Many institutions around the world accept UNSW students for short-term research projects

UNSW students may be able to undertake components of their honours or postgraduate research abroad while still enrolled at UNSW.

By obtaining research experience or professional practice at an overseas university, UNSW students are able to complement their studies while gaining invaluable life experiences. Our students collaborate with innovators from world-class institutions, making important industry contacts while engaging in cutting edge research. Participation in an overseas research experience may also be recognised on your AHEGS.

How does it work?

With approval of your supervisor and faculty, research may be able to be undertaken at a recognised higher education institution for a maximum of 12 months, though most students will go for 3-6 months. This research can then be bought back to contribute to your research work at UNSW.
During this time you:

- Remain enrolled at UNSW,
- Have an academic supervisor at the host institution
- May obtain access to the library, student services, campus amenities and recreational facilities during your stay,
- May be eligible to apply for a student visa from the destination country.

Scholarships and financial assistance

Here you can find information on scholarships and financial assistance. Scholarships are also promoted throughout the year on our Learning Abroad Notices.

UNSW Travel Scholarships

UNSW is providing $1,000 International Mobility Grants (IMG) travel scholarships to selected UNSW students wishing to undertake learning abroad programs. For more information please Search the UNSW Scholarships.

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

The DAAD is Germany’s largest scholarship awarding organisation and runs several programs to support academic exchange between Germany and other countries. For more information please visit https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/

Other financial assistance

Many overseas governments and organisations offer scholarships and assistance to students going on exchange. For details please consult the relevant organisation or country consulate.

How to apply

Choosing the right destination is an important decision. We recommend that you follow these procedures to organise your overseas experience:

1) Consider your motivation

Consider why you are interested in undertaking research overseas? Do you wish to:

- Gain international industry experience
- Enhance your area of research
- Go to a specific country or region
- Go to a specific institution

2) Find out about your options

Each term the Study Abroad and Exchange Office hold information sessions about international experiences including exchange, research, short courses, internships etc that are available to UNSW students. These sessions provide general information on studying overseas and how to begin researching universities. These sessions are a good opportunity to ask questions and gather information.
Once you’ve attended an information session and begin researching foreign universities and you can also discuss your plans with our Learning Abroad Advisors.

3) Discuss your proposal with your UNSW supervisor or faculty

You should discuss your proposed research options with your UNSW Supervisor, UNSW Program Coordinator or Faculty and gain their approval. UNSW staff have connections and world-wide experience thus may be able to assist with formulating a plan.

4) Find and contact a supervisor

Research potential supervisors at foreign universities and ask if they are willing to host you. When looking for a supervisor, it’s important to align the area you wish to research with that of the proposed supervisor. Supervisors are often found through UNSW staff connections with our partner institutions. We would recommend that students speak with their UNSW supervisor or school staff for recommendations.

If there’s no existing research connection, we recommend researching authors of journal articles related to your research area or searching the staff and research web pages of institutions you are interested in.

Once you have identified a potential supervisor you should email them to introduce yourself and area of research interest. We have an email template that students are welcome to use - contact advisor4globaled@unsw.edu.au for a copy.

5) Prepare and lodge your application

Once you have found a supervisor who has agreed to take you on you should investigate the application process at the host institution. If required complete any application from the host institution according to their deadlines. Please note that the application process and deadlines will vary according to the institution. As a general rule organise the research placement at least 6 months before your proposed start date.

Postgraduate research students should also seek approval from the UNSW Graduate Research School through a Variations to Candidature | UNSW Research.

6) Notification of acceptance

The decision on your acceptance is at the discretion of the overseas institution. If accepted the institution will send you notification of your application information on your enrolment, associated fees and visa requirements.

When you have been accepted, email UNSW at advisor4globaled@unsw.edu.au with details of your overseas research experience, including the foreign university, topic of research and duration of overseas research experience.

You will then be provided with the necessary pre-departure and insurance materials.

After application

Once you have been accepted to an overseas institution, you should complete our online Pre-Departure Tutorial.

This tutorial covers useful information on preparing for your overseas study, including:
• Insurance,
• Travel registration,
• Passport and visas,
• Enrolment,
• Credit transfer,
• Health checks,
• Safety and security, and
• Settling in.

Contact us

Contact the Study Abroad and Exchange Office:

• Location: John Goodsell Building, Room G30
• Send enquiry

My research experience at the University of Northern Arizona USA was undoubtedly one of the highlights of my PhD studies and it makes me proud to be a UNSW student.

I recommend overseas research as it’s very important, above all for PhD students, to explore new ideas, make contacts, meet other people and see how they work.
Overseas research is a great opportunity to do something a bit different. It is also a great networking opportunity and looks good on your CV.