

Guide to studying and living in Australia.

Your journey to Australia starts here.

After reading the guide you hold in your hands, you'll know everything you need to start a new life in one of the world's most exciting countries.

Studying in Australia is an educational experience like no other. The country's world-class universities, language schools and training courses foster innovative, creative and independent thought that'll give you a competitive advantage back home.

But there's more to studying overseas than just studying. The experiences you have and the friendships you forge in Australia will stay with you forever. Australia attracts students from nearly two hundred countries. They speak vastly different languages yet leave saying the same thing: living in Australia was one of the best times of my life.

This booklet explains why living and studying in Australia is so rewarding. It's also a handy reference guide to visa requirements and your rights and responsibilities as an international student, among other things.

In fact, what you hold in your hands could be called a guide to a new life. To begin your adventure, turn the page.

Start your journey here
www.studyinaustralia.gov.au



Before you leave.

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Taking the challenge of studying overseas means that there will be many things to plan and prepare for. Use this guide to help you plan your trip and prepare for the exciting adventures that lie ahead.

A few weeks before you leave home you should contact the International Office at your institution. They can help by providing advice on airport reception, temporary accommodation, orientation sessions and other services you may need help with.

Make sure you take copies of all documentation with you, including your passport, visa, travellers' cheque receipts, flight tickets, insurance documents and credit cards. Put copies in different places where they can be easily accessed in an emergency, and keep the originals in your hand luggage. Leave a copy of all of your important documents with someone at home.

Before you leave you should also consider the following.

- **Travel insurance** – make sure you have enough cover for yourself and your possessions, especially while travelling. Check that your policy covers you if you intend to work overseas.
- **Car insurance** – ask your car insurance company for a no claims letter before you leave home if you intend to buy a car. Car insurance is expensive in Australia, particularly for young people. Most no claims bonuses are transferable to Australian insurance companies.
- **Accommodation references** – if you plan to rent accommodation, try to bring references from your previous landlords. This will make signing a tenancy agreement a lot easier. Also make sure you have some current bank records to help prove you can afford the rental.
- **Medical records** – bring your medical records and medical prescriptions with a letter from your doctor if you need to take medication. You should also bring English translations of these.
- **Passport photos** – you might want to bring a few extra passport photos, as they will be useful if you need to get membership cards or visas for overseas holidays.
- **Money** – you should bring enough Australian currency in cash for your first few days and have access to \$1,500 to \$3,500 in bank draft/travellers' cheques (in your own name) to establish yourself.
- **Living costs** – visit www.studyinaustralia.gov.au for a general guide on living costs when you arrive.

Use this checklist to make sure you have all the documents you'll need:

■	Airline tickets and a valid passport with student visa.
■	Letter of offer from your study institution or a confirmation of enrolment slip issued by the institution.
■	Receipts of any related payments you have made including tuition fees, health cover, etc.
■	Letter of scholarship award (if applicable).
■	Original or certified copies of your academic transcript.
■	English translation of prescriptions for any medications you are carrying.
■	Personal identification such as a driver's licence or identity card, including an English translation.
■	Health insurance details (see page 48 for more details).

Your luggage

When packing your luggage, make sure you keep the items you might need to declare at customs easily accessible. Keep in mind that the check-in weight for economy class is usually 20kg (check baggage allowance with your airline). Your luggage should be clearly labelled with your name, contact address and the address of your institution.

It is advisable to lock your luggage, however if a search of your luggage is necessary due to security issues the lock may be broken.

Never agree to bring a bag or other items to Australia for someone else as it may contain something illegal and you will be held accountable for it.

Keep your passport and the Notice of Arrival or Confirmation of Enrolment from your institution with you at all times, along with the contact details of the International Office at your institution. If you are unsure of what to do at the airport, ask an official for help. They are always ready to guide you.



Arriving in Australia.

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When you arrive in Australia, certain items need to be declared. You will need your passport and Incoming Passenger card ready to go through immigration. You may then collect your luggage from the baggage hall and proceed to the baggage examination area.

Customs control and quarantine laws

- If you do not have anything to declare, follow the green channel.✘
- If you do have something to declare, follow the red channel.

Items you must declare on arrival:

- plant material (including painted, lacquered or raw wooden carvings, handicrafts and souvenirs made from plant material, straw products, bamboo, cane or rattan basket ware, potpourri, fresh or dried flowers, and items that contain bark);
- animal products (including feathers, bones, horns, wool, animal hair, skins, furs, shells, coral, bee products, live animals, and birds' eggs),
- all animals/protected wildlife;
- medical products;
- food (includes cooked and raw food and ingredients, dried fruit and vegetables, canned meat products, dairy products, fish and other seafood products, instant noodles and rice, herbs and spices, biscuits, cakes and confectionary, tea, coffee and other beverages, and seeds and nuts); and
- firearms, weapons and ammunition.

Note: Amounts of AU\$10,000 or more carried with you, or equivalent in foreign currency (meaning notes and coins of legal tender), must be reported on arrival or departure.✘

All luggage is x-rayed or screened on arrival. You must declare all food, plant material and animal products for quarantine inspection. If you fail to declare or dispose of any quarantine items or make false declarations you will be caught. You could be fined \$220 on-the-spot; or you could be prosecuted and fined more than \$60,000 and risk 10 years in jail. You will not be penalised if goods are declared.

The leaflets *What can't I take into Australia?* and *What can't be mailed to Australia?* published by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) provide a full list of goods that need to be declared and which ones are prohibited from entry into Australia. For more information visit www.aqis.gov.au.

