Type of visa...
Your UCEAP Marine Biology/Terrestrial Ecology program is three-months long. Fortunately, this means you do not need the expensive semester or year-long student visa. If you are arriving in Australia on the start date of the program and returning immediately afterwards, you will only need an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA), Subclass 601.

If you are a non-U.S. Citizen
Visa regulations differ by country of citizenship. Visit the website for the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP). Do some research on your own to determine if there are any special entry requirements that apply to your country of citizenship. IF you are required to apply for a visa other than the ETA, note that you are not an exchange student and so are not eligible for exchange student visa subclasses.

Applying for the ETA
The application for the Electronic Travel Authority is available at http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/601-). Open the link and read the webpages carefully; they provide information on the cost of the ETA, conditions, process, and eligibility. Once you have read the information thoroughly and feel confident that you understand the procedure, complete ETA application as instructed by clicking the “Apply now” link. Note that there is of service fee AUD$20 which you may pay online by credit card.

Most ETA applications are approved within a few days. You can apply and then come back to the website later to check the status. Your ETA info will also be sent electronically to your airline. When you check in at the airport, the relevant agent will be able to verify that you are approved to enter Australia on an ETA.

Some students obtain the ETA from the travel agent who booked the flight. If your travel agent does this for you, be sure to show the agent your passport. The agent will need to enter your passport details into the computer reservation system.

You may stay in Australia up to three months at a time on this visa, and that is exactly the length of the program.

Personal travel before or after the program?
When making personal, individual travel plans beyond the program, you must do some excellent research and be sure that you have a valid visa for the duration of your total stay in Australia. Be proactive and engaged about this matter.

Options:
It is our understanding at the time of this posting that the ETA is valid for multiple visits (within a twelve month window) and allows up to three months for each visit. To use the ETA in this way, you would need to leave Australia, return, and begin the “new” visit (although you can only undertake study for one three month period, which limits you to the MBTE program). However, to be sure of the details please consult the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) before making travel arrangements.

If you know you will exceed the three month limit of the ETA and you do NOT want to leave Australia and return, you will need to apply for a longer visa. The Visitor Visa, Subclass 600, Tourist Stream may be the right option for you. Note that we are necessarily limited to advising you only on the requirements necessary to obtain a visa for the MBTE program, so do your research and consult the DIBP website for details.

Arrival in Brisbane
When you arrive at the airport you will be asked to provide your residential address. You will receive your housing assignment and address from the on-site staff in Queensland just prior to your departure, so carry this information with you and be ready to present it upon arrival.

Further Questions?
If you still have visa questions after searching the above websites, please direct them to:

The Embassy of Australia in Washington D.C.
1601 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington DC, 20036-2273
Tel: (202) 797-3000

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