



GAP SEMESTER



Australia and Bali Gap Semester Program

ISLAND HOPPING, CONSERVATION,
AND SURFING

www.pacificdiscovery.org

Overview

Snorkel, surf, and savor Indonesian cuisine while learning how to make a difference in the environment during this gap year program in Australia and Bali!

Hop onto this gap year program to go canyoning in the Blue Mountains, boating among the Whitsundays Islands, surfing in Bali, and snorkeling in the Great Barrier Reef. Along your journey, you'll hike to the top of a volcano for sunrise, go on a yoga retreat in Ubud, and experience life along the Gold Coast. There will be time to immerse yourself in Balinese culture with traditional cooking and dance workshops, interact with the local communities, and of course, explore the vibrant cities of Sydney, Byron Bay and Cairns.

You'll experience both adrenaline and tranquility through your adventures down under and the relaxing vibes of Indonesia's most famous island. Learn about marine conservation in the outer Great Barrier Reef, help a local food rescue organization, and undertake volunteer conservation work in National Parks. Prepare to be immersed in unique environments and cultures and learn about sustainability and conservation.





Safety

With our 20 years of operation and more than 100,000 student days in the field, we have an excellent safety record.

We even got voted as one of the Top Gap Year Providers for Safety by students on Go Overseas! Safety is something we pride ourselves on at Pacific Discovery, so it feels amazing to be recognized for the efforts we go through.



Accreditations

We have had our safety management systems assessed and accredited by the Gap Year Association (USA), Year Out Group (UK), and OutdoorsMark (New Zealand). Assessors have commented that our systems are among the best they have observed.



Who We Are

We are an accredited gap year provider that offers experiential gap semester and summer programs to some of the most amazing places on earth. Our programs are deliberate overland journeys, blending authentic immersion in diverse cultures, meaningful service-learning projects, rewarding adventures, wilderness exploration, and personal development.



Our Programs

Our programs are more than simply a travel, time-out or study abroad experience. Each is instead an overland journey of discovery, where students are immersed in a facilitated learning environment, designed to maximize the educational and life-skills potential.



Our Philosophy

We want to make the world a better place by providing extraordinary learning adventures that assist students in gaining the skills, confidence and insight to realize their potential in an increasingly global society; developing empathy for other cultures; furthering understanding of international issues; and heightening appreciation for the earth's wilderness and diversity.

Core Educational Components

Our programs are as much a journey of personal development as they are a physical journey, and participants are supported in reflecting together and thinking about their values, goals and what they wish to gain from the program experience.

PRE-PROGRAM

Prior to program start, participants are asked to create some goals for the program – this is personal and unique to each individual group member. Participants are given a suggested outline of skills and competencies that they can choose to focus upon.

DURING PROGRAM

At program orientation, goals participants have identified are discussed in a meeting with the program leaders. Throughout the program, ideas, tools and strategies are discussed that can be useful to help participants achieve their goals both on the program and for the rest of their lives. Participants are encouraged to journal during the program to assist them in clarifying their thoughts and define what they are learning.

TRANSFER AND FOLLOW UP

At the conclusion of the program, participants give a presentation to their group and leaders, summarizing how they've been challenged, what they've learned, how they've grown and how they intend to apply what they've learned to their lives after the program.

Towards the end of the program participants are also asked to write a letter to themselves imagining where they want to be in 6 months' time and identifying behaviors, habits and changes they wish to put in place. These letters are sent to them 6 months after program conclusion, helping reinforce the learning that has occurred.



Program Design

Each of our programs incorporate the following six core program components. These six interdependent components, provide immense opportunity for students to learn about themselves, to push their boundaries, question their assumptions, to stimulate problem solving and inquiry skills.



EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

Our programs are experiential education programs, meaning that learning is hands-on and tangible. For example, students will learn about a country's history and culture by immersing themselves in it, meeting local people and hearing life stories.



ETHICAL TRAVEL & SUSTAINABILITY

Students show respect for local customs, develop meaningful cross-cultural relationships, learn minimum-impact grassroots travel techniques and come to understand social and ecological issues on a deeper level.



OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

Immersion in the wilderness is an opportunity for students to become grounded, teaches appreciation for wild places and provides us the opportunity to explore local environmental issues and relate these issues to global environmental themes



SERVICE LEARNING

Volunteer elements built into our programs allow students to really immerse themselves in a place and share an experience with local people, bridging the gap that often exists between visitor and host.



