Sydney Law School Exchange Program 2015

The University of Sydney offers an extensive range of student exchange programs with universities throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Many students have participated in these programs and have found them to be an exciting and challenging way of broadening their academic horizons and enriching their experience in different environments and cultures.

The exchange programs offer students the opportunity to complete a full semester of study overseas and to receive credit for this study towards their degree at the University of Sydney.

Why go on exchange?
Studying overseas is an exciting opportunity to broaden your academic experience and sample a different lifestyle and culture. Every year, Sydney Law School sends approximately 40 students overseas on faculty exchanges, and many more law students also undertake university-wide exchanges or study abroad opportunities. Students who have previously gone on exchange have found it to be a rewarding experience as it has added an international dimension to their law degree, challenged them academically and facilitated the development of new skills, and enhanced their personal growth and self-confidence.

A semester abroad is the perfect accompaniment to the strong global focus of the Sydney LLB and JD. Whether a student aims to work internationally or locally, every field of law is increasingly engaging with cross-border issues. Students today are entering a crowded and competitive graduate market, and an exchange provides graduates with a point of differentiation, a means of standing out from the crowd.

Testimonials from former exchange students and employers attest to the value of an exchange in relation to a career in law:

“I knew of Singapore’s reputation as a business and arbitration hub, its rise to global prominence, its multicultural nature, and the English-law basis of its legal system, and I thought that a semester at the National University of Singapore (NUS) would provide an interesting cultural experience as well as show me the training and knowledge required for a truly international career.

Studying in Singapore showed me the opportunities and challenges that a career in international commercial law could present. I have frequently used the knowledge I gained at NUS during my first years in practice, and I regularly catch up with my peers from exchange, who have started careers in law and business around the world. My time on exchange was an invaluable experience, and I hope that as many students as possible at Sydney Law School are given similar opportunities.”

Joseph Cayzer, solicitor, King & Wood Mallesons and former exchange student, National University of Singapore

“All business today is global, whether or not our product extends beyond the boundaries of our own nation. Every aspect of the supply chain is touched, in some way, by economic or legal influences in the international arena. In the last few years, legal practice has been transformed by this process of internationalisation. Our practice is organised around global sector groups and the laws that apply to our clients’ affairs often include several domestic laws as well as international law. A sensitive and nuanced understanding of different legal systems is critical in responding to client needs and providing wise counsel. Many lawyers in different offices have that cross-cultural perspective – giving them a breadth of vision and experience that is invaluable to the growth of a global law firm. We often form legal teams with both a cross-border and civil law/common law mix so as to bring that perspective to client matters.”

Donald Robertson, Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills
“Law is, to an ever-increasing extent, a profession with an international dimension. A commercial lawyer in Australia cannot expect to avoid transactions and disputes that traverse, not only borders, but also different legal systems. My team works in international disputes, dealing with foreign law and foreign lawyers on a daily basis, and the ability to grasp transnational legal issues is a vital skill. Students who have taken the opportunity to study overseas, and who have gained exposure to other legal systems and other approaches to the law, are appealing to us because they have taken an important first step towards acquiring that skill.”

Max Bonnell, Partner, King & Wood Mallesons

What types of programs are available?
The University of Sydney offers two types of exchange programs: University-wide and Faculty-specific.

University-wide exchange programs are available to JD and LLB students but are administered by the University’s Study Abroad and Student Exchange Unit. For details on participating institutions, application procedures and selection criteria please visit: http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/student_exchange

Faculty-specific exchange programs are available to students of a particular faculty only. Sydney Law School currently has exchange agreements with law schools in North America, Europe and Asia. These exchanges are administered entirely by Sydney Law School.

What is the difference between the two programs?
The Faculty-specific and University-wide programs are very similar. Eligibility for both programs is restricted to students in their final year and students can only attend for one semester. However, some of the reasons students might consider a Faculty-specific exchange are: the reputation of the law schools we have agreements with and the quality of the legal education, and the range and availability of creditable law units. Students seeking to study in the US should note they can only do so under the Faculty-specific program. US law schools will not accept law students under University-wide agreements.

How does the Faculty-specific exchange program work?
Sydney Law School currently has agreements with 20 overseas law schools which allow for the exchange of a certain number of students each year. Over the term of the agreement the number of incoming and outgoing students must be balanced and for this reason Sydney Law School may be required to alter the annual quota of students it sends overseas.

Whilst a student is on exchange, they are enrolled on a full-time basis at the University of Sydney and therefore pay the relevant tuition fees to the University of Sydney. Students may be required to pay some minor administrative charges or health insurance to the host institution, however, they are not required to pay any other fees.

