

# **Types and Opportunities: Outbound Mobility Experiences Offered to Australian Students**

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*Rob Malicki*

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## Background

As part of the audit of existing Australian outbound mobility activity, this project sought to identify the *types* of outbound mobility experiences that Australian universities and vocational education and training providers are *offering* their students. It is the most detailed data collection/ analysis of its kind that has been undertaken in Australia.

This piece of work sits alongside Alan Olsen's comprehensive quantitative benchmark of the numbers of outbound students, their destinations and demographics. That work counts experiences undertaken by students in 2012; this work counts opportunities offered to students.

## Methodology

A thorough analysis (web search/audit) of university's central and faculty websites was undertaken, and institutions were asked to contribute lists (where they exist) of the opportunities they promote. In cases where outbound mobility programs at faculty level were known to exist, but no public-domain information was found, phone calls were placed to individual faculties to request information on their options. Some 30 such phone calls were made.

In general, information about institutions' outbound exchange offerings, including partner institutions, was readily accessible.

However, non-exchange mobility options proved more challenging. Many options are not easily located through public-domain searches. In many cases, central international offices are also not aware of all of the activities being promoted around their institutions.

As an example, one institution promotes hundreds of non-exchange mobility options to students through its international leadership program. All these opportunities are promoted on a student-only learning platform and not on public-domain websites. As the institution was not able to provide a comprehensive list of programs promoted on this learning platform, this long list of options has not been captured in this first-iteration of the research.

## Institutions and Data

In most universities, data on all outbound programs was publicly available, other universities readily provided information on request. But, for seven universities, no data was publicly available on non-exchange outbound programs and no response was provided to the request for information. For a further four institutions the data publicly available (or by request) for non-exchange mobility options was very low in terms of numbers and clearly understated.

The author estimates that the 1,149 'non exchange' outbound mobility options identified make up around 80-85% of the *true* number of experiences being offered. Further iterations of this research are needed to improve the data available.

## Headline Results

- A total of 4,457 university exchange partners were identified across 39 Australian universities.
- A total of 1,149 non-exchange overseas study options were identified across 31 universities.
- Institutions have an average of 114 exchange partners and promote an average of 35 non-exchange outbound programs (the level of promotion of all these options varies significantly from institution to institution).

## Student Exchange Opportunities

A data collection was done across the 39 Australian universities' websites. In total the universities maintain 4,457 student exchange partners globally, an average of 114 student exchange partnerships per institution.

Of these, 962 student exchange partnerships are between Australian and Asian universities, representing 22% of all student exchange agreements held by the universities. From this it is clear that the Australian universities have been diligent in forming exchange alliances in the region. This suggests that the limiting factor for students going to the Asian regions for semester length (or longer) exchange programs is not the number of partnerships available, but rather factors such as credit transfer and 'opportunity cost' back home.

Of the Asian countries, the following number of exchange agreements has been identified.

Country	Number of exchange agreements	Country	Number of exchange agreements
Japan	321	Singapore	36
China	219	Malaysia	33
Korea	128	Indonesia	19
Hong Kong	62	Philippines	9
Thailand	44	Vietnam	6
Taiwan	43	Nepal	1
India	41		

The biggest destinations for Australian exchange students, unsurprisingly, also have large numbers of exchange agreements. A non-exhaustive list of these destinations includes:

Country	Number of exchange agreements
USA	709
UK	353
Germany	399
France	325
Canada	268
Sweden	184
Netherlands	138
Italy	118
Denmark	114

## Non-Exchange Outbound Mobility Options

A total of 1,149 non-exchange overseas study options were identified across 31 universities. This includes:

- 709 short term academic programs (e.g. partner-run summer and winter schools, or other short courses)
- 174 study tours
- 84 internship programs or opportunities
- 39 clinical, practicum or placement programs
- 62 language study options
- 45 volunteering options
- 21 research or field work opportunities
- 11 conference or moot competition options
- A handful of miscellaneous other opportunities.

Whilst options like partner university run summer and winter programs are likely well captured, faculty-based activities (such as study tours, clinical placements or research options) may not have been fully captured.

357 options are in Asia (including 86 to China, 42 to Japan, 31 to India, 30 to Hong Kong, 30 to Malaysia, 21 to Singapore, 21 to Indonesia, 17 to Thailand, 16 to Vietnam). This compares with 86 to the USA, 76 to the UK and 19 to Canada.

Non-exchange mobility options in Asia are widely offered in Australian universities.

Few of the 'new' overseas study experiences being established and funded under the AsiaBound grants program appear in the list of options. This is because the overwhelming majority of them are scheduled to run in late 2013 or in 2014 – thus they are currently being established and not yet being promoted.

AsiaBound projects that are 'existing' (i.e. have run in previous years, but also attracted funding from the first round of AsiaBound grants) have been largely captured in the research as international offices have been involved in the selection process for those programs.

As a result, we can expect to see a significant increase in the number of outbound options to Asia in future years as new programs are finalised and implemented. Anecdotally, it appears that approximately 50% of AsiaBound projects put forward for the 2013/2014 round are new (for example, some institutions only put forward new projects, others only put forward existing options, and others still put forward a mix of new and existing). If this is correct, then we can expect to see in the order of 140 new short-term outbound options to Asia in 2014 – an increase of about 38% (see the 'Formula' used below).