There are also restrictions on which prescribed medicines you can bring into Australia. Check with the Australian Therapeutical Goods Administration at www.tga.gov.au.

Duty free goods

You may have to pay customs duty and sales tax on some goods brought into Australia. Travellers are allowed to bring the following into Australia tax free:

- \$900 worth of goods, not including alcohol or tobacco (\$450 for travellers under 18 years of age). For example, cameras, electronic equipment, perfume, leather goods, jewellery, watches and sporting goods; and
- 2.25 litres of alcoholic beverages, and 250 cigarettes or 250 grams of cigars or tobacco products other than cigarettes, for travellers aged 18 years and over.

If you exceed the \$900 concession allowance, duty and sales tax may be charged on the balance above the allowance. For more information visit www.customs.gov.au.



Your first few days.

Your first few days.

Many institutions offer an airport reception service for students who will be living on campus or in homestay. For a small fee, a representative from your institution will meet you at the airport and drive you to your accommodation. This service can often be arranged through your institution's International Office, and should be organised a few weeks before you leave home. Make sure you put the name and phone number of your reception officer and the place and time you have arranged to meet in your hand luggage so you can find it quickly.

Public transport runs to and from all international airports, and many regional airports. Buses, trains or taxis will be available at the terminal.

When you arrive at your accommodation, don't forget to contact your parents or relatives to let them know you have arrived safely.

Things to do

- Contact the International Office at your institution.
- Obtain a student card and concession cards.
- Enrol and attend the orientation sessions provided by your institution.
- Open a bank account, if you have not already (see page 25).
- Arrange permanent accommodation.

Settling in

The first few days you spend in Australia will probably be busy and emotional. There will be many things to do to prepare yourself before your studies commence, such as finding permanent accommodation and enrolling in classes. You may begin to feel the strain of being away from your family, friends and the familiar sights of home. To help you cope with this hectic period, it is important to be aware of what you should do and who can help you.

Start by exploring the city and working out where places such as your campus, local supermarkets and public transport points are in relation to where you live. You may also like to buy a local paper for ideas on what kind of community, sporting or cultural clubs are in your area. Joining clubs is a great way to meet new friends and become part of the community. Advertisements for community events, such as concerts or markets, will also be in the newspaper.

Where to find help

Your International Office is a great place to get help on everything from setting up a bank account to sorting out your enrolment. You should introduce yourself to the office soon after arriving in Australia and start making use of their services. Your institution will also have student counsellors who you can talk to if you're having trouble adjusting to life in a new country.

Your state or territory government website is also a good source of information. You will find maps, transport information, community clubs and counselling services, infrastructure information, a guide to local tourist attractions, arts and sporting facility information and links to other useful websites.

Australian Capital Territory
www.act.gov.au

South Australia
www.sa.gov.au

New South Wales
www.nsw.gov.au

Tasmania
www.tas.gov.au

Northern Territory
www.nt.gov.au

Victoria
www.vic.gov.au

Queensland
www.qld.gov.au

Western Australia
www.wa.gov.au

Find permanent accommodation

There is a variety of accommodation available to suit different budgets and needs, including on-campus accommodation or a homestay with an Australian family. Shared accommodation with other students is a popular option, and student noticeboards and newspapers often advertise rooms, apartments and houses for rent. Some institutions also post accommodation vacancies on their website.

Most accommodation, except homestay, does not include electrical items, furniture, bedding or kitchen utensils. Inexpensive household goods are available from second-hand retail outlets or are advertised for private sale in newspapers or on institution noticeboards. You may wish to bring some of your own basic items.

The International Office at your institution can provide you with advice on accommodation options. Temporary accommodation can be arranged for you before you leave home so that when you arrive you have some time to consider your long-term options.

Homestay (about \$110 to \$270 a week)

Homestay is popular with younger students and those studying short-term English courses. Single or shared rooms are available and the costs vary accordingly. Meals are usually included, but cheaper self-catering homestay is available. Another option is farmstay, which offers the same services in a rural setting. Educational institutions maintain a register of reputable families prepared to board international students during the academic year.

You should pay for your homestay rent and deposit (usually the equivalent of four weeks' rent) on arrival if you have not paid before you leave home. Make sure you get a receipt each time you pay the rent.

As you will be living in someone else's home, you will be expected to clean up after yourself, especially in shared areas. You should seek your host's approval before you install any equipment, such as a television, in your room. If you have any questions, talk to your host and they will try to help you. If there is still a problem, contact your institution for assistance.

It is a good idea to discuss the following issues with your host family when you first arrive. This will help you to better communicate with them, and to get the most out of your homestay experience.

- When should I pay for the rent or phone bill?
- What are the rules about using the kitchen, washing my clothes, going out and having my friends over?
- What time at night should I stop receiving telephone calls?
- When is the latest I can return home after school?
(For students who are in high school or under the age of 18.)
- How much notice should I give if I decide to move out?
When can I get my deposit returned?

Hostels and guest houses (about \$80 to \$135 a week)

Hostels are usually run by organisations such as Youth Hostels Australia (YHA) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Students share kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Shared accommodation (about \$50 to \$160 a week) and rental accommodation (about \$70 to \$350 a week)

Students often share with other students. When renting a house, apartment or bed-sit, the landlord (the owner of the property) will require rent to be paid in advance together with a security bond equal to four weeks' rent. Make sure you get receipts of these payments. This bond is refundable at the end of the lease, provided that no damage has been done to the property and adequate notice has been given to the landlord when you vacate the premises.