Which universities participate in the Faculty-specific exchange? *

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Am I eligible?
To be eligible for a Faculty-specific exchange you must:
1. Be undertaking your final year of the JD or LLB in 2015.
2. Have a high credit average (70% or above). Many destinations require a considerably higher WAM including US destinations which require a minimum WAM of 75.
3. Be enrolled full-time at the University of Sydney (24 credit points) whilst on exchange.
4. Produce evidence that you are proficient in the language of instruction if applying to an institution where classes are taught in a language other than English (Japanese for Kobe; German for Humboldt).

All JD and LLB students are required to complete a minimum of 96 credit points at the University of Sydney. If you have already been granted more than 24 credit points of credit for studies undertaken at another institution, you will not be eligible for an exchange.

You are also expected to meet the progression rules of the JD or LLB and you should have completed most (if not all) compulsory law requirements prior to going on exchange including the Jurisprudence (JD & LLB) and the International Comparative and Transnational (JD only) elective requirements. If you have outstanding compulsory requirements to complete in your final year, you must provide evidence that you are able to complete these units at Sydney. Under no circumstances are students permitted to complete any compulsory requirement whilst on exchange or cross-institutionally.

How do I apply for a Faculty-specific exchange?
Application forms are available from the Law School Information Desk and Law School website. The application consists of three parts: general application form; statement of purpose; and two academic referee reports (including at least one law referee). You are also required to submit a curriculum vitae. Students are encouraged to approach potential referees early, as late submission of these reports may compromise your application.

Students are required to type their applications. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

Applications for the Faculty-specific exchange must be submitted by Monday 30 June 2014 for exchange in both semester 1 and semester 2 2015. Late applications will not be accepted. Incomplete applications, or applications submitted without relevant documentation, will not be processed. Interviews may be conducted for students seeking a place at a particularly competitive institution, or to verify a student’s foreign language skills. You will be advised of the outcome of your application in late August.

Is there competition for places and what can I do if I am not accepted?
Places in the Law School exchange are limited and highly sought after. While there is considerable competition for all exchange destinations, US exchanges are in particularly high demand. You should
give serious thought to all of your preferences. Although you will be assessed for your first preference, if there are not sufficient places, it is very likely that you will be assessed for your lower preferences.

Selection is not based on WAM alone, and a good academic record does not guarantee a place in the exchange program. The selection committee will consider your suitability and preparedness for an exchange, and academic performance is only one of the criteria used.

Students who are not successful in gaining a place on the Law School exchange may apply to the University-wide program for semester 2 or directly to an overseas institution as a non-award student. Students considering the latter option should bear in mind that they will be responsible for making all arrangements themselves and will be liable for any tuition fees set by the overseas institution. Students will not be permitted to make independent arrangements with any of the law schools with which Sydney Law School currently has an agreement.

**Enrolment and credit**

All students, whether on a Faculty-specific or University-wide exchange program, are enrolled in the unit *Law International Exchange Electives* prior to departure. Students will normally pre-enrol in this unit for the appropriate credit point value (24 credit points).

One of the most important aspects of the exchange period is the transfer of credit to your enrolment at the University of Sydney. You are required to nominate the units of study you intend to undertake whilst on exchange and have these approved by the International Associate Dean prior to departure. Once you have enrolled at the overseas institution, you will need to confirm your choice of units with the International Associate Dean. It is imperative that any variation to your unit selections is also approved by the International Associate Dean.

Upon completion of your exchange period, you will receive an academic transcript from your exchange institution listing the units of study undertaken and the results achieved. Please note that for both Faculty-specific and University-wide exchanges, you will not receive a mark or grade on your University of Sydney academic record for your exchange studies. Your record will simply reflect that you have satisfied the requirements of the program. It is important to note that the results you achieve at the exchange institution will not contribute to your WAM.

**What is the cost of going on an exchange?**

The exchange programs work on the basis of reciprocal agreements with overseas universities in which students only pay fees to their home institution. By remaining enrolled at the University of Sydney, you will not be required to pay tuition fees to the host (exchange) institution, although you may be required to pay an administrative fee. You are required to pay for your return airfare, visa and living expenses whilst overseas. A general estimate is AU$10,000 - $15,000 for one semester to cover living expenses, airfares, travel and health insurance, etc. Costs will vary depending on the exchange rate and the cost of living in each country. Please note that exchanges to the U.S. may cost considerably more and employment opportunities whilst overseas may be limited. Exchange funds can be made up of:

- Centrelink benefits (if you are already eligible)
- Personal savings
- Parental support
- Scholarships

**Sydney Law School Exchange Scholarships**

Sydney Law School will be offering a limited number of exchange scholarships for students undertaking Faculty-specific exchanges in 2015. These scholarships will be valued at AU$2,000 each and are awarded on the basis of equity. It is intended that these scholarships will enable students to
undertake an exchange who would not otherwise be in a position to do so, or to assist students who would experience serious financial hardship as a result of the exchange.

