until this is received. Be aware of deadlines: If completed overseas units are not processed in time, it may delay your graduation or cause administrative complications.

Keep copies of all correspondence, unit approval forms, transcripts and any email confirmations.

Remember: Although you're studying abroad, you're still enrolled in UWA and you must meet UWA's degree requirements (points required, major/minor rules, etc.).

## Additional Tips

- » Align courses with Career goals
- » Choose units that either support your major or allow you to explore a new niche that might differentiate you in future employment.
- » Reflect: "How will these units help me build skills or knowledge valuable after graduation?"

## Language proficiency

If your host country uses a language other than English for instruction, check whether you need to demonstrate language proficiency (or take local language units).

Even when the host institution uses English, adjusting to different academic styles can require preparation (reading, writing, group work in a different context).

## Step 4: Additional Application Components

As part of your application, you may need to:  
**Grant permission for a nominated contact person** to liaise with GLO on your behalf.  
**Complete a risk assessment** for your destination country (this requires a few written paragraphs, so allow time).

**Acknowledge UWA's return flight policy.**  
**Read information about Centrelink and OS-HELP loan options.**

Once your application is approved by UWA, you may also need to **submit a separate application directly to your host university**.

## Application Deadlines:

The **Semester Exchange Program** has two application rounds per year (deadlines are strict, late applications will not be accepted):

### December (11:59pm AWST)

Exchange applications for Semester 2 and Split Year (all destinations, including Canada)

Exchange applications for **Semester 1 and Calendar Year** (Canada only)

### June (11:59pm AWST)

Exchange applications for **Semester 1 and Calendar Year** (all destinations except Canada)

## After Submission:

Once your application is submitted: You'll receive **email confirmation** from GLO. Wait times for updates can be lengthy but try not to stress if you don't hear back immediately.

Once both UWA and your host university confirm your placement, you'll proceed with pre-departure requirements such as travel insurance, visas, and safety training.

# PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

## Pre-Departure orientation: Attendance is compulsory!

GLO requires you to attend a pre-departure information session prior to leaving unless you have a valid reason for absence.

These sessions cover important topics like academic planning, credit transfer, health & safety, living abroad, host university applications, visas, cultural adjustment and more.

Use the orientation to ask questions about your study plan abroad, timelines, any language requirements, and administrative steps both at home and abroad.

Make sure you complete any required pre-departure checklist provided by GLO (forms, travel arrangements, insurance, etc.).

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Before you leave, make sure your travel documents and insurance are up to date and meet **GLO** requirements. Incomplete or invalid documentation may delay your departure or affect your enrolment status while overseas. Make copies (physical and digital) of important documents such as passport, visa, travel insurance, UWA approval, host university letters and emergency contacts.

## PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

**Passport:** Confirm passport validity for at least 6 months beyond your intended stay abroad. Make **two copies** of your passport, one to keep with you (separate from the original) and one to leave with a trusted contact at home.

**Visa:** Apply early as visa processing times can vary significantly between countries. Ensure that you have official offer/acceptance letters, enrolment confirmation, and any documentation they require for the VISA applications.

Make sure you apply for a relevant visa that allows for study, work (if relevant) and multiple entries if you plan to travel. If you are studying abroad, please note that you will not receive work rights in all countries and that your time studying abroad is meant to allow you to study abroad, not work abroad!

You can research the VISA requirements and options for students using your host country's official government website. Visa processing can take weeks or months so apply well ahead of departure.

**Visa requirements:** If you are spending a semester abroad, many destinations require a **student or study visa**. Visa requirements differ depending on your host country and university. Once you receive your **host university acceptance letter**, begin your visa application as soon as possible (processing can take several weeks or months.) Check your host university's international office website for country-specific instructions. GLO can provide general guidance, but you are responsible for ensuring you meet all visa conditions. Keep digital and printed copies of your **visa approval** for travel and enrolment purposes.

**Tip:** Always use the official embassy or consulate website of your host country when applying for a visa, never third-party or unofficial sites.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE AND 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

UWA approved travellers including students on approved Global Learning Programs will receive travel insurance for the duration of their overseas program free of charge. You need to check any requirements about vaccinations,

police clearances, or biometrics depending on the destination country.

Some host countries require specific types of insurance for incoming students, for example **national health insurance** schemes in Europe/Asia. If your host university provides or requires a specific health plan, you must show proof of enrolment before departure.

## Private travel and leisure days:

If you plan to travel before/after your Global Learning program, or travel to a second country from your host country, you are required to have your own additional personal travel insurance to cover the additional time and locations.

## Your additional travel insurance - What to check:

- » Ensure your policy covers **medical care, hospitalisation, mental health services, and emergency evacuation or repatriation.**
- » Bring a **copy of your policy** and your insurer's **emergency contact details** with you

## Healix

All UWA students participating in an approved global learning program are **covered by Healix 24/7 emergency assistance.**

This policy provides protection for medical emergencies

You must complete the **Healix online travel safety course** before departure. This course is paid for by UWA and is a mandatory step in your pre-departure preparation.

You must download the **Healix Travel Oracle App** and **enable alerts** on your phone. This app provides country-specific safety updates, medical assistance information in addition to 24/7 emergency support. It's also includes an emergency call button.

**Tip:** Keep copies of your insurance documents accessible digitally and in print and know how to make a claim

## SmartTraveller:

All Australian students going overseas should **register and subscribe to updates** on the Australian Government's **SmartTraveller** website: [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)

SmartTraveller provides official travel advice, safety alerts, and contact details for Australian embassies and consulates.

Subscribing ensures you'll receive notifications about changes to local safety conditions or travel advisories in your host country.

## Centrelink and Financial Support:

If you receive Centrelink payments (such as Youth Allowance, Austudy, or Abstudy), contact Centrelink before you depart to check if your payments can continue while you're studying overseas.