Formula:

- 2,800 higher education, short term grants were allocated in this round. This is equivalent to approximately 280, 10-grant projects.
- If half of these projects are new, we can expect to see some 140 new projects (or up to 1,400 new individual experiences in Asia) over the period from late 2013 to late 2014.

Apart from Asia, the other main destination region for non-exchange outbound mobility is Europe. There are 476 options listed in Europe - major 'offering' countries include France (82) and Germany (95). However, many of these programs are university-run summer and winter schools that, in a great many cases, are unlikely to be attracting many participants (see below).

Some 157 outbound mobility options are promoted to the Americas (USA, Canada, Mexico and South America).

The tables below are from the AsiaBound baseline audit. These show the *actual* proportions of outbound Australian students, in terms of destination regions by program type, as well as the main destination countries.

### Destination Regions and Types of International Study Experiences

Country	Exchange/Other Long	Short Term/Placements
Europe	48%	27%
Asia	14%	49%
Americas	35%	15%
Africa and Middle East	1%	5%
Oceania	0%	5%

### Destination Countries and Types of International Study Experiences

Exchange/Other Long	Short Term/Placements
1. US	1. China
2. UK	2. US
3. Canada	3. Italy
4. France	4. UK
5. Sweden	5. Oceania Region
6. Japan	6. Middle East/Africa Region

We see that 49% of outbound short program and placement participants go to Asia, compared with 27% to Europe. However, 31% of all program offerings are in Asia (357 of 1,149) compared with 41% of offerings being in Europe. This suggests that whilst universities may advertise more short program options in Europe than in Asia, short program options in Asia are better subscribed on a per-program basis than those in Europe.

The 157 program offerings in the USA/Canada represents 13.6% of all program offering – a close match to the 15% of students taking short programs in the Americas.

### Best performers in terms of range of non-exchange options

The largest individual listing of non-exchange programs is at the University of Adelaide (133 options listed). However, this may not be indicative of how comprehensively each of these options is promoted.

Other institutions with large listings include Griffith (76), Monash (75), Melbourne (68), Charles Sturt University (56), Victoria University (53), Wollongong (52), RMIT (51), University of Queensland (50) and Deakin (46).

Institutions promote an average of 35 non-exchange experiences (the median value is also 35 experiences).

## Disciplines

Due to the wide range of ways institutions define their non-exchange mobility programs, and a general lack of information available, it has not been possible on this first iteration of the research to analyse the disciplines of non-exchange mobility programs. Partner-university summer and winter programs particularly tend to be multi-disciplinary, making it difficult to establish which academics disciplines have access to the *widest range* of options.

Alan Olsen's quantitative benchmark, however, does pick the '*how many*' aspect of student numbers, disciplines and destinations.

## Use of third party providers

The use of third party providers in Australia is growing, although it is less extensive than in 'mature' study abroad markets such as the USA.

A non-exhaustive list of third party providers identified is below. These providers most commonly are offering volunteering and internship opportunities, although academic short courses, clinical placements and language options are also represented.

Institutions estimated that they receive information from at least 3-4 times as many organisations as they actually advertise. Based on this anecdotal evidence, an estimate is that in excess of 80 third party providers are active in Australia. Also anecdotally, the use of third party providers is growing as institutions seek extra ways of increasing outbound mobility with the limited resources at their disposition.

- ACICIS (Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies)
- AIC Internships
- AIM Overseas
- AIESEC
- Antipodeans Abroad
- Academic Internships Council
- Australia Volunteers International
- Australia-Indonesia Youth Exchange Program (AIYEP)
- CAPA International Education
- Challenges Abroad
- CIEE
- CIS Abroad
- CRCC Asia
- EDVenture International
- Global Vision International
- ICC Internships
- India Study Abroad Centre
- InternEx World Internships
- Internships Australia
- LEAP Foundation
- Projects Abroad
- Youth Without Borders

## Undergraduate vs Postgraduate

Overwhelmingly, non-exchange mobility opportunities being promoted by Australian universities are targeted at undergraduate students. The exception to this is within postgraduate MBA programs, which typically offer some form of international study tour option to their students.

This project identified 18 research or field work opportunities being promoted, with these almost exclusively being targeted at postgraduates.

However, with some 3,868 international research experiences captured in the 2012 quantitative benchmark, clearly this number of offerings or opportunities is significantly understated. It is likely that many international research experiences are facilitated 'offline' through faculties, making them difficult to identify without significant further research.

### **Vocational Education and Training Providers**

The AsiaBound baseline, the quantitative benchmark, showed starkly the lack of opportunities for students in vocational education and training providers to undertake international study experiences.

While all 39 Australian universities responded to the university survey, 15 vocational education and training providers responded. Six providers indicated that they had not been active in 2012, the other nine providers reported 177 outbound study experiences: 14 student exchanges, 148 short term study experiences and 15 placements or internships.

Up to this point, the best proxy for numbers of opportunities or offerings is the lack of take up of these opportunities as international study experiences.

There is change, essentially stimulated by government programs such as AsiaBound.

A future iteration of this research might find quantifiable numbers of opportunities and offerings in the vocational education and training sector.