CULTURAL IMMERSION

We immerse students in the local culture, through homestays, volunteer projects and language study. Students learn empathy for other cultures and build bridges of shared understanding.



PERSONAL & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the program, students are given leadership opportunities from facilitating reflection to coordinating the daily schedule.



Sample Itinerary

***This is a guide to what you can expect to do on program.
The order in which the activities occur might vary***

WEEK 1 | SYDNEY & CANYONING IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Welcome to Sydney, Australia! On arrival, you will be met by your Pacific Discovery Program leader and transferred to our accommodation in the heart of the world's most vibrant city. A comprehensive program briefing takes place where we get to know each other before we explore Sydney's famous harbor and beaches, the Opera House, and Australian Museum. Roll on the next 10 weeks!

We'll leave Sydney for the Blue Mountains. Our base for the next 3 days will be Katoomba, a town in the area that borders Blue Mountains National Park and its bushwalking trails. Whilst we are here we have time to explore the area, check out the famous Three Sisters rock formations, and take on a day of canyoning. Getting a well-earned adrenaline and endorphin kick is what's in store in this beautiful National Park when we go abseiling, rappelling and climbing!

WEEK 2 | SURF CAMP & CONSERVATION PROJECT

We journey north to an isolated section of the coast where we learn to surf during a three-day surf camp. Whether it is your first time on the water or you have a few days under your belt, our surf instructors will cater to everyone. Evenings are spent relaxing at the campground and playing games before a great sleep in preparation for another day's worth of riding waves!

At the heart of surfing is a connection-to-nature philosophy. We experience this in a hands-on way by undertaking volunteer conservation work alongside National Parks staff in a coastal National Park. The project revolves around bush regeneration and dune conservation near Crescent Head on the East Coast of Australia. This program aims to secure as many of the native plants and species that can be secured in the wild as possible for the next 100 years.



WEEK 3 | **BYRON BAY, SUNSHINE COAST & AUSTRALIA ZOO**

After some rewarding volunteer work, we head to Bryon Bay to take advantage of its beautiful beaches, boutiques, cafes, and an epic snorkel trip. After relaxing in Byron Bay we will head to Stradbroke Island, also called Straddie by the locals. We will gain an understanding of Australian history with an informative walking tour where we explore the shore of Dunwich, a place of cultural significance for the aboriginals. We will also snorkel around the rock walls and the fantastic reefs of Stradbroke Island, which is known to inhabit six of the world's seven marine turtle species!

From Byron Bay, we drive north into Queensland. Here we stay on the Sunshine Coast near another gorgeous beach and try whale and dolphin spotting again as we walk around the national park headland. We will also spend several hours exploring Australia Zoo, learning about the zoo's wildlife, and the conservation initiatives of its late founder Steve Irwin, a famous Australian wildlife conservationist that is also known as the Crocodile Hunter.

WEEK 4 | **FARMSTAY & ISLAND HOPPING**

Our next few days are spent on an Australian farm a few hours south of Brisbane. This family-owned and operating cattle farm offers people from all over the world the chance to experience outback life in a beautiful part of Australia. We'll explore the outdoors by taking walks around the farm grounds for epic sunsets and 360-degree views, and enjoy open fire BBQs.

On departing Alkoomi, we will drive up the coast until we reach the gateway to The Whitsundays, Airlie Beach. From the township of Airlie Beach, we spend an action-packed day island hopping among the Whitsunday Islands aboard an ocean raft. Enjoy snorkeling and visiting spectacular Whitehaven beach, often voted 'best beach in the world'. A travel day brings us to Magnetic Island, where the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area meets the rain forests of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Over half the island are bird sanctuaries and a national park with a large koala population. We will stay 3 nights on the island, giving us plenty of time for hiking, swimming and koala spotting.



WEEK 5 | **MARINE RESERVE CONSERVATION IN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF**

During the first few days of this week, you will take the reins as a group and decide what to do with Pacific Discovery's unique self-led section, which has long been ingrained in our DNA. As a group, you will take the time to look at the budget and timings to see how you spend your days. This means the power is in the group's hands!

We will end our stay on the East Coast of Australia in tropical Cairns. Cairns has a popular waterfront boardwalk and lagoon beach to relax in your free time. While we are here, we spend 3 days getting involved in marine conservation. We'll learn all about coral, marine life and sustainability for our oceans on the outer Great Barrier Reef. A visit to the Great Barrier Reef isn't complete without doing some underwater exploration ourselves of course! We are lucky to have a personal marine biologist guide us around the reef on an unforgettable snorkeling expedition! Be astounded at the diversity of this World Heritage area – spot sea turtles, a myriad of tropical fish, and other marine creatures.