If you are planning to rent, check price ranges for housing with the International Office, real estate agents, university noticeboards, student and local newspapers and your institution's website. As most properties are not furnished, take into account the cost of buying furniture as well as estimates for electricity, telephone and gas.

Tips for renting

- Don't feel pressured into taking accommodation that does not suit you.
- Carefully check the property to ensure it meets your requirements. Note the condition of all fixtures, fittings and appliances (such as carpets, tiles, walls, phone and electrical outlets, ceilings and lights, and bathroom and kitchen items). Ensure that everything is clean and in working order. Anything not in serviceable condition should be reported to your landlord or real estate agent.
- Once you have decided to rent a property, you are required to sign a legal document known as a *lease* or *rental agreement* which sets out the obligations of the landlord and the tenant (the person living in the accommodation). This written agreement is usually for a fixed term (generally six to 12 months) and both parties are committed for the period specified in the contract. The lease will require the landlord to make sure all utilities are properly installed and in working condition, and the tenant must keep the property in good order.
- Before renting a property, you are entitled to a property inspection report which will list all items inside the property and their current condition. This property inspection report should be signed by you and the landlord or real estate agent. It will protect you from liability for damages not caused by you (such as damages from previous tenants).
- Do not sign any documents unless you fully understand them and can meet all the necessary conditions. Ask the International Office at your institution for help if you need it.
- Ensure you obtain a receipt for all monies paid, including bond, rent or deposit. Keep a copy of all signed documents for your records.
- You should buy contents insurance to cover your more valuable personal items.

You will probably be responsible for initial connection fees and all ongoing charges for electricity, gas, water and telephone. Deposits will be required before the electricity and telephone can be connected. Fees will vary depending on the state or territory you are settling in, and whether you are moving in to a city or regional area, but you can generally expect to pay about \$30 to connect electricity, \$30 for gas, \$60 for water and \$60 for phone.

Boarding schools (about \$8,000 to \$11,000 a year)

Many private secondary schools provide accommodation, meals and laundry services for international students. Tuition fees are in addition to the boarding fees. You will live in a dormitory with other students of the same sex and will be supervised by adults.

Campus accommodation (about \$80 to \$250 a week)

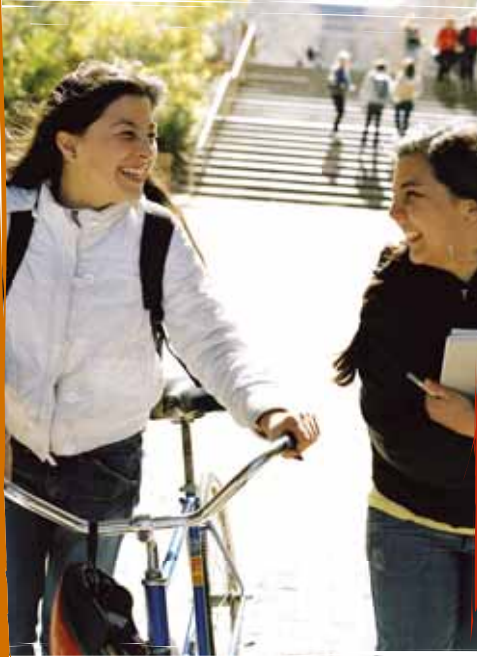
Most universities and some vocational institutions offer a variety of accommodation on or near campus, such as apartments, residential colleges or halls of residence. The cost varies depending on the type of accommodation.

Residential colleges are slightly more expensive and provide accommodation with meals. They may also have sporting and social facilities, tutoring, libraries and computer facilities.

Halls of residence are located on or near institution campuses and are generally cheaper than residential colleges. Students usually have meals and some cleaning services provided. Only full-time students are accepted. Students need to apply early because of the high demand for places.

Women-only or men-only accommodation

In boarding schools and university halls of residence you will only share rooms with people of the same sex. With all other types of accommodation, it is acceptable for you to specify that you prefer to share with either men or women only. Most advertisements for private share house living will state a preference for tenants to be a specific gender.



Living in Australia.

Living in Australia.

The first few months in any new country are often a time of great adjustment, particularly if this is your first time living away from home. In this section of the guide you will find some facts about living in Australia, tips for adjusting to Australian life and information on services available in Australia.

Basic Facts

The following are some basic facts about life in Australia. For more information, you can visit Tourism Australia's website at www.australia.com or the Study in Australia website at www.studyinaustralia.gov.au.

Our people

Australia has one of the highest standards of living in the world. It is an English-speaking country with a population of about 21 million. It is home to people from over 190 countries, and at least one in five Australians was born overseas. Cultural diversity is part of our national identity and is one of Australia's greatest strengths.

Our government

There are three levels of government in Australia: the Australian Government (Federal), state and territory government and local government (councils). The Australian Government is based in Canberra at Parliament House and is headed by the Prime Minister.

Our law

As an international student in Australia, you will be subject to all state, territory and federal laws. The legal age for buying cigarettes and buying and drinking alcohol is 18 years. *Remember*, if you break the law (depending on the offence) your student visa could be cancelled and you may be deported.

Australian police patrol public areas in marked or unmarked cars, on foot, on bicycle, and sometimes even on horseback. They are approachable and will offer assistance if you need it, even if you just need directions to the train station. You are encouraged to report any crime committed against you or that you witness to your local police station.

Time zones

There are three different time zones in Australia. Daylight saving also comes into effect in some parts of Australia during the summer months.

Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): Greenwich Mean Time plus 10 hours (Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland)

Central Standard Time: AEST minus 30 minutes
(South Australia and the Northern Territory)

Western Standard Time: AEST minus two hours (Western Australia)

Our states and territories

There are six states and two territories in Australia: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The capital city is Canberra, which is located in the Australian Capital Territory in the south-east of the country.

Currency

Australia uses a dollars and cents system of decimal currency with 100 cents in a dollar. The bank notes in use are \$5 (purple), \$10 (blue), \$20 (orange), \$50 (yellow) and \$100 (green). Coins used are silver 5 cents, 10 cents, 20 cents and 50 cents, and gold \$1 and \$2 coins.

Australian currency is the only legal tender in Australia. Money from other countries can be changed at the exchange facilities located at international airports, banks and major hotels. Travellers' cheques are easier to use if they are already in Australian dollars, but banks will cash travellers' cheques in almost any currency. Major hotels and some shops will also cash travellers' cheques.

Weights and measures

Australia uses the metric system of weights and measures. Speed and distance are measured in kilometres, goods in kilograms and litres, and temperature in degrees Celsius.

Climate and seasons

Almost a third of Australia is in the tropics and the rest is in a temperate zone. The coldest areas are Tasmania and the south-east corner of the mainland.

Summer	December to February
Autumn	March to May
Winter	June to August
Spring	September to November

Water

Australia is a very dry country and water is a precious commodity. Many Australian cities and towns experience drought from time to time and often have enforced water restrictions. Do not waste water unnecessarily. You should learn about appropriate water use when you arrive by visiting your state or territory's water board website, or ask your International Office. Tap water in Australia is clean and safe to drink.

Australian culture

You may notice differences in etiquette, lifestyles and values to what you are used to. Australians are informal which can take some adjustment, especially if you are more accustomed to a culture where ritual is important and where levels of status and authority are clearly distinguished and carefully respected. These are not obvious characteristics of Australian culture and you will be expected to be able to accept a wide range of people on an equal basis in informal situations. Here are some tips on Australian culture.

- **Addressing people** – Australians usually have a first or given name and a family name or surname. People of your own age or younger are usually addressed by their first names. When speaking to people older than you, call them *Mr*, *Mrs* or *Ms* followed by their surname until you know them well, or they ask you to address them by their first name.

- **Greetings** – *good morning, good afternoon* and *good evening* are formal greetings. Informal greetings are *hello, hey* or *hi*.
- **Please** and **thank you** – say *please* when requesting something and *thank you* when anything is provided to you.
- **Personal space** – standing closer than an arm-length from another person unnecessarily may make them feel uncomfortable.
- **Dress** – Australians tend to dress casually. If more formal dress is required, you will usually be told.
- **Queuing** – people queue when they are waiting in turn for something (such as a taxi, bus, at a ticket counter, or for a cashier). Never push ahead of others or “jump the queue” – it won’t be tolerated.
- **Punctuality** – if you can’t keep an appointment or invitation, or are running late, always call to explain before the event.
- **Smoking** – smoking is banned in government buildings, on public transport including domestic and many international flights, theatres, shopping centres and many indoor and outdoor public meeting places. Many restaurants have a smoking area as well as a non-smoking area. Always ask for permission to smoke.
- **Equality** – Australians believe all individuals have equal social, legal and political rights, as protected by the Australian Constitution, and like to be treated equally.
- **Spitting** – spitting in public is illegal and can cause offence.
- **Littering** – Australia is environmentally conscious and littering is illegal. If you litter, you may be fined.
- **Table manners** – Australians usually use cutlery for meals at home or in restaurants. If you don’t know which utensil to use for a particular course, ask first or watch and follow what others do. You can eat with your fingers at informal meals such as a picnic or barbeque.

Services

Banks

There are many banking institutions represented in Australia. Normal trading hours are 9.30 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Friday. Some banks are open on Saturday mornings, but all are closed on Sundays and public holidays.

Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are readily available for withdrawals 24 hours a day. Most stores and supermarkets also have Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale (EFTPOS) terminals where you can pay for goods directly from your bank account and make cash withdrawals.

Credit cards

The most commonly accepted credit cards are MasterCard, Visa, Bankcard, American Express, Diners International and their affiliates. Most businesses accept credit cards as payment. It is not necessary (or encouraged) to carry large amounts of cash with you.

Opening a bank account

You should open a bank account as soon as you arrive in Australia. While your passport will be adequate identification for the first six weeks of your stay, you will need further identification after this time. When you open a bank account, you may be required to provide a Tax File Number (see page 44).

Transferring funds

Money can be transferred to Australia via bank drafts or cheques and telegraphic transfer. Bank drafts from overseas will take a few days to arrive and can take up to 10 working days to clear through an Australian bank. Telegraphic transfers usually take a shorter time, but cost more. Cheques take about five working days to clear.

Electricity

The electrical current in Australia is 240/250 volts AC, 50 cycles and a three-pin plug is used. Adapters are usually required for most foreign appliances and a transformer may be required if you bring an appliance from overseas that operates on a different voltage.

Tipping

Tipping is not customary in Australia and service charges are not added to accounts by hotels and restaurants. At any time, tipping is a matter of choice in recognition of good service. You can tip food and drink waiters up to 10 per cent of the bill for good service. You are not required to tip taxi drivers.

Shopping

Australia's major town centres and capital cities have world-class shopping facilities. Hours are generally 9 am to 5 pm seven days a week, with late night shopping until 9 pm on Thursday or Friday. Some supermarkets are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Postal services

Postal services are provided by Australia Post and mail is delivered once a day from Monday to Friday. For larger parcels, a card will be left in your letter box for you to take to your nearest post office for collection. The postal service is reliable and efficient with next day delivery within the same city. Most post offices are open from 9 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday. They sell stationery, post bags, phone cards and stamps. You can also pay your electricity and telephone bills and some other accounts at a post office.