You may be required to provide proof of your **enrolment in an approved overseas program** through UWA. Please note that you are only eligible for Centrelink payments if you have a UWA unit enrolment while overseas, such as through the Exchange Program, a WIL unit or others.

It's best to update your travel dates and overseas study details well in advance to avoid interruptions to payments.

More information:

[www.servicessaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au)

You can also find more information about how to obtain your Centrelink letter in Global Studio

## Other pre departure requirements:

Complete all **UWA Global Learning pre-departure forms and modules.**

Ensure your **passport, visa** and insurance are valid for the entire duration of your stay and double check that the **dates align** with your entire trip, including any holidays before or after your time abroad.

Make digital and printed copies of important documents (passport, insurance, visa, student ID).

Inform your family and UWA of your **travel itinerary and local contact information.**

## FINANCIAL PLANNING

Studying abroad can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your degree, but it's important to plan your finances early to make the most of your time overseas. The GLO has a budget planner that may be useful when planning financially for your experience. Consider the following when preparing your budget:

## Scholarships, grants and loan opportunity programs available

There are several funding options available to help cover exchange costs:

### UWA Scholarships and Grants:

**UWA Global Learning Grant:** supports students undertaking approved UWA programs.

**Faculty and School-specific Awards:** check your faculty website for discipline-based funding opportunities.

**New Colombo Plan (NCP):** for eligible students studying in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Government and External Funding:**

**OS-HELP Loan:** an Australian Government loan available to eligible Commonwealth-supported students studying overseas.

**DFAT and Destination-specific Scholarships:** occasionally available, check with GLO.

Exchange rates and currency

Before you depart, familiarise yourself with the **exchange rate** between the Australian dollar (AUD) and your host country's currency.

Monitor rates using apps such as **XE Currency** or **Wise**.

Remember that **rates fluctuate**, which can affect your budget for housing, transport, and food.

Always check whether your bank charges **foreign transaction or withdrawal fees**.

**Tip:** Keep a small amount of local currency on hand when you arrive for initial expenses like transport or meals.

## Budgeting and Cost Breakdown

To effectively budget for your study abroad experience, start by listing all sources of income, including allowances, part-time job earnings, and scholarships. Then, detail your monthly expenses such as rent, groceries, transportation and personal expenses.

Research the average cost of living in your host city. Expenses can vary significantly between countries and even within the same country. Accommodation: Check whether student housing, private rentals, or homestays are available and compare costs.

**Food:** Eating out regularly can be expensive. Learn where locals shop for groceries and cook at home when possible.

**Transport:** Look into student travel passes, bike-share programs, or public transport cards to save money.

**Social activities and travel:** Set aside a portion of your budget for trips, cultural events, and socialising; they're a big part of the overseas experience!

**Tip:** Many universities publish an estimated monthly cost of living on their international student webpages. Use this as a starting point when planning your budget.

# MANAGING YOUR FINANCES

Check if your Australian bank has partnerships or fee-free international accounts. Consider opening a local bank account in your host country for convenience.

**Cards:**

Carry at least two cards (e.g. debit and credit) in case one doesn't work or gets lost. Choose cards with low international transaction fees (e.g. Wise, Revolut or ING)

Remember: Always notify your Australian bank that you'll be overseas to avoid your card being blocked.

**Cash:**

Carry a small amount of local currency when you arrive (enough for transport and essentials). Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

ATMs are widely available in most countries, but fees can vary. Use **partner or in-network ATMs** to reduce charges.

Emergency funds: Keep a backup fund accessible in case of unexpected expenses (medical, travel changes, etc.).

## Opening a Bank Account:

Familiarise yourself with how to open a bank account in your host country. Some banks allow you to start the process online before arrival. Bring your **passport, student ID, and proof of enrolment or local address**.

## Budgeting tips:

- » Estimate and track your weekly/monthly expenses. Apps like Trail Wallet, Mint, Splitwise, or PocketGuard can help.
- » Take advantage of **student discounts** for transport, attractions, and meals.
- » Plan for **unexpected costs**, such as medical appointments or travel changes.

Note that students on exchange do not pay tuition fees for their host university. Your fees will be your normal tuition fees at UWA, either domestic fees (which you can defer onto HECS) or international fees. Billing will be per semester and any tuition fee owed is payable to UWA.

If you are participating in a program other than an Exchange Program, which does not include a UWA enrolment in a unit, you are in most cases required to pay tuition to the host organisation/institution.

# PACKING TIPS

Packing for your overseas experience can feel overwhelming, but being prepared will help you settle in smoothly. Plan ahead and consider the **climate, culture, and your accommodation type** when deciding what to bring. This list is just a helpful guide of some things to remember, but do your own research and pack accordingly. Keep in mind, you will likely purchase various items when you are abroad, so don't stress if you leave something at home.

## Clothing, toiletries and personal items:

As a general tip it is recommended to pack clothing that can be easily layered, with a mix of warm and cool weather items including a versatile and waterproof jacket.

- » Pack for the local climate. Check average temperatures and seasonal changes.
- » Include a mix of casual, smart, and weather-appropriate outfits.
- » Bring a few UWA or Australian-themed items to share your home culture!
- » Bring all essential toiletries and prescription medications in its original packaging with labels and a copy of your prescription
- » A small first-aid kit with basic medications

## Academic Supplies:

Notebook, stationery, and any course materials you may need initially.

## Electronics:

Devices: Laptop, phone, iPad etc  
Chargers

Power adapters and convertors for you electronics (check local voltage and plug type)  
Headphones.

## Other Essential Items

Local currency for immediate expenses  
Important documents (copies of passports/ insurance etc.)

# CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS

Respecting local customs and dress codes is essential;

- » Research the local dress culture/ expectations and pack accordingly

- » Bring modest clothing if studying in more conservative areas
- » Include items to cover your head or arms if required in public spaces
- » Pack a few dressier outfits for formal occasions, university events or cultural events.
- » It can be a thoughtful gesture for host families or new friends to bring a small gift from Australia (like a local souvenir)

## Also consider your living situation:

Check what is provided in your accommodation before packing (e.g., bedding, kitchen items, towels).

- » Bring a few personal comfort items, like photos or decorations, to make your room feel like home
- » Bring quick-drying fabrics where possible that can be easily washed by hand
- » Pack a pair of shower shoes
- » Bring earplugs and an eye mask for better sleep
- » If you're in a shared apartment or dorm, consider space limits.

## Additional Tips

Roll clothes to save space and reduce wrinkles. Leave room for souvenirs or shopping you will do abroad.

Label your luggage clearly and keep your contact details inside each bag.

Weigh your luggage before heading to the airport to avoid excess baggage fees.

# HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS

It is always a good idea to consult your doctor at least 6-8 weeks before you depart and check the vaccination requirements of the country you are going to. Ensure you have enough prescribed medications for your stay, with copies of prescriptions and doctor's letter if needed. Keep in mind that you may not be able to get your prescribed medication in your host country so plan ahead! Carry medications in original packaging and check legality in the host country.

## Accessing Medication and Seeing a Doctor

**Prescriptions:**

Bring enough medication to last at least the

first few weeks abroad, along with a copy of your doctor's prescription

#### **Check local regulations:**

Some medications available in Australia may be restricted or unavailable overseas.

#### **Refilling medication:**

Once you're settled, ask a local GP or pharmacist how to refill your prescription. You may need to see a local doctor to get a local prescription.

#### **Seeing a doctor:**

You can usually make an appointment at a local clinic or university health centre. In some countries, you can also use walk-in clinics or telehealth services.

Keep receipts for any payments so you can claim reimbursement through your insurance later.

#### **Mental health:**

Moving overseas can be exciting but also challenging. Reach out for support early if you're feeling stressed, anxious, or homesick. Many universities offer free counselling, student support services, and peer networks for international students.

### **Finding Local Healthcare Services**

Before you leave, familiarise yourself with how the healthcare system works in your host country.

Some partner universities may have on-campus clinics or counselling services available to students.

Find out where the nearest hospital, GP (general practitioner), and pharmacy are located once you arrive. Save their addresses and phone numbers in your phone.

Emergency services (police, ambulance, fire) have different numbers in each country, make sure you know them.

If you haven't already, download the Healix app and contact them for advice when finding information about local doctors and hospitals while abroad.

**Tip:** You may want to contact your host university's international office. They may be able to assist with a list of recommended doctors, clinics, and mental health services in your area.

### **Emergency contacts (embassies/consulates)**

Record and carry contact details for the nearest Australian embassy/consulate and local emergency services.

Keep emergency contacts accessible both digitally and on paper

### **Safety and security advice:**

Research local laws, customs, and cultural expectations to avoid unintentional offences. Be aware of common scams, crime risks, and unsafe areas in your host city.

Follow local university and UWA safety guidelines

Keep valuables secure and travel with awareness.

## **ACCOMMODATION GUIDE**

Finding the right accommodation is an important part of preparing for your time abroad. Your living situation will influence your daily life, social connections, and overall study experience, so take time to research and plan before you arrive.

#### **Research accommodation options early**

Explore housing provided by the host university (on-campus dorms, student residences, or home stays) if you are studying abroad.

Check private rental options (apartments, shared houses, student hostels).

Look into short-term accommodation (hostels, AirBnB, temporary housing) for the first weeks while searching for something longer-term.

#### **Use reliable sources**

Host university housing office or student services.

Verified student accommodation websites and UWA partner university recommendations.

If you prefer to live off-campus, look for verified listings on trusted housing websites or student accommodation platforms.

Consider student residences, shared apartments, or homestays.

Always confirm lease terms, costs, and what's included (utilities, Wi-Fi, furniture).

### **Types of Accommodation**

#### **On-Campus Housing: Through Your Host University**

Many universities offer on-campus or affiliated housing for exchange students or those staying for a short term program.

Check your host university's accommodation portal or international office website for application deadlines and room options. These options are often convenient:

- » Usually furnished and close to classes.
- » Great for meeting other students and accessing campus facilities.
- » May include meal plans, shared kitchens, or common areas.

#### **Off-Campus Shared Housing**

Renting an apartment or house with other students offers independence.

You'll need to manage bills, cleaning, and groceries collaboratively.

Check public transport routes and commute time to campus.

#### **Homestay**

Living with a local family can offer cultural immersion and home-cooked meals.

Often includes utilities and meals in the weekly cost.

Good for improving language skills and adjusting to local customs.

#### **Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)**

Managed student apartments with shared or private rooms, study areas, and social spaces. Usually modern, secure, and located near universities.

#### **Private rental/shared apartment:**

More independence, but requires dealing with landlords, leases, and utility set-up.

#### **Check practical considerations**

Location and transport links to campus and city centre.

Cost (rent, utilities, internet, deposit requirements).

Safety of the neighbourhood and access to facilities (shops, healthcare, public transport).

#### **Plan ahead**

Secure accommodation before arrival if possible, or arrange short-term housing while you search.

Understand tenancy agreements, payment processes, and refund policies.

Keep copies of all housing contracts and receipts

### **Before You Sign a Lease**

- » Read your rental agreement carefully.
- » Understand payment terms, bond deposits, and notice periods.
- » Confirm what's included (e.g., furniture, Wi-Fi, utilities).
- » Ask for photos or video tours if booking remotely.
- » Avoid sending money through unverified platforms.

### **Telecommunication**

Staying connected while being abroad is essential, not just for keeping in touch with family and friends back home, but also for navigating daily life in a new country. From sorting out a SIM card to managing mobile data abroad, a little preparation goes a long way in saving money and frustration.

