

Cooperation in education between the EU and Australia has increased progressively over the last decade, with joint projects, sectoral policy dialogue, conferences and student and staff exchange programs.

## Partners in education and *training*

Below: Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Member of the EC in charge of Research, Innovation and Science visiting the Australian Microscopy & Microanalysis Research Facility (AMMRF) in Sydney in 2012.



Joint EU–Australia mobility projects have seen more than 1 100 students from 35 Australian institutions and 66 European institutions from 20 Member States spend a study period with the respective country.





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## *Education websites*

### **Bilateral study projects**

<https://aei.gov.au/international-network/europe/eubilateral-mobility-projects/pages/joint-mobility-projects.aspx>

<http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/australia/>

### **Erasmus Mundus**

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/programme/back\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/programme/back_en.html)

### **Jean Monnet fellowships**

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc88\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc88_en.htm)

If we had to use one word to sum up the ethos of the European Union, that word would be ‘freedom’. The EU, in all its various guises – from the EEC to EC to EU – has been built on the four freedoms – free movement of goods, persons, services and capital. Now there is a fifth freedom – the freedom of knowledge.

We talk much in Europe about the Knowledge Triangle – Education, Research and Innovation – and how this is the oil that runs the economic motor of the EU. We no longer talk about a brain drain but the ‘brain train’ where students, researchers and innovators from around the world interact and share information, creating a continuous circle of knowledge and innovation.

Australia and the EU are working together in developing and implementing education and training policies and practices which promote economic growth and prosperity. They held the Australia-EU Forum: Education in Industrialised Economies: Skills, Innovation and Economic Growth in Brussels on 19 November 2012. The delegation included government and non-government representatives from Europe and Australia led by the then Ambassador to the EU Mr Brendan Nelson and Mr Xavier Prats Monné, Deputy Director-General, Education and Culture, European Commission.

## **Education for better socio-economic outcomes**

Europe’s 2020 Strategy sets ambitious objectives for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth, and puts a strong focus on knowledge and innovation, sustainability, employment and social inclusion. In this context, higher education plays an essential role in society by creating new knowledge, transferring it to students and fostering innovation. Institutions throughout Europe have to adapt to a growing global environment – they are working to modernise, both in terms of the courses they offer and the way they operate.

The EU has just launched a new strategy – Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes. In this strategy, the internationalisation of education is recognised both through the systematic and coordinated application of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the ongoing development of the Bologna Process. International partnerships are fundamental to this new approach, at the level of tertiary institutions and vocational education and training institutes.





## Partners in education

The Joint Declaration on Cooperation in Education and Training between the EU and Australia, signed in 2007, has strengthened cooperation in a variety of fields. Education and training forms a key part of the new EU–Australia Partnership Framework Agreement which is currently being negotiated.

Cooperation in education and training with Australia has increased progressively over the last 10 years. Starting with a small pilot curriculum development and exchange project in 2002, it now features:

- annual calls for proposals for joint projects (including joint and/or double degrees)
- sectoral policy dialogue in the area of education and training (including senior officials meetings, joint studies, conferences and workshops)
- steady exchange of information on new programs, policies and initiatives.

The inaugural policy dialogue meeting between the European Commission and Australia was held in March 2009 in Melbourne. The focus was on reforms in higher education, as well as mobility and quality. This led to a joint EU–Australia Tuning pilot

project encouraging enhanced cooperation in higher education between Australia and the EU to align academic standards and reference points.

Subsequent dialogues were held in: Brussels on qualifications frameworks in 2010; Australia on early childhood education and care in April 2011; and Brussels on international education in 2012. In 2013, the theme was quality and recognition and in 2014, the focus will be on lifelong learning.

The European Commission is funding a project to implement U-Multirank – a new multidimensional, user-driven approach to international ranking of higher education institutions. Australian universities are prominently represented in the feasibility study on new forms of university ranking. >

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Left and top right: Education cooperation has strengthened links between European and Australian institutions.

Middle: The Erasmus Mundus program provides student and scholar exchange between Australia and EU countries.





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Above and middle: Australia and the EU have ongoing policy dialogues on a range of issues, including early childhood education and international education.