Telephone

Australia has a modern communications system. Public telephones are widely available and accept coins and pre-paid phone cards. Mobile phones are also very popular and are available from a variety of service providers.

Transport

Public transport

Australia has an extensive and comparably safe public transport system that includes trains, buses, trams and ferries. You can buy tickets at train stations, ferry wharves, at newsagencies or onboard buses and trams. Australia also has two major national airlines and a number of regional airlines. Airline bookings can be made through travel agents, the airlines or online.

International students are eligible for travel concessions in some states. Ask your institution if you are eligible.

Taxis

Metered taxis operate in all major cities and towns. You can call a taxi and book your journey by phone or wait at taxi ranks which are at transport terminals, main hotels and shopping centres. In some cities you can also hail taxis on the street. A taxi is vacant if the light on the roof sign is on. There is a minimum charge on hiring and then a charge per kilometre travelled. You may be charged a small fee for paying by credit card.

Your own transport

You may decide to purchase your own transport. A reasonable second hand bicycle can be bought for about \$200 and a good second hand car can be purchased for less than \$10,000. It is a good idea to have a second hand car inspected by a reputable mechanic to ensure it is roadworthy.

If you buy a car, you will be responsible for registration, repairs, fuel, insurance and service costs. It is compulsory to buy third party insurance which will cover the damage to other cars or property if you have an accident. You can also take out a more comprehensive insurance policy which will cover the cost of damage to your vehicle. The cost of a comprehensive insurance policy will depend on your age, driving record and the type of car you own.

If you will be in Australia for a period of no more than three months, you can drive with an international driver's licence or a valid overseas driver's licence. You must carry a translation if the document is not in English. If you plan to stay longer than three months, you will need to obtain an Australian driver's licence by taking a test on highway codes and regulations. You will also need to undergo a driver's test and obtain an Australian driver's licence if you purchase a car.

Australians drive on the left side of the road. The maximum speed limit is 50km an hour in residential areas and is usually 100km an hour on highways, unless signs indicate otherwise. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a serious offence, punishable by loss of licence and sometimes jail. Random breath testing, where the police stop your vehicle and measure the amount of alcohol you have consumed, is conducted in most Australian states and territories. For information on alcohol limits, visit www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au.

Traffic cameras are in use at many intersections to monitor speeding cars or cars that do not stop at red lights. If you are caught breaking the law a fine will be mailed to you and you may lose points from your licence.

Seat belts for drivers and all passengers are compulsory. You will be fined if you or any of your passengers are caught not wearing one. You will also be fined if you are caught using a mobile phone while driving. If you must make or receive a call, use a hands-free kit or pull over to a safe place on the side of the road.

Contact the Road Authority in your state or territory for more information on Australian driver's licences and road rules.

Personal safety

Australia is a safe and secure study destination and international students are welcome. However, as with anywhere you travel, you should take steps to keep yourself safe:

- always tell someone when you are going out, where you are going and when you expect to return;
- take care travelling at night on your own;
- make use of campus security escorts and bus services where available;
- never leave personal belongings unattended;
- always carry either a mobile phone, change for a pay phone or a phone card;
- it is always wise to take note of any security guidelines provided by your place of study;
- avoid giving your personal information to strangers; and
- lock your doors and windows before going out.

Emergencies

If you are faced with a life-threatening emergency, you should dial **000** on the telephone. The operator will ask you if you need fire, police or ambulance services before transferring your call.

Adjusting to Australian life

It can take time to adjust to living in a new country and being surrounded by unfamiliar customs. At first you may feel frustrated, lonely or homesick. Remember that these feelings are normal and are experienced by all travellers. They will subside with time and as you become more familiar with your surroundings and make new friends. Here are some tips to help you settle in.

- **Be positive** – remember the reasons why you chose to study in Australia.
- **Make conversation** – try talking to others who have been through similar experiences as they may have valuable insights.
- **Keep a journal** – this can help you gain perspective on the feelings you are experiencing as your time in Australia continues.
- **Stay occupied** – keep your mind and body active by filling your spare time with playing sport or taking up a hobby. This can also help you meet new people.
- **Socialise** – spend time with other students from other countries and Australia. This can reduce your feelings of isolation and loneliness and enrich your study experience.
- **Be flexible** – be prepared to adapt to the changing environment.
- **Watch people around you** – listen and observe the behaviour and communication of others. If you don't understand, ask questions.
- Your international student advisor or counsellor at your institution is available to discuss any issues you may have.

- Remember that just as you are learning about Australian culture, Australians you meet may not know much about yours. You may need to explain things such as which foods you can or can't eat, how your food needs to be prepared, and any additional religious or cultural needs. Always discuss the reasons behind your needs so people can understand and accommodate them.
- As your time in Australia continues, you will find yourself becoming more familiar and comfortable with the aspects of Australian culture that may have initially confused you. Just like at home, there are aspects of the local culture that you will enjoy and others you won't. Remember that people will always help you when you need it.

If you are ever unsure of something someone says, what to do in a particular situation, how to use public services, you should just ask. Australians are approachable, friendly and helpful and will be happy to answer your questions.

Bringing your family

Your family members must be included on your initial student visa application, even if they do not accompany you to Australia or intend to visit you in Australia.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) classifies your family as your spouse (a person you are legally married to or a person of the opposite sex who you have been living with in an exclusive relationship for more than 12 months) and your or your spouse's children (aged under 18 and never married). For more information, visit the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au.

