Studying in Australia/New Zealand: An Application Timeline

Every year thousands of international students flock to one of Australia’s 39 and New Zealand’s eight universities. According to the latest available figures, only the USA and Britain attract more students than Oz, and little New Zealand isn’t too far behind.

And maybe you’re thinking of joining them – after all, endless beaches, azure oceans and year-round sunshine don’t sound too bad really, do they? And neither do epic scenery, a world famous student party culture, or koala bears and the occasional penguin.

Oh, and you can also add top-notch universities to the list. Between Australia’s elite Group of Eight (think of it as an Antipodean Ivy League) and the Australian Technology Network universities, New Zealand’s highly respected Universities of Auckland and Otago, and the many other high calibre institutions beyond these, these two nations can boast some of the world’s best.

How, we hear you ask, do I get in on this action? Well, you’re in the right place to find out. Below is a rough timeline which explains what you need to do to study in Australia and New Zealand (starting in the first semester), and when you need to do it by.

Remember though – always check everything with the university which you’re applying to. Australia and New Zealand don’t have anything equivalent to UCAS for international students so it’s going to be a little different at each university. Each will have an international office that will be happy to help you out, so take full advantage – that’s what they’re there for!

The academic year in these two countries, by the way, runs from February (the height of summer in the upside down bit of the planet) to November. Some courses start midway through the year but the vast majority start – as is traditional – at the start. The below guide is for Semester 1 entry.

**Timeline**

**Now:** This may well be the biggest decision you’ve had to take in your life so far. So it goes without saying that you should do as much research as you possibly can into the course and place which will define the next three years – at least – of your life.

Start with websites – both the universities’ and external ones designed to help you make your decision – but don’t leave it at that. Attend some fairs, open lines of communication with the universities themselves, and if you get a chance, even fly out to have a look. This is certainly something you should take your time with, but try and start earlier rather than finishing later.

Also look into funding and loans. You don’t want to find out too late in the day that you’ve missed the application deadline for something you were relying on.

**May-September:** Made up your mind on a couple of places (having a back up is wise) and courses? Meet their academic requirements? Then it’s time to apply! You should be able to do this online, through the university’s website. Deadlines tend to fall towards the end of October, though some universities don’t operate one specifically but advise you apply by a similar sort of point. It’s impossible to emphasize how important it is to check when the cut off point is with the university itself; you can usually find out online. In many cases, there will be different ones for different courses.
However, thought the deadline is in October doesn’t mean you have to wait until then to apply (though some people like to wait for their results first in order to secure a firm offer). Remember you’re moving to the other side of the planet so there will be other thing to get in order first. Universities also tend to receive a glut of applications around the deadline.

Make life easier for yourself by checking what you need to apply, which will be mostly stuff about your academic record, and getting it together well in advance. You don’t want to get halfway through and realise you need to make another trip to the notary’s office...

Once again, keep in mind that different deadlines may apply if you’re looking to get a scholarship, be they external or programs run by the university itself.

**August-October:** Your application shouldn’t take too long to process; let’s say four to six weeks at the very most. If you met the academic requirements for the course, confirming with the university you achieved the grades you needed if your initial offer was conditional, then there’s every chance that the news will be favourable. If not, don’t worry about it too much, there are still plenty of options for you to explore, and if you’ve left enough time, you can even apply to another university in Australia or New Zealand.

The next step is to apply for a student visa, which you can do online if you’re planning to study in Australia (on Immigration Australia’s website). If you’re studying in New Zealand, then you should go through Immigration New Zealand’s London office.

To get a visa, as well as basic personal information, you’ll need to show that you have a place at university, indicate that you can financially support yourself, show that you’re of good character (i.e. you haven’t committed any serious crimes), and possibly do a couple of medical checks. Nothing that you’ll find too strenuous.

If you’re studying in Australia, it is a condition of your visa that you purchase Overseas Student Health Cover from a certified providers for the duration of your stay. It is highly recommended in New Zealand too, though a reciprocal arrangement means that you will be covered in an emergency.

**Around the same time:** There may be cities in Australia (New Zealand is a little cooler) where the temperature during the height of ‘winter’ reaches levels which would be classed as a heatwave in Britain, but you can’t live on the beach, okay? So once you know you’re in, start working on getting yourself a place to stay.

Most universities offer some accommodation, ranging from colleges in the style of Oxbridge, to ordinary halls or self catered apartments. Places at these are limited, and will be distributed either to certain categories of student or on a first-come-first-served basis.

If not, then you can seek out some private accommodation with the help of your university’s international office. If you can’t find anywhere, they will arrange some temporary accommodation for you until you can find somewhere more permanent.

It might also be worth opening a bank account before you leave. And remember to buy yourself a plane ticket of course!
**Early January:** Let your university know when you’re arriving, as many will send out a welcoming committee to meet you at the airport, which can be very helpful when you step off a plane, dazed and confused, in a brand new country.

**Late January:** Land at the airport, meet the university’s representative, avail yourself of some transport to your new abode and unpack your stuff. Go to the beach, take a picture of yourself and send it back to your friends back in rainy Britain. Generally gloat.

**February:** Complete all the registration bits and bobs at university, attend orientation events, make some friend, and begin your course. Good luck!

*Remember, this is just a rough guide – make sure you check and double check everything with the universities to which you’re applying. You can find more information about studying in Australia and New Zealand on TopUniversities.com*