TO BALI

WEEK 6 | **SELF-LED SECTION & BALI EXPLORATION**

In Cairns, we will also take the reins as a group and decide what to do with Pacific Discovery's unique self-led section, which has long been ingrained in our DNA. As a group, we will take the time to look at the budget, and timings to see how we spend our days. This means the power is in the group's hands. You can choose which activities to do, how to get between activities and which accommodation to stay in. This will help you gain independence and step into the instructor's shoes. The challenge is on, take the bull by the horns and plan an awesome section for the group!

Afterward, it is time to fly to the Island of Gods, Bali. Bali is an Indonesian island known for its forested volcanic mountains, iconic rice paddies, beaches, and coral reefs. Flying to the island, we will be met with clear water, jungle-covered land, and more islands than we can count. Our first few days will be spent making ourselves familiar with the island life in the seaside town of Sanur.



WEEK 7 | FOOD BANK, MANGROVE RESTORATION & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

This week, we will get hands-on with valuable volunteer work at a local charity organization that aims to reduce food waste. They do this by rescuing good condition excess food from hotels and cafes and turning it into delicious, nutritious meals for orphanages and other people in need. We will help them by packing and distributing these meals, supporting efforts to ensure no one in Sanur goes hungry. We have one more day of volunteering ahead of us - this time helping on a mangrove and coral regeneration project nearby.

We then make our way to the rolling rice paddies of Tabanan on the Southwest Coast. We stretch our legs in the middle of these rice fields hidden from the rest of the world and stumble upon local villages, a honey farm, and friendly locals along the way. Aside from some of the most beautiful natural scenery on the island, Tabanan also hosts a lot of spiritual and cultural heritage like the local royal palace, which was built in 1343 and is open for us to explore.

We'll continue to immerse ourselves in the rich Balinese culture by getting hands-on making various Balinese cakes and flower arrangements, learning how to prepare our favorite Balinese dish, and might even get an introduction into Balinese traditional dance!

WEEK 8 | SURF CAMP & SPIRITUAL UBUD

It's time to head to Padang Padang to improve upon our surfing skills. This won't be just a throwaway surf lesson, but a 4-day surf camp. We spend our days learning about the perfect body positioning and techniques and we'll be catching waves again in no time. When not on our boards, we will have time to relax by the pool, catch epic sunsets, and join in on some yoga practices offered by the camp. By the end of the week, we will be feeling confident enough to stand up, turn, and even look the part when walking along the beach with our surfboards.

At the end of the week we take a speed boat Instafamous Nusa Penida. The beaches and the views on this tiny island just off the Bali coast are incredible - make sure to have your camera handy! Here, we work with an organization that manages holistic conservation & community development programs on the Balinese Hindu island. They'll teach us about the Bali starling conservation work being done on the island, build nests, weave baskets, and give our time helping out amongst the local communities that call this island home. In our free time we will relax into "island time", explore the scenic sites, and wade in the crystal blue waters.



WEEK 9 | RICE FIELDS & YOGA RETREAT

It's time to head back to the mainland and say hello to the rice paddy fields of Ubud! Ubud is located in the mountainous area of Bali and is well known as a spiritual hub, making it an appealing destination for yoga practitioners. We will take in the unique atmosphere, wander past Hindu temples and markets, and visit a monkey forest that houses more than 300 long-tailed Macaques!

These last eight weeks have been packed and full-on! Now it's time for a little self care. A yoga retreat will open up our eyes to relaxation, meditation, and the need to slow our lives down. As well as enabling self-reflection, yoga increases strength, balance, and flexibility. We will spend our days nestled into the rice paddy fields of Ubud - a great oasis away from the lively city center. Here we will spend 4 days practicing different styles of meditations and yoga poses while learning about how to incorporate these practices into our daily lives.

WEEK 10 | VOLCANO SUNRISE HIKE & COOKING LESSON

This week we start by fitting in a sunrise hike up to Batur Volcano. Mount Batur is an active volcano located northwest of Mount Agung and is considered to have some of the best views on Bali. We will meet our guides for an evening overnight hike to get us a bit closer to the summit, and away from the crowds as we set up our little camp for the night. The next morning we will wake before the sun and get to the rim of the volcano for a gorgeous sunrise view over the surrounding countryside, lakes, and crater at the summit.

