Languages on Exchange

Students who intend to study a language on exchange should demonstrate a high level of language proficiency in order to successfully complete their courses in the target foreign language. In addition to the main eligibility criteria for the International Exchange Program, these additional criteria apply to language students:

- Passed at least 3 semesters of the target language at the time of application.
- Have achieved a credit average (65 percent) over all language units of study.
- Have at least one academic reference from the department offering the target language.

Students should normally have completed 4 semesters of language instruction at the University of Sydney by the time they leave for their exchange. Some exceptions may apply to students in the Advanced streams or those selecting universities that offer language instruction at beginner or intermediate level. An Exchange Adviser will be able to clarify specific requirements for your preferred destinations.

Priority for Language Majors

Students studying the language of the host institution as part of their major will be given priority placement for language destinations. Students are encouraged to consider a two semester exchange to gain the maximum benefit of the immersion experience, however, some destinations may only be offered to students on a one semester basis if places become scarce. As Japan is a very popular destination, applicants will only be permitted to apply for a maximum exchange duration of one semester (excluding the one year standard program at the University of Tokyo and Waseda University). There is also a one semester placement restriction at Sciences Po, France. In all cases, there is no guarantee of placement at your preferred destination.

Intensive Language Courses

Most host universities provide pre-semester intensive language courses which usually last a few weeks. These courses may count for credit towards your language major, if this study is approved by your course coordinator at the University of Sydney. Some of these courses attract tuition fees which cannot be waived for exchange students. These fees start from AUD$100 to several hundred dollars.

Customised International Programs for Foreign Students

In some countries eg: China, France, Japan and South Korea, customised programs are offered for non-native speakers of the language to help improve language fluency while learning about the customs and culture of your host country. In addition, a range of academic courses taught in English may be offered in other disciplines which you may be able to credit towards your Sydney course. These disciplines are normally focused on the Humanities and Business areas, however, some courses are offered in Science and Engineering eg: Tohoku University, Japan.

Placement tests will normally determine whether you must enrol in these customised programs or if you are fluent enough to enrol in regular courses taught in the target language. In some cases, eg: Geneva International Students Program (GISP), students will have to decide at the application stage whether they wish to take the program for foreign students or courses with regular students.

Short-Term Exchange Options

Several short-term options are available for study between 3-6 weeks at designated partner institutions on an exchange basis. These are offered during Winter (July) and Summer (January/February). Students may earn between 6 to 12 credits (excludes Tohoku University, Japan). Students on short-term exchanges are eligible for International Exchange Scholarships and OS-HELP Loans. Find more more at:


Academic Restrictions

Students in the Bachelor of Arts (Languages) must enrol in a minimum of 24 senior credit points for a semester of exchange undertaken at an appropriate university where your language major is the primary language of instruction. A minimum of 12 senior credit points must be in the language major.

Business Programs in Asia and Europe

If you are enrolled in a course at the Business School and also studying a language such as Chinese, French, German, Italian or Spanish, you may wish to consider applying to the partner universities for Business students in these countries. Some courses at these partner universities are taught in the foreign language and also in English. Some cannot offer language instruction alongside Business courses eg: China. The number of courses offered in English will vary from destination to destination.