### **Setting Up Your Phone Plan or eSIM**

Before you fly, take a moment to check your phone's compatibility and plan for how you'll stay connected once you arrive. Do some research into the country you are going to as well!

### **Check if your phone is unlocked**

Make sure your phone isn't locked to an Australian carrier. If it is, contact your provider to unlock it before you leave, this will let you use local SIM cards overseas.

Choose between these options:

#### **Local SIM Card:**

The most common and cost-effective choice. You can usually buy prepaid SIM cards at airports, convenience stores, or mobile shops. They're ideal for longer exchanges (over a month).

Tip: Bring your passport, it's often required for SIM registration.

#### **International SIM or Travel eSIM:**

If you're visiting multiple countries or travelling short-term, an international SIM or eSIM (digital SIM) is a convenient option. eSIMs can be set up online before you travel with providers like Airalo, Holafly, or GigSky offering global or regional data plans at an affordable price.

#### **Roaming with Your Australian Carrier:**

Some Australian providers (like Telstra, Optus, or Vodafone) offer international roaming add-ons. This can be convenient but is usually more expensive for longer stays. Great for short programs however (under 4 weeks).

### **Setting Up Your eSIM**

#### **If your phone supports eSIMs:**

Purchase a plan from a trusted provider before you depart.

You'll receive a QR code via email, scan it to activate the eSIM.

Once you land, switch to the new plan in your phone's settings and start using data immediately.

**Student Tip:** Keep your Australian number active on a minimal prepaid plan (or through Wi-Fi-only apps) so you can still receive verification codes from banks or services.

**Another Tip:** Make sure to read the email from your eSIM provider, some will only let you activate the sim in the country.



# BRIEF ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

## Arrival and Settling in Abroad

The first few days of your global learning experience are exciting, overwhelming and can be a little isolating! From navigating the airport to learning public transport routes and understanding local customs, here's how to make your arrival smooth and your cultural transition meaningful.

## Arrival Checklist

Before you start exploring your new home, take some time to get organised.

## Within your first few days:

Contact your family when you have arrived at your final destination.

## Arrival and Accommodation

Confirm your accommodation details and check in safely.

Take note of your address and local contact person.

## Documents and Registration

Keep your passport, visa, insurance details, student ID and other important details in a safe place.

Complete any required university registration or orientation tasks, if you are studying abroad. Register with local authorities if required (some countries ask international students to do this).

## Money and Communication

Set up local banking or payment options (e.g., travel cards or local bank accounts).

Activate your SIM or eSIM.

Add important contacts if you haven't already: your host university, embassy, insurance hotline, and local emergency number.

## Familiarise Yourself

Locate the nearest supermarket, pharmacy, medical centre, and public transport stop.

Attend orientation (if there is one and if you are studying abroad) it's a great way to meet other students on the same program get insider tips.

**Student Tip:** Give yourself a day or two just to settle in, explore your neighbourhood on foot, and adjust to the local time zone before diving into classes or travel if you can. Building a small support network early helps with adjusting so don't be afraid to introduce yourself to roommates and neighbours.

## Public Transportation & Getting Around

Public transport systems abroad can vary from ultra-efficient metros to laid-back local buses. Learning how to use them early on will make your life much easier.

- » **Research transport passes:** Many cities offer student discounts or prepaid travel cards for trains, buses, and trams. Ask your host university about student concession cards or apps
- » Use mobile apps like Google Maps, Citymapper, or local transit apps to help you plan routes in real-time.
- » Be punctual: Some countries (like Germany or Japan) are known for their precise timetables, while others are more relaxed. Always check the schedule before heading out.
- » Bikes & Scooters: Many cities have affordable bike-share or e-scooter programs (like Lime Bikes), a great way to explore while saving money.
- » Taxis & Ride Shares: Apps like Uber, Bolt, or Grab operate in many regions, but always check local equivalents or university guidelines for safe use.

**Safety tip:** Always validate your ticket where required, some countries impose fines for unvalidated travel, even if you've paid.

## Understanding Cultural Norms & Etiquette

Culture influences everything from how people greet each other to how they eat, dress, and communicate. Observing local norms shows respect and helps you integrate smoothly into your new community.

## GREETINGS & COMMUNICATION

In some countries, a handshake is standard; in others, people bow, kiss on the cheek, or wave. Formality levels vary, address lecturers or older people respectfully unless told otherwise. Non-verbal cues matter! Gestures that are friendly in Australia may carry different meanings elsewhere.

## Dress Codes

Dress expectations differ by setting. Universities are usually casual, but religious sites, government buildings, and formal events may require modest or conservative attire. Observe what locals wear and follow suit, it's the easiest way to blend in respectfully.

## Dining Etiquette

Table manners vary widely. In some cultures, it's polite to finish all your food; in others, leaving a little shows you're full.

Learn how to use local utensils (e.g., chopsticks)!

Wait for your host or the eldest person to start eating before you do in more traditional settings.

## Personal Space & Behaviour

Volume levels and body language expectations can differ. Some cultures speak quietly in public, others are more expressive.

Public displays of affection may be frowned upon in more conservative countries.

Always ask before taking photos of people, especially in cultural or religious contexts.

## Navigating Cultural Differences & Expectations

Adjusting to a new cultural environment takes time and that's completely normal. The culture shock phase is real, but it's also one of the most rewarding parts of being abroad.

## Tips for adapting smoothly:

- » Don't be judgmental! When something feels different, ask why. Differences are what make your experience rich.
- » Learn key phrases. Even simple greetings in the local language go a long way in showing respect.
- » Be flexible: Some processes or systems won't work like they do in Australia, so patience helps.
- » Respect local laws and customs: These can include alcohol restrictions, smoking zones, or rules about public behaviour.
- » Join clubs, volunteer, or attend community events to connect with locals. These experiences help you see beyond the tourist layer.