We dive into the heart of Balinese culture through a hands-on cooking lesson, learning to prepare traditional dishes from scratch using fresh, local ingredients. Then, we will spend our last few days enjoying what Bali has to offer and start program wrap. What a journey it has been! We will have traveled through and gotten to know two countries on the other side of the world, learning more about the world and ourselves.

**Each week there will be some designated free time so that you can catch up on email, do laundry, rest, and explore independently with others in the group.*

***Pacific Discovery reserves the right to alter and/or change the order of the itinerary, the focus of the projects, or the activities themselves due to dates, availability, and safety precautions.*



Program Highlights

- Learn to ride waves from surfing-guru instructors during not one but two surfs camp
- Learn to cook your favorite Balinese dish or get an introduction to making traditional Batiks
- Canyoning adventure in the Blue Mountains (swimming, jumping, and abseiling through waterfalls)
- Island-hopping in the spectacular Whitsunday Islands and the Great Barrier Reef
- Hike, swim and spot koalas on Magnetic Island
- Climb to the top of Bali's active volcano for sunrise
- Volunteer project around bush regeneration and sand dune conservation on Australia's East Coast
- Get involved in marine conservation in the world-famous Great Barrier Reef
- Help on a mangrove and coral regeneration project in Bali





COUNTRY INFORMATION

Australia: With a landmass comparable to the lower 48 states of the US, but a population of only 20 million, Australia is comparatively sparsely populated. This is due to the fact that by far the largest part of Australia is desert or semi-arid land commonly known as the outback. Australia is the flattest and driest inhabited continent, with the oldest and least fertile soils. Only the south-east and southwest corners of the continent have a temperate climate. Most of the population lives along the temperate south-eastern coastline. The landscapes of the northern part of the country, with a tropical climate, consist of rain forest, woodland, grassland, mangrove swamps, and desert. Australia has abundant and visible wildlife, from kangaroos to raucous parrots.

Indonesia: consists of over seventeen thousand islands with a population of over 267 million people; making it the worlds 4th most populous country. Indonesia sits on the ring of fire creating a string of volcanoes that run through some of its main islands. It has resulted in fertile soils, a factor in historically sustaining high population densities of Java and Bali. This grouping of islands is also home to a variety of wildlife such as the Sumatran Tiger, Rhinoceros, Orangutan and the Asian Elephant.



CLIMATE

Australia: March temperature - Average min/max 70/95°F Sep-Oct temperature - Average min/max 70/82°F

Indonesia: Jan-Feb temperature - Average min/max 78/82°F Oct-Nov temperature - Average min/max 75/80°F



MEALS

Australian cuisine is very similar to that of their neighbouring New Zealand - an evolved fusion of British and European traditional dishes with some local flair.

Special foods to try: kangaroo, shrimp on the barbie, yabbies (very similar to shrimp), emu, macadamia nuts, vegemite, chicken parmigiana (chicken schnitzel topped with tasty tomato sauce and cheese), barramundi (a local fish).

Bali has a wonderful cuisine fusion of traditional Balinese flavours, tropical fruit and coconuts, and with so many ex-pats living on the island, western food is also readily available.

Regular food to expect:

- Breakfast: cereals, toast, eggs, fresh fruits, yoghurt, tea and coffee
- Lunch: wraps, sandwiches, salads, dinner leftovers
- Dinner: barbeque meats, vegetables, lots of fresh salads, pasta, wraps, chicken schnitzel.



TRANSPORT

We will be traveling in our own group van with a luggage trailer for the duration of this program.

SUITABILITY

Gap programs are intended for students aged 17 - 22. This program is suitable for anyone of average fitness with an enthusiasm for conservation and new experiences. There is always a volunteering component in our programs, so we can give back to the places that give so much to us. You need to be prepared for some physical work during this volunteering portion of the program; i.e. trail building, tree planting or painting. You don't need to have had previous experience with travel or any of the activities offered.

ATTITUDE

The program is a shared group experience. We would like you to join the program with an open mind and a willingness to work together with your group mates to make the program an amazing experience. The programs focus on group cohesion. We appreciate you for being open to learning and challenging your ideas and assumptions in order to get the most from this summer abroad experience.

GROUP SIZE

Group sizes vary per program and are generally 12-14 students, accompanied by two experienced and qualified Pacific Discovery program instructors. Local guides assist with interpretation of some historical sites, cultural experiences, and activities.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

We have selected a dynamic team of inspiring, supportive, resourceful, and highly experienced instructors to lead our programs. Our program instructors are committed to putting your welfare and safety first. They are people in whom you can trust and confide, who remain objective whatever the circumstances, and who take a genuine interest in your well-being. They implicitly understand the importance of balancing the needs of individuals with group objectives, facilitating a high level of group cohesion, inspiring a genuine appreciation for the areas visited and an awareness of minimum impact travel ethics. All of our instructors have Wilderness First Responder (WFR) first aid certification, and extensive group leadership and risk assessment/management training.