Students apply for these scholarships at the same time as they apply for the exchange. It is anticipated that students will be notified as to the success of their application shortly after they are made an offer of an exchange place.

**International Office Scholarships**

The International Office offers up to 380 International Exchange Scholarships each year. These are valued at AU$1,000 and are awarded on the basis of academic merit.

Most nominated students will be automatically considered for the scholarships – there is no separate application process.

As funding is extremely limited, please do not rely on anticipated scholarship funding when planning your exchange.

**OS-HELP Loans**

OS-HELP is an Australian Government loan scheme that assists eligible students to undertake some of their study overseas. Students must be Australian citizens, enrolled as a Commonwealth-supported student, and required to complete at least 6 credit points of their course upon their return from overseas. Further information on the scheme is available at:


**Frequently Asked Questions**

*Can I take a compulsory unit overseas?*

No. It is not possible to take a compulsory Sydney law unit whilst on exchange.

*Can I satisfy the Jurisprudence requirement of the LLB/JD or the International Comparative and Transnational requirements of the JD whilst on exchange?*

No. You must satisfy all compulsory components of your program at Sydney.

*Can I do honours and go on exchange?*

It is possible to enrol in both honours and an exchange, but it is not possible to be enrolled in honours during the exchange semester. LLB students must be residing in Sydney while they are doing honours.

*Can I take a part-time load while overseas or only attend for one trimester?*

You must be enrolled on a full-time basis and for this reason, must attend for a minimum of two trimesters. It is not possible to complete the equivalent of 24 Sydney credit points in one trimester.

*How are overseas units assessed for credit?*

Courses taken overseas are assessed on the basis of contact hours, assessment regime, credit weighting of the host institution, and general workload e.g. expected weekly reading, etc.

*Will I receive Austudy/Youth Allowance while overseas?*

If you are currently eligible for a Centrelink benefit, you should receive it whilst on exchange as you will still be enrolled at the University of Sydney and attending the overseas institution as part of a university-sponsored program.

*Which universities have foreign language requirements?*

Kobe requires proficiency in Japanese and Humboldt requires proficiency in German. Humboldt does offer a limited selection of English-language courses, but we do not recommend that students select
this law school on the assumption that a full-load of English-language courses will be available to them. Courses at all other Faculty-specific exchange institutions are taught in English.

*Does the program extend my degree by a semester or will it delay my graduation?*

Students attending an institution with an academic year comprising two semesters should not experience any delay in the completion of their degree or the processing of their results in time for graduation. It is your responsibility to ensure that Sydney Law School receives an original academic transcript from your exchange institution in order for credit to be processed and for your name to be placed on the graduation list (if eligible). Failure to do so may delay your graduation. Students undertaking an exchange in Semester 2 should note that results are not finalised in time for their name to be included in the provisional honours list published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in early February.

*Where do I live while on exchange?*

Many universities provide student housing such as dormitory accommodation on campus, or off-campus private accommodation. There is usually a high demand for this accommodation and students should expect to live in shared housing with other students.

*Can I work while on exchange?*

Work rights for international students vary from country to country. We do not recommend that students on exchange seek more than a few hours of employment per week, and they should not rely on anticipated employment to fund their exchange. We advise students to check the conditions of their student visa carefully prior to departure.

*Can I take any non-law courses while on exchange?*

You must undertake a full-time law load while on exchange. Although credit will only be given for units offered by the law school, you may be permitted to enrol in other courses for non-degree purposes. Students on Faculty-specific exchanges however, may not be permitted to enrol in courses offered by other faculties and should check with the relevant exchange institution.

*Can I apply for both the Faculty-specific and University-wide programs?*

Students are not encouraged to apply for both programs. If you are made a University-wide offer for semester 1 you will not be considered for the Faculty-specific exchange. If you do not receive an offer for Faculty-specific exchange, you will have the opportunity to apply for University-wide exchange in semester 2. Students that do apply for both programs will not receive offers for both programs.

**Further information**

*Faculty-specific exchange*
Professional Law Programs  
Sydney Law School  
Email: law.professional@sydney.edu.au  
JD students: sydney.edu.au/law/cstudent/jd/exchange.shtml

*University-wide exchange*
Study Abroad and Student Exchange Unit  
International Services  
Telephone: 8627 8322  
Email: international.exchange@sydney.edu.au  
Website: sydney.edu.au/current_students/student_exchange