**Reflection tip:** Keep a short journal and take lots of pictures! It helps you process cultural differences and recognise how much you're learning along the way.

## Embrace the Experience

Studying abroad isn't just about academics. It's a chance to grow, adapt, and see the world from new perspectives. By staying open-minded, respectful, and proactive, you'll create meaningful connections that last far beyond your experience there and then!



# STUDYING AND ACADEMIC LIFE ABROAD

## Academic Life Abroad

Studying abroad isn't just about exploring new places it's also about experiencing a different academic culture. Every education system has its own expectations, learning styles, and rhythms, so understanding how to navigate them early on will help you succeed and make the most of your study overseas!

## Understanding the Education System

Every university approaches education differently. What feels normal at UWA might not be the same elsewhere (even at Curtin). For example:

**Class structures:** Some countries focus heavily on lectures and exams, while others emphasise small group tutorials, oral assessments, or research projects.

**Independent learning:** Many institutions expect students to take greater responsibility for their own study schedules, readings, and assignments.

**Grading and feedback:** Assessment scales, deadlines, and feedback styles can vary widely. A pass mark to a high distinction might be lower or higher than at UWA, and detailed feedback may not always be given.

**Academic calendars:** Semester start dates, exam periods, and holidays will likely differ from UWA.

**Tip:** Check your host university's academic handbook or orientation resources before classes start. Understanding their academic structure will help you set realistic expectations.

## Classroom Etiquette & Expectations

Cultural norms often extend into the classroom, shaping how students and lecturers interact.

**Participation:** In some countries, open debate and questioning are encouraged whilst in others, students may be expected to listen quietly and take detailed notes.

**Punctuality:** Being on time is important in (almost) all countries. Some lecturers may even lock the door after class starts.

**Addressing lecturers:** Forms of address can vary, some cultures prefer first names, others require formal titles.

**Group work:** Collaborative projects may be more common, and expectations for

contribution, communication, and deadlines can differ.

**Academic integrity:** Standards for citation and plagiarism apply everywhere but may be enforced differently. When in doubt, follow UWA's academic policies as your baseline.

**Student tip:** Observe how local students behave in class. It's the fastest way to understand what's considered respectful and appropriate.

## Study Resources & Support

Your host university will likely offer a range of academic support services, you just need to know where to find them.

**Libraries and study spaces:** Most universities have quiet study zones, group rooms, and computer labs available to students.

**Learning centres:** Universities may offer workshops on writing, referencing, and exam preparation similar to UWA's STUDYSmarter services.

**Academic advisors or coordinators:** These staff can help you with course selection, timetabling, or academic challenges.

**Language and writing support:** If English isn't the primary language of instruction, take advantage of tutoring or language programs to strengthen your skills.

**Tip:** Don't hesitate to ask questions, both lecturers and admin staff are used to helping international students adjust.

## Staying Organised

Adjusting to a new academic system means managing expectations, timetables, and workloads.

Keep a planner or calendar to track assessments and deadlines.

Balance study and travel, it's easy to get swept up in exploring, but staying on top of coursework will save stress later.

Form study groups with classmates if you can. It's a great way to learn local perspectives and share notes.

Remember that GLO is still here to help you. If you encounter academic difficulties abroad, reach out for advice on how it may affect your UWA credit transfer.

## Changing units

Ensure you seek approval for any unit changes

made, by your Student Office! You can contact them through AskUWA as per normal practise, even while abroad. Do not enrol in units that you didn't seek prior approval for, to ensure a smooth credit transfer at the end of your time abroad.

## Embracing a New Learning Environment

Studying abroad challenges you to think differently not just about what you learn, but how you learn. You'll adapt to new teaching styles, assessment methods, and expectations that build independence, resilience, and cross-cultural awareness. Every lecture, project, or group discussion is a chance to see your field of study through a different lens. Embrace the experience, be proactive, and remember success abroad is measured by how much you grow academically and personally.

**Tip:** Joining your host university's student clubs or local cooking classes is a fun way to meet people and learn about food traditions firsthand.

# PRACTICAL TIPS FOR DAILY LIFE

## Food, Dining & Local Culture

One of the most exciting (and delicious) parts of studying abroad is discovering how food shapes daily life and culture in your host country. Whether you're on a semester-long exchange or a shorter program, meals are more than just fuel, they're a window into local traditions, social life, and community.

Every destination has its own rhythm when it comes to meals. In many European countries, lunch is the main meal of the day, and dinners start late. In Asia, street food culture thrives, you'll find bustling night markets and food stalls offering authentic, affordable dishes. In North America, café and diner culture are strong, and brunch is practically a ritual for many students.

Try to embrace the local dining customs. Don't be afraid to sample new flavours or regional specialties, even if they seem unusual at first.

Exploring local food markets, small eateries, and family-run restaurants can often lead to some of your most memorable cultural

experiences (and delicious food) you'll enjoy in your life.

**Tip:** If you have allergies be very careful, many countries in Asia and across the globe cook food in peanut oil or other allergens so be extra cautious.

If you have dietary restrictions, learn how to communicate them clearly in the local language and research substitutes in advance. Specialty items like gluten-free or vegan products can be harder to find or pricier in some overseas places.

## Grocery Shopping Abroad

For longer exchanges, grocery shopping becomes part of your weekly routine, and it can look quite different from home.

### Supermarkets vs. Local Markets:

Larger supermarkets offer familiar brands but may be more expensive.

Local produce markets or small corner stores often have fresher, cheaper food (in some countries) and offer you a great chance to practise your language skills.

**Bring Your Own Bags:** In most countries, plastic bags cost extra or aren't provided at all, so keep a reusable bag handy.

**Student tip:** If you're sharing accommodation, consider cooking together with flatmates, it's cheaper and a great way to share cultures through food.