You may bring members of your family with you to Australia provided that you meet certain conditions. You must show proof of your relationship (for example, a marriage licence or birth certificate). Children will need to be enrolled in school and you will need to cover their tuition and other costs. Other limitations on bringing family members apply. For more information go to www.immi.gov.au/students/students/bringing_family/index.htm.

Everyday costs

A goods and services tax (GST) of 10 per cent is added to most goods and services in Australia. Items excluded from this tax include fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, bread and dairy products. The GST is added to the cost of the item on the shelf, so the ticketed price is the amount you will pay at the cash register.

Although the cost of goods and services is monitored by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to protect consumers from being unfairly charged for items, costs do vary slightly depending on the place of purchase. The best advice is to visit several stores to find the lowest price for an item.

Religion

As one of the most multicultural countries in the world, Australia is accepting of all religions and your right to practice your faith without persecution or discrimination is protected by law. University and vocational education and training (VET) institutions often have prayer rooms on campus, and there are many places of worship representing all faiths in towns and cities around the country. To find out where you can practice your faith in your community, talk to your International Office or your institution's Chaplain.

Food

Australia's diverse cultural heritage has resulted in some of the finest and most varied cuisine in the world. There are restaurants for all tastes, with Asian, Middle Eastern, African and European food heavily represented. Australian cuisine itself is a mixture of all these influences, with traditional dishes given an Australian flavour.

For cooking at home, you will find a wide range of international ingredients at major supermarkets and speciality food stores.

There is also a wide range of foods available for people with special diets, such as gluten- or dairy-free products, vegetarian and vegan products and halal meats.

Health

Your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) will cover you for most medical expenses (see page 49). Most large universities have a health centre on campus, and all institutions will have a first aid officer. Medical centres are in most cities and towns and are staffed by excellent doctors.

Your institution will also provide you with access to counsellors who can help with mental health issues, and to family planning facilities.

Students under the age of 18

If you are under the age of 18 while studying in Australia your parents must nominate a guardian to be responsible for you. This person may be a relative, family friend, homestay parent or teacher living in the same city you are studying in who will be able to sign forms on your parents' behalf, provide advice if you need it and take an interest in your academic progress. If you wish for a family member to accompany you to Australia they must apply for a Student Guardian Visa.

For more information on Student Guardian Visas, visit www.immi.gov.au/students/student_guardians/index.htm.

Guardianship and supervision in schools

Institutions are required by law to provide supervision of students on school grounds before school, during recess times and after school. This includes students involved in activities on school premises, such as sports training or rehearsals for school productions. Students living in boarding houses are supervised at all times.



Studying in Australia.

What your International Office can do for you

Many universities and VET institutions have an International Office on campus. You should contact the International Office at your institution soon after arriving in Australia. The office will be a continuous source of information and support for you while you adjust to living in Australia, and all the way through to the end of your studies. The International Office offers a range of services. If your institution does not have an International Office, talk to the student administration staff.

Orientation

Student Contact Officers (SCOs) in your International Office will guide new international students through orientation programs designed to help them understand the Australian education and training system and become familiar with the campus, support services and clubs. They will explain the institution's structure and governance, Australian culture, and general issues associated with living in a new country.

Learning and study skills

Workshops or private counselling sessions may be provided for students who need help in developing study skills such as writing essays, note taking or preparing for exams.

English language support

Many institutions provide English language classes for students from non-English speaking countries. These classes focus on developing students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and develop study skills such as note taking, report writing, research and information technology use.

Accommodation

The International Office will be able to help you research suitable, affordable accommodation close to campus. Should you find rental accommodation off campus, the office will also be able to help you understand anything in the contract you must sign, known as a lease, that you do not understand (see page 15).

If you have a problem with your homestay, the International Office will help you resolve the issue. They can also direct students in private accommodation to tenants' advisory services.

Counselling

SCOs can help you adjust to life in Australia. SCOs arrange for students to be met at the airport upon arrival in Australia, assist in finding accommodation for students, help students understand visa and OSHC issues, and provide guidance for students settling in to a new learning environment. SCOs are a continuous point of contact within the institutions for any issues students may have.

Many institutions also have counsellors to advise students on social and welfare issues and career counsellors are available to help students decide on further study and career opportunities.

Career advice

The International Office can refer you to your institution's course convenors or career counsellors who can help you plan your career and select the classes that will prepare you to excel in your chosen field.

Religious and community groups

Ask your International Office for details of religious and community groups on campus and around town.

Students with disabilities

Institutions offer services for students who require assistance with their studies due to a disability or chronic medical condition. These may include voice recognition software, hearing aids, or note taking services.

Contact your institution several weeks before you arrive to make the appropriate arrangements for your specific needs.

The Australian classroom

Most international students find the Australian teaching style to be quite different to what they are used to. In Australia, there is a focus on practical learning that encourages creative, independent thought and debate. Teachers aim to provide you with a thorough understanding of a topic rather than just teaching you the right words to remember for exams. You are expected to develop your own thoughts and share them with your fellow students during classes, and this class participation may be an assessable part of your grade.

Lectures and tutorials

Classes at university will be a mixture of lectures and tutorials. A lecture might be attended by up to 200 students from different courses within your discipline. A tutorial is much smaller, with only about 30 students in attendance. You will discuss the information provided in your lecture with other students and your teacher during the tutorial. It is important, then, that you attend all of your lectures in order to understand and contribute to your tutorial discussions.