ACCOMMODATION

Our accommodation will be a mixture of comfortable and clean hostels, lodges and campsites. Accommodation is diverse, comfortable and carefully chosen to fit our needs and varies per program.



FREE TIME

Programs are heavily scheduled so that we are always on the move and having lots of structured fun; but we highly value rest and reflection. There will be some designated free time in a town or city each week so that you can catch up on email and laundry and rest.



HEALTH

One component of all of our programs is outdoor adventures like hiking, biking and kayaking, so while you don't need to have done any of these before, you will need to be prepared and have the fitness level to give them a go. If you have any queries regarding health recommendations for travel, please contact your doctor, or a travel doctor, to discuss this. For further information refer to: [http:// wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/) We also recommend you be up to date on specific vaccinations that are required to travel in this region.

We recommend that you carry a personal first-aid kit as well as any personal medication. Please be aware that for legal reasons, our program instructors are prohibited from administering any type of drug. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.



SPENDING MONEY

Spending money usually goes towards drinks and snacks, personal shopping, laundry, email, entertainment, and optional activities. We recommend you budget approximately \$100 a week for this, but this varies per student and per program. The amount of spending money you bring depends on your budget and shopping habits. You need to bring this money yourself.

Optional activities are available on many programs that can add to this cost, such as skydiving, bungee jumping, extra surfing lessons, etc.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

Our students value the opportunity to wind down, immerse in their surroundings and talk to each other. We encourage students to self manage their phone use, and we strongly encourage flight mode. This allows students to still take photos and send updates to family when in wifi, but allows them to be fully connected to the locals, service work and community when they're out and about. You are able to purchase a SIM or use international roaming plans if you wish. The easiest option is to use the WIFI available at places we stay in main cities and towns. Family and friends will also be able to keep in touch and follow your adventures through Pacific Discovery's social media pages, and through an online Facebook album for your group (which your instructors will upload photos to each week).



PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Travel abroad requires a passport. If you don't have one, you need to apply for one as soon as you apply for this program.

US Government Passport website: <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>

If you already have a passport, it must be valid for more than 6 months after program end, otherwise you need to get a new one issued before joining the program. Pacific Discovery will contact you regarding visa requirements and arrangements after you apply for the program.



TRAVEL INSURANCE

Pacific Discovery requires all students to purchase a comprehensive travel insurance policy for the duration of the program. Travel insurance provides cover in the event of medical expenses due to illness, injury, and emergency medical evacuation. Travel insurance may also include cover for loss of baggage or personal effects, and trip cancellation or trip curtailment.

To arrange your policy, [click here to go to our website](#).



COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives greatly, and Pacific Discovery has developed rigorous policies for safety based on professional advice and endorsement. The health of our students is of the utmost importance at all times. We are working closely and regularly with health professionals on our COVID-19 policy, as the situation continues to develop.

[Read our full COVID-19 policy here.](#)



PEACE OF MIND

Pacific Discovery is an educational travel organization accredited with American Gap Association (USA). Since its inception in 2001, Pacific Discovery has taken several thousand students, graduates, faculty, family and special interest groups, on experiential travel and volunteer programs, utilizing a staff of experienced and qualified program instructors. We have an exemplary safety record, comprehensive Risk Management Systems and a database of alumni, parents, advisors and faculty, who are happy to be contacted for feedback. The program carries public liability insurance, and student funds are held securely until disbursement.

Program Tuition & Costs

A \$500 application fee is due when you apply. Upon acceptance onto program, a deposit is due within 14 days. Balance of program cost to be paid 60 days prior to departure.

Please find the up to date program tuition cost on [our website](#).

Included in Program Tuition

- All in-country travel and transport
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All activities, excursions, entry fees and adventure travel as described in the itinerary
- Informal lectures from resident experts on conservation and sustainability, history, and culture.
- Experienced program Instructors and local guides.