## Dining Etiquette & Tipping Practices

Dining customs can vary widely depending on where you are:

**Tipping:** In many countries (like the U.S. or Canada), tipping 10% or more is expected in restaurants and bars. In contrast, in Japan or South Korea, tipping can be seen as impolite. Across Europe, rounding up the bill or leaving small change is usually appreciated but not mandatory.

**Table Manners:** Some countries value punctuality and quiet dining; others celebrate long, social meals. Observe how locals behave and follow their lead (do your research depending on the country you're going to!).

**Paying the Bill:** Splitting bills isn't universal. Sometimes the restaurant expects one person to pay, or you may need to ask to pay separately, usually a case-by-case basis.

**Tip about tipping:** When unsure about tipping or etiquette, ask locals or your host university's student support team, they're always happy to help.

## Cafés, Street Food & Eating on a Budget

Living abroad doesn't mean eating out has to break the bank. Many cities have affordable food options if you know where to look:

## Student Cafeterias & Campus Dining:

Most partner universities have cheap canteens (refectories or cafeterias) where students eat.

**Street Food & Takeaway:** Often the best place to try authentic local dishes at low prices.

**Cafés:** Great for studying or catching up with friends, some countries have a thriving café culture where people spend hours socialising over coffee or tea.

**Budget tip:** Look out for daily specials or student discounts, many places near universities offer reduced prices for students.

## Embracing Food as Cultural Exchange

Food is one of the easiest (and most enjoyable) ways to build cross-cultural connections. Invite local friends to an Aussie dinner night and cook something from home. Likewise, accept invitations to try local dishes, these small gestures often lead to meaningful friendships and memories that last long after you've returned to UWA.

# APPS & COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Wi-Fi-based messaging apps like WhatsApp and Messenger are widely used for day-to-day communication. They're perfect for messaging friends and family back home without international SMS charges.

Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams are great for staying connected with UWA supervisors or joining virtual classes (if necessary).

Local apps: Many countries use local messaging services, for example, WeChat in China.

## Using Wi-Fi & Data Efficiently

Data costs can add up quickly abroad, so it's worth being smart about how you use it:

- » Connect to Wi-Fi whenever possible. Most universities, cafés, libraries, and

accommodation provide free Wi-Fi.

- » Download maps offline: Google Maps allows you to download areas for offline navigation which is a lifesaver if you get lost without data.
- » Use airplane mode overnight: Saves both battery and data.
- » Manage background data: Check your phone settings to prevent apps from using data in the background.
- » Download movies or music while on Wi-Fi instead of streaming on mobile data.

**Budget tip:** Track your data usage through your carrier's app or your phone's settings, it's easy to burn through data faster than expected when using social media or video calls abroad.

## Safety & Connectivity Abroad

Public Wi-Fi: Be cautious when using public networks for banking or entering personal details, consider using a trusted VPN for extra security.

Stay Reachable: Share your local number or WhatsApp with your host university and new friends so they can reach you in case of emergencies or events.

## Staying Connected to Home

Time zones can make staying in touch tricky. Schedule regular catchups with friends and family but remember to stay present in your new environment too. Disconnecting from home occasionally helps you fully immerse in your overseas experience and creates space for new connections and adventures.

# SAFETY AND EMERGENCY

Contact Information for Local Emergency Services. Knowing who to contact in an emergency is essential before you travel.

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

Each country has different emergency numbers. Look these up and save them in your phone as soon as you arrive.

Example:

Australia – 000

UK – 999 or 112

Europe (EU) – 112

USA/Canada – 911

### University emergency contacts:

Keep your host university's campus security number and international office contact easily accessible.

Note down the contact details for UWA Global Learning and your insurance provider's emergency assistance line.

### Local embassy or consulate:

Register with Smartraveller (smartraveller.gov.au) before you leave and note the contact details for the nearest Australian embassy or consulate. They can assist if you lose your passport, face legal issues, or need help during a crisis.

**Tip:** Keep a printed list of emergency contacts in your wallet and store a digital copy on your phone.

### Safety Tips for Travelling Solo or in Groups

Travelling is one of the best parts of going overseas as part of your UWA degree, but staying safe should always come first.

#### General safety:

Trust your instincts: if a situation feels unsafe, leave.  
Keep valuables (passport, phone, wallet) secure and avoid displaying them in public.  
Stay alert in crowded areas and on public transport.  
Avoid walking alone late at night in unfamiliar areas.

Learn local customs and laws: something acceptable in Australia may be frowned upon or illegal elsewhere.

### When travelling solo:

Share your travel itinerary and accommodation details with friends, family, or your host university.

Check in regularly via message or social media. Choose well-reviewed, safe accommodation and transport options.

Keep a backup copy of your passport and ID in a separate location.

### When travelling in groups:

Plan meeting points in case anyone gets separated.

Look out for each other especially on nights out or in busy tourist areas.

Discuss and agree on safety boundaries before your trip (e.g., transport, curfews, alcohol use). Ensure you have downloaded the Healix app, you can contact Healix in any emergency 24/7!

**Tip:** Download location-sharing or safety apps such as Google Maps location sharing, bSafe, or Find My Friends for extra peace of mind.

### Advice for dealing with lost belongings, thefts or accidents:

Even the best-planned trips can come with a few unexpected bumps, a misplaced bag, a stolen phone, or a missed connection. Staying calm, prepared, and informed makes all the difference. Here's what to do if things don't go exactly to plan during your time abroad.

### If Your Airline Loses Your Luggage

Lost luggage is more common than you'd think, especially on connecting flights.

If your bags don't arrive when you do:

- » Report it immediately at your airline's baggage counter before leaving the airport.
- » Provide your baggage tag (the sticker you get at check-in) and contact details.
- » Ask for a Property Irregularity Report (PIR) which you'll need for insurance claims.
- » Track your bag: Most airlines have online tracking systems or apps.
- » Claim essentials: If your bag is delayed, you may be entitled to reimbursement for basic items like toiletries or clothes. Keep all receipts.