At a VET institute lectures and tutorials are generally combined. That is, the presentation of information and its discussion will occur at the same time. VET class sizes are generally smaller than classes at university.

Assessment

Your final grade for a unit will be based on your performance in assignments (written or practical, depending on your course), exams, class participation (that is, how much you speak up and contribute to discussions in classes), attendance and group exercises.

Depending on your degree, you may be continually assessed throughout the semester, rather than in just the last few weeks or on the final exam. The advantage of this method is that your entire grade does not rely on one single piece of assessment. If you don't perform well in an exam, you will have the opportunity to lift your grade through other pieces of assessment.

The system of assessment is different for each state and territory, but generally the following will apply.

Schools	Vocational education and training institutions and universities
A Outstanding achievement	High Distinction 100 to 80 per cent
B High achievement	Distinction 79 to 70 per cent
C Satisfactory achievement	Credit 69 to 60 per cent
D Unsatisfactory achievement	Pass 59 to 50 per cent
E Fail	Fail Below 50 per cent

Some vocational institutions may use a competent/not competent or a satisfactory/not satisfactory grading system.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when you take someone else's work and submit it for assessment as your own. This can include copying blocks of text from reference books into your own assignment and neglecting to reference or 'credit' the original source.

Plagiarism is a very serious offence in Australia and there are harsh penalties for the practice that may include an automatic fail of your unit. This will put your student visa in jeopardy.

If you wish to use someone else's work, you must reference it and explain how it relates to and supports your own work and the argument you are trying to make. You must never submit another student's work as your own.

For help on how to reference properly, contact your institution.

Quality assurance

Australia is committed to providing quality education and training to international students, however, you may still encounter problems with your course or institution. The Australian Government has enacted a number of laws to ensure you are protected at these times, and it is important for you to understand your rights.

The laws protecting international students are grouped together under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS)* legislative framework. Under this framework, all Australian institutions that accept international students on a student visa are legally required to provide quality courses and meet the national standards for student services and institution facilities.

Some of the main requirements include the following.

Consumer protection

The ESOS legislation provides consumer protection if a student or institution defaults on the course the student is enrolled in. This protection includes either a refund of course money to the student, or if a refund is not possible, placement of into an alternative course through a Tuition Assurance Scheme.

Course information

Institutions must ensure that the marketing materials (such as brochures and handbooks) they provide to international students are accurate and not misleading.

Before offering a Confirmation of Enrolment, the institution must provide you with current and accurate information, such as:

- requirements for acceptance into the course, including English language proficiency, previous work experience or educational qualifications necessary for admittance;
- the course content and duration;
- the qualification it leads to;
- modes of study and assessment methods;
- if course credit may apply;
- campus locations;
- the facilities, equipment, learning and library resources available;
- details of any arrangements with another registered provider, person or business that offer your course or part of your course;
- indicative course-related fees, including advice on the potential for fees to change during your course;
- applicable refund policies;
- information on the grounds on which your enrolment may be deferred, suspended or cancelled;
- a description of the ESOS framework;
- relevant information on living in Australia, including indicative costs of living and accommodation options; and
- if you have school-aged dependents, schooling obligations and options for them.

Student support services

Institutions must support international students in adjusting to study and life in Australia, achieving their learning goals and achieving the learning outcomes of their course.

This includes providing information on arrival on:

- students support services available to help you adjust to life and study in Australia;
- legal services;
- emergency and health services;
- facilities and resources;
- complaints and appeals processes; and
- any student visa conditions relating to course progress and/or attendance as appropriate.

Throughout your course, your institution will help you to access study support services and welfare-related services if you need them.

Grievances

If you have any concerns about your course or institution you should first try to discuss them with your education provider. The International Office at your institution can advise you on the best way to handle your concerns.

The ESOS framework, however, also provides the opportunity for independent, prompt and inexpensive resolution processes for both parties. These procedures must also ensure that you may be accompanied by a support person of your choice.

You can find more information on your rights under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS)* legislative framework at www.studyinaustralia.gov.au.



Working in Australia.

Working in Australia.

You can apply for permission to work up to 20 hours a week on a casual basis after you have started your course of study. You must also apply to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to do volunteer or unpaid work which counts toward the 20 hours a week limit you are allowed under your visa.

For further information on working in Australia, visit DIAC's website at www.immi.gov.au/students.

Getting permission to work

If you want to work part-time in Australia, you will need to obtain permission from DIAC in the state or territory where you are living. You should complete a form from DIAC (Form 157P) to request permission to work, and pay an application fee of about \$60. DIAC will need to see your current student visa and evidence that you have commenced your course of study. This evidence can be in the form of a letter from your institution stating your course details (CRICOS code, start and end dates) or you can get an authorised officer from your education provider to complete the "education provider details" section of the form you complete (Form 157P).

If you are allowed to work, a new visa label will be put into your passport. It will have a work limitation condition (8105 or 8104), instead of the no work condition (8101). If you work more than 20 hours per week during the school semester, your visa may be cancelled.

Permission for spouses to work

Spouses with a Dependent Student Visa may apply for a work visa while accompanying a full time student. Spouses will need permission to work and must follow the conditions as set out on their visa, as restrictions may apply.

Types of work for international students

International students often find work in retail, hospitality and administration. You could expect to earn \$6-15 an hour, depending on the kind of work you do and your age. You may be paid more for working on Sundays or public holidays.

Tutoring younger students in the field you are studying or in your native language is also a good way to earn money. Student tutors can earn about \$40 an hour.