### **Student exchanges and joint degrees**

Since the first pilot project in 2002, the European Commission and Australia have jointly funded 21 curriculum development and mobility projects in higher education and post-secondary vocational education and training. This has allowed more than 1100 students from 35 Australian institutions and 66 European institutions from 20 Member States to spend a study period with the respective country. In 2012, the first joint degree project was awarded and another call for proposals has just been launched to continue this highly successful series.

Exchanges such as these give students the opportunity to develop their personal skills, improve their employment prospects and prepare them for working in increasingly globalised environments. They have also strengthened links between European and Australian institutions.

### **Erasmus Mundus program**

Erasmus Mundus is the EU's flagship scholarship program. It is built around three pillars: joint programs and scholarships; partnerships between European and non-EU higher education institutions; and the promotion of European higher education through projects to enhance Europe as a centre of excellence.

Australian students and academics have been highly successful in the Erasmus Mundus (EM) program. Since the start of the program, more than 200 Australian students and academics have received scholarships to take part in EM courses. Australian institutions have also been active in partnerships and there are 13 EM Masters Courses and six Doctoral programs with Australian institutions. In total, 13 Australian institutions are involved, with some taking part in two programs. Five are taking part as full partners and 13 as associates.

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The EM Partnerships program links leading universities in Europe with those in Australia and New Zealand to promote the study of EU external relationships by offering exchanges for postgraduate students, post-doctoral students and academic staff. The first partnership was announced in 2010 with six European partners, two partners in New Zealand and three in Australia. The second partnership focused on architecture and urban planning with five EU partners (Germany, Belgium Bulgaria, Portugal France), plus Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. In 2012, a third partnership was announced focusing on 'Networking on Environmental Safety and Sustainability Initiative for Engineering' with 10 partners from six EU countries (France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Czech Republic and Finland) and four Asia-Pacific institutions (Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand) These projects will enable nearly 300 exchanges in total.

Other collaborations include Jean Monnet Fellowships and, again, Australia has a good track record with three Jean Monnet Chairs, and several modules.

The Erasmus Mundus Partnerships program links leading universities in Europe with those in Australia.

Top: The three EU Centres in Australia create synergies, promote interdisciplinary dialogue, and generate collaborative research projects.

### EU Centres in Australia

The EU–Australia relationship in education is enhanced in other ways. There are now three EU Centres in Australia:

- ANU Centre for European Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra
- European Union Centre at RMIT University in Melbourne
- Monash Europe and EU Centre based at Monash University in Melbourne.

The centres are co-funded by the European Commission and their home institution. They encourage the study and research of the EU in Australia, as well as undertaking outreach activities to promote the benefits of the EU–Australia relationship. •





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# Student links and exchanges



European and Australian institutions welcome students from their counterpart countries. There are student links and exchanges across all levels of education, from primary school to postgraduate studies.



**Above:** Australian institutions incorporate the latest technology for their students.

**Above right:** European students in Australia enjoy a wide range of sporting activities. For example, at St Catherine's School, sports range from snowboarding and skiing through to rowing.

**Right:** Student welfare is an important aspect of international exchanges. St Catherine's was one of the first schools in Australia to introduce an innovative positive psychology program for all of its students.

Europe and Australia have been cooperating on education from 1788 when British settlement first saw a steady stream of Europeans coming to Australia to start new lives. Since then, cooperation in education has expanded and developed.

Education cooperation with the EU is important to Australia because of Europe's strong tradition of research and development, the existing academic linkages, opportunities for study in Europe, as well as the extensive cultural and people-to-people linkages.

Australia has a history of international education which continues today with its multicultural campuses, international teaching staff and global outlook. Australian institutions host around 40,000 students annually from Europe. In addition, other Europeans undertake short study tours or English language courses. The highest numbers of European students are from Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Czech Republic, Poland, Norway, Italy and Sweden.

Europeans are studying at all levels in the Australian education system, including high school and student exchanges. Many European students love the Australian lifestyle. Exchanges at the academic and research levels are also popular, with networks created across universities in Europe and Australia.

Australia offers high quality education and training at all levels for European students. Its education system is regulated by government and provides an enriching learning experience with dedicated student support. Australia is the third most popular English-speaking education destination in the world.

Both Australia and Europe emphasise lifelong learning as a key to ongoing personal, social and economic development, so exchanges and links are popular across all age groups. Student mobility between Australia and Europe is encouraged to share knowledge, expand networks and promote links across the two partners. •