**Tip:** Always pack essentials (medication, a change of clothes, important documents) in your carry-on, just in case your checked luggage takes a different route than you do.

### Lost or Stolen Belongings

Losing personal items can be stressful, especially abroad, but taking quick action can prevent further issues.

#### 1. Stay calm and retrace your steps.

Check with nearby staff, public transport offices, or campus security. Many cities have efficient lost-and-found systems, act quickly while you're still nearby.

#### 2. Report thefts to the local police.

File a police report as soon as possible, even if recovery is unlikely.

You'll need this report to make an insurance claim or replace official documents like passports or student IDs.

#### 3. Contact your insurance provider.

Most travel insurance policies cover theft and loss of valuables, but you'll need documentation.

Keep a digital copy of your policy number and emergency contact details in your phone and email.

#### 4. Notify your host university.

The International Office at your host university may be able to help you translate or navigate local procedures if language barriers make reporting tricky.

**Student Tip:** Make digital backups of important items before you leave, passport, ID, insurance details, flight tickets, and student cards. Store copies securely online (e.g., Google Drive or iCloud). Drive is usually a good option because you can sign in from a separate computer if needed.

### Lost Wallet or Bank Cards

If your wallet goes missing or is stolen:

- » Block your cards immediately using your bank's app or hotline.
- » Contact your bank for replacement options, they can often ship cards abroad or help transfer funds.

» Keep a small emergency stash of cash in a safe place (like your accommodation) separate from your wallet.

**Tip:** Consider using a travel money card, it's safer than carrying large amounts of cash and easy to replace if lost.

### If You're Involved in an Accident or Medical Emergency

Accidents can happen anywhere, knowing what to do helps you stay safe and get the help you need.

Seek medical help immediately.

Contact local emergency services.

Visit the nearest hospital or clinic, most universities have lists of recommended facilities. Contact Healix 24/7 emergency assist.

Keep receipts and documents related to medical treatment or hospital visits.

Contact your host university or GLO

They can help arrange support, liaise with local authorities, and contact your family if needed.

Inform the local Australian Embassy or Consulate if you lose your passport, need legal help, or experience a serious incident.

**Emergency Tip:** Save key contacts in your phone before you travel

Local emergency number

Australian embassy or consulate in your host country

Healix 24/7 emergency assist hotline

UWA Global Learning contact

Your local host university emergency contact

### Staying Prepared

Photocopy or scan all important documents (passport, visa, insurance card, student ID) and store them separately from the originals.

Use hotel or dorm safes when available.

Be cautious in crowded areas. Keep your bag zipped and valuables close to your body.

Stay alert, not anxious. Most experiences abroad go smoothly, being mindful just helps you respond confidently if something does happen.

### Final Advice

Losing something abroad or dealing with a stressful situation doesn't have to ruin your experience. You'll find that most people from airport staff to university advisors are understanding and helpful. Staying calm, following the right steps, and having good travel insurance ensures you can focus on what matters most: learning, exploring, and making the most of your time abroad.

# SOCIAL LIFE AND CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

While academics is a major part of your overseas journey, social life and cultural adjustments shape the overall experience. Making friends, building new connections for a lifetime and being open to cultural sensitivity helps get you socially engaged and slightly less homesick.

## Making friends

- » Go to orientation and events by university / student councils
- » Join clubs of your interest
- » Use common spaces like the study area, lounges and cafeteria
- » Try volunteering
- » Don't be afraid to make friends outside your classroom and course
- » Say YES!

## Cultural sensitivity

Learn local customs and traditions (examples of some places: bowing to greet, removing shoes indoors and eating etiquettes)  
Be open minded to different practices and celebrate or respect unfamiliar festivals  
Avoid sensitive topics of religions or politics when talking in group  
Learn basic local phrases

## Dealing with homesickness:

Homesickness is a common feeling experienced by many students overseas, especially in the first few weeks. It is a sign that you value your connections back home. You don't need to ignore your emotions.

In fact, acknowledging them helps you process and adapt faster. You can cope by:

### Staying Connected (in Moderation)

Keep in touch with family and friends through calls or messages, but try to balance this with engaging in your new environment so you don't feel stuck between two worlds.

### Create a Routine

Establishing a daily or weekly routine such as going to the gym, studying at a café, or cooking meals brings structure and comfort, making a new place feel more familiar.

### Get Involved Locally

Join student clubs, cultural events, or volunteer programs. Meeting people and building new friendships helps reduce feelings of isolation.

### Explore Your Surroundings

Take time to discover your host city. Finding favourite spots like a park, café, or bookstore can make the area feel more like home.

### Take Care of Yourself

Eat well, sleep enough, and exercise regularly. Physical wellbeing has a huge impact on emotional resilience.

### Reach Out for Support

Most universities have international student offices, counsellors, or peer support groups. Talking to someone who understands can make a big difference.

### Bring Comforts from Home

Having familiar items eg photos, snacks, or small keepsakes can help create a sense of belonging in your new space.

### Give Yourself Time

Adjusting to a new culture takes time. Be patient and kind to yourself as you adapt and grow through the experience.



# RETURNING HOME AND REENTRY



## Re-entry Shock/Reverse culture shock:

Returning home after your study abroad journey can be a bit challenging. You may feel disconnected, strange or disappointed after living abroad. You may expect everything to feel familiar when you get back, but often you have changed and things at home have also changed. Living abroad for a period of time changes how you see the world and yourself. Coming home can challenge your identity as you try to fit your new perspectives into an old environment.