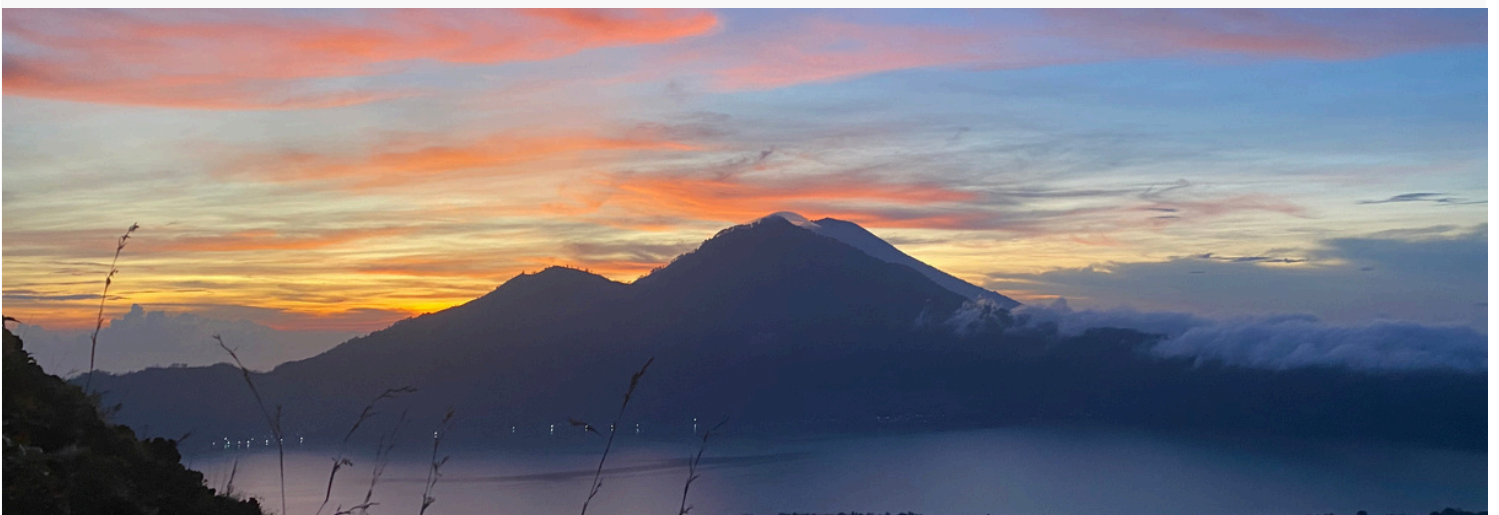
Not Included in Program Tuition

- Travel (international flights) between your home and the program
- Internal flights
- Visas
- Spending money (we suggest allowing \$15 per day for drinks, snacks and personal expenses)
- Travel insurance
- Optional academic credit
- Optional activity costs ie skydiving, bungee jumping, and additional surf lessons.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Students should not book their travel until after they have received the flight confirmation email from Pacific Discovery with the program flight requirements and travel agent details. This is sent out 2-3 months ahead of program departure. This information is also made available in the student portal login section of our website.

Our preferred groups travel agent, [The Travellist Co.](#), can assist you to arrange international flights from your nearest regional airport, and return home. We prefer you to arrange your flights through our group travel agent to simplify arrival logistics, and so that you are traveling to and from the program with others in your group.





College Credit

Our programs are a structured syllabus with clear learning outcomes that offer true personal growth and global awareness. As a reputable gap year provider since 2001, we have developed strong industry connections, including two educational institutions which we offer college credits through for our programs.

Pacific Discovery partners with Seattle Central College to offer college credit, a recognized educational provider who offers exceptional study options for students. We have been running college credit options for students for several years now with this provider, and as long as requirements are completed, the system has been an excellent option for students in regard to continuation of study, deferment and easy transfer to other institutions.

If you're keen to explore this option further, please reach out to us using the contact details provided at the end of this catalogue. We'd love to help you identify what options are available to you and support you throughout the process.

Scholarships & Financial Aid

We want to make our programs as accessible as possible. Although we charge the minimum we can for our programs, we recognize that they can still be difficult to fund for many families. Please note that these scholarships go directly towards the tuition costs for the program and do not include assistance towards the cost of international flights. We expect scholarship recipients to demonstrate their commitment to this opportunity by fundraising for their international flights, personal spending, and the balance of tuition.

Our students supplement the program costs in a variety of ways. We encourage you to get creative! Create a Kickstarter, find a part-time job, fundraise. Think big and small. Each dollar adds up to one amazing adventure abroad.

- Exploration Scholarship
- Diverse Voices Scholarship
- Financial Need Scholarship
- Gap Year Ambassador Fellowship

To apply, please go to pacificdiscovery.org/need-to-know/scholarships-financial-aid



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