## It is completely normal to:

Miss the independence and excitement of life abroad  
Feel out of sync with friends and family who can't fully relate to your experiences  
Be frustrated with old routines or cultural norms that now feel limiting  
Feel a sense of loss or nostalgia for your host country

## How to cope:

**Stay Connected** with friends from abroad or other students who understand what you're feeling.

**Share Your Experience!** Reflect on your growth and experiences and talk about what you learned, or present your experiences through photos, journaling, or campus events. Channel your energy into new goals, study areas, or volunteering to keep growing.

**Be Patient.** Give yourself time to adjust, just like when you first went abroad.

**Seek Support:** If the transition feels overwhelming, reach out to student services or a counsellor.

Volunteer with GLO or sign up with Perth International, UWA's club for students that went abroad as part of their degree.

**Remember:** Re-entry shock is a sign that your time abroad was meaningful. With time and reflection, you'll find ways to integrate what you've learned into your life back home.

## Integrating Study Abroad Experience into Your Resume

Spending time abroad through UWA isn't just an academic experience, it shows employers you're adaptable, independent, and globally minded. Highlighting your experience on the overseas program effectively can make your resume, LinkedIn, and interviews stand out.

## Reflecting on Your Experience

Take time to think about what you learned, both personally and professionally.

Ask yourself:

- » What challenges did I overcome while living abroad?
- » How did I adapt to new environments, cultures, and academic systems?
- » What communication or problem-solving skills did I develop?
- » Did I take part in group projects, internships, volunteering, or student clubs?

**Tip:** Use specific examples. Employers value real situations that demonstrate growth and initiative.

## Adding study abroad to your resume:

You can include your program participation in both the 'Education' and 'Skills/Experience' sections.

### Example (Education section): Bachelor of Arts - University of Western Australia

*Exchange semester at University of Amsterdam, Netherlands (Feb-Jul 2025)*

Courses in International Relations and Media Studies. Developed cross-cultural communication, adaptability, and research skills in an international academic environment.

### You might also mention:

Language skills developed or improved.  
Group projects or research completed abroad.  
Awards, scholarships, or leadership roles.  
Volunteer or extracurricular involvement.

**Tip:** Focus on **transferable skills**. Things like adaptability, resilience, teamwork, and intercultural communication are highly valued by employers.

## Showcasing it on LinkedIn:

Add your experience under **Education**, with your host university's logo.

Include photos, blog posts, or projects in the **Featured** section. Connect with classmates, lecturers, and local peers to grow your **international professional network**.

In your "About" section, mention how your time abroad on program XY enhanced your global perspective and employability.

## Discussing it in job interviews:

When asked about your experience, use the **STAR method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to describe how you handled challenges or achieved goals abroad. Employers love hearing how you turned challenges into learning opportunities, it shows initiative and maturity.



# USEFUL RESOURCES

## Emergency Contacts

It is essential to keep a list of local and international contacts in case of emergencies. Save these numbers in your phone and keep a written copy in your wallet or travel documents.

- » Local emergency services
- » Police, Fire, Ambulance
- » Nearest hospital/medical centre
- » Local university emergency contact

## Australian Contacts

- » Australian embassy / Consulate:
- » UWA Global Learning Office
- » AskUWA: [ipoint.uwa.edu.au/app/ask/list](https://ipoint.uwa.edu.au/app/ask/list)
- » Phone: + 61 8 6488 8199
- » UWA 24/7 crisis support line: +61 8 6488 2222 (option 1 for emergencies)
- » UWA Health and Wellbeing Services

## Health and Insurance Support

Overseas Health Insurance Provider (OSHC / travel insurer):

Local Medical Assistance:

Other Useful Resources

Smart Traveller: [smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au) — travel advisories, registration, and safety tips

**International SOS / 24-hour travel assistance**

**Your Host University's International Office:**

## Apps and Websites

Having the right apps can make navigating life abroad much easier. Before you go, download and set up these useful tools:

## Navigation & Transport

**Google Maps** or **Apple Maps** – directions, public transport routes, and local attractions

**Citymapper** – detailed local transit options (available in major cities)

**Moovit** – public transport schedules and route planning

## Language & Communication

**Google Translate** – text, voice, and image translation

**Duolingo** – learn basic phrases and local language skills

**WhatsApp / Messenger / WeChat** – staying connected with friends and local contacts.

## Currency & Finances

**XE Currency** or **Currency Converter Plus** – real-time exchange rates

**Revolut** or **Wise** – international banking, budgeting, and fee-free currency conversion

## Travel & Safety

**SmartTraveller** (by the Australian Government) – travel advice and emergency updates

**Triplt** or **Google Trips** – itinerary management and travel planning

## Local Websites

Familiarise yourself with local resources that can help you settle in and stay informed:

**Local Government Website:** Information on visas, housing, healthcare, and safety updates

**Public Transport Authority:** Timetables, routes, and ticketing (e.g., metro, bus, train services)

**Tourism Board:** Local attractions, cultural activities, and travel guides

**Cultural Events Calendar:** What's happening in your city — festivals, exhibitions, community events

**Student Networks:** University student associations, international student clubs, and social platforms

*(Replace with country- or city-specific links before distribution.)*

## Mental Health Hotlines:

*Numbers may vary by country but this is still an option if you need further support or want someone to talk to. Some of the Australian hotlines are 24/7 so you could also contact them at any time if you need.*

## University Study Abroad Office

GLO and your **host university's international office** are here to support you before, during, and after your exchange.

## UWA Global Learning Office

**AskUWA:** [ipoint.uwa.edu.au/app/ask/list](https://ipoint.uwa.edu.au/app/ask/list)

Phone: +61 8 6488 8199

Website: [globalstudio.uwa.edu.au](https://globalstudio.uwa.edu.au)

Support includes: academic advice, credit transfer, wellbeing check-ins, and emergency assistance

## Host University International Office

Provides: on-site orientation, visa guidance, student ID support, and local emergency contacts. Keep their contact details easily accessible throughout your stay