Remember that your first priority in Australia should be your studies. If you decide to take on the challenge of part-time work, start with a few hours a week until you are able to find a balance with your studies.

Tax returns

As an international student you may be affected by Australia's taxation system.

You should obtain a Tax File Number (TFN) from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) if you are going to work in Australia. You may also need a TFN to open a bank account. To apply, complete a form available from the ATO website or an Australia Post office. If your visa allows you to work you can use the ATO's online registration system. You will need to supply your name, current address and date of birth. You may also need to supply your date of arrival in Australia, current overseas passport (with current entry permit), and proof of enrolment, such as a student card or the Confirmation of Enrolment issued by your institution.

If you work in Australia you will need to lodge an income tax return, either through a registered tax agent or by completing it yourself. If you complete your own income tax return, *e-tax* is the fastest way to obtain a refund. In most cases this will be within 14 days. You can download *e-tax* from the ATO website.

For more information about tax file numbers and tax returns, phone the ATO on 13 28 61, or visit www.ato.gov.au.

Superannuation

If you work in Australia as an international student, and are paid \$450 or more in a calendar month, you may be entitled to superannuation. Your employer is usually required by law to pay money into a superannuation or retirement savings account for you. This legal requirement is called the Superannuation Guarantee. If you are eligible, you may be entitled to receive this money when you permanently leave Australia. This payment is called the Departing Australia Superannuation Payment (DASP).

To find out more about superannuation or to apply online for your DASP, visit www.ato.gov.au.



Visa requirements.

Visa requirements.

Student visa conditions

There are a number of conditions on your visa you must follow to be allowed to study in Australia. The main conditions are that you must:

- maintain satisfactory attendance;
- achieve satisfactory academic results;
- continue to be enrolled in a registered course;
- notify your education provider of your address within seven days of arriving in Australia, and within seven days of any change in your address;
- notify your original educational provider if you change to a new education provider within seven days of obtaining your new certificate of enrolment; and
- maintain OSHC cover.

There may also be special conditions for students on scholarships. Make sure you read and understand all the conditions of your scholarship to ensure you comply, or else your visa may be cancelled and you may be deported.

Non-compliance

Your visa conditions are set out in the letter of approval you receive with your visa or on your visa label. It is important that you are familiar with these conditions and follow them. Every year, a number of students abuse the law by:

- working without approval or working longer hours than permitted by their visa;
- ceasing their studies before the end of their course;
- overstaying their visas; or
- using fraudulent documentation.

If you break these conditions, your visa may be cancelled and you may be required to leave Australia. You may also be prevented from returning to Australia for three years after your visa is cancelled.

If your circumstances change and you want to change your course, or you wish to stay longer, you should contact your nearest DIAC office for advice on how to make these arrangements. It is also important that you ensure your visa does not expire while you are in Australia. If you remain in Australia for more than 28 days after your student visa expires without obtaining a new one, you may be prevented from returning for three years.

If you need help understanding any of these conditions, talk to your institution or contact DIAC.

For further information see the *Overstayers and People in Breach of Visa Conditions* fact sheet, available on the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/86overstayers.htm.

Extending your visa

If your student visa expires before you have finished your course of study, you will need to apply for a new one at your local immigration office or at the visa section at the Australian Mission or Embassy in your home country. Further information is available on the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au.

Health cover

Australia has a special system of health cover for international students called Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). You must have health cover for the length of your enrolment as part of your visa requirements.

Your institution arranges OSHC for you. When you arrive in Australia, you must register with an insurance company (see below) to obtain your OSHC membership card. You will need to show your passport as identification and your visa and confirm the dates of your cover. Your institution will probably have an agreement with a specific OSHC provider, but you do not have to stay with this provider.

While your OSHC will help to pay for any medical or hospital care you may need while studying in Australia, and will contribute towards the cost of most prescription medicines and an ambulance in an emergency, OSHC does not cover dental, optical or physiotherapy. If you want to be covered for these expenses, you will need to pay for additional private health insurance.



Returning home.

Returning home.

When it comes time to return home after completing your studies, you may find it useful to attend a returning home seminar run by some institutions. Your time in Australia will change you, and you should expect that your friends and family will have changed in your absence as well. Finding a job or continuing education, living on your own or moving back in with your parents, and catching up with what has been happening in your family and friends' lives are just some of the things you will have to adjust to. You may even find that you have to readjust to the weather and food.

Many institutions will run returning home seminars that will cover topics such as resettling, how to get your exam results, making travel arrangements, joining alumni associations, and preparing for your future career.

Alumni associations

International students who graduate from an Australian institution are Australian alumni. You will find alumni associations established by your university and there may be Australian alumni networks in your own country.

Australian alumni networks can:

- assist you in maintaining the personal, business, institutional and educational links and friendships you have made while studying in Australia;
- help you with business and job opportunities back home and around the world; and
- provide a matrix of understanding and support within a community of graduates who have shared your experience of leaving home to study in Australia, and returned home as alumni.

A list of alumni associations can be found on the Study in Australia website www.studyinaustralia.gov.au.



Further information.

Further information.

Visit these websites for more information on living and studying in Australia.

Department	Website
Australian Government	www.australia.gov.au
Study in Australia	www.studyinaustralia.gov.au
ESOS	www.aei.dest.gov.au/ESOS
Education in Australia	www.education.gov.au
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (for contact details of your country's embassy)	www.dfat.gov.au
Department of Immigration and Citizenship (for immigration and visa information)	www.immi.gov.au
Australian Customs Service (for information on what you can bring into Australia)	www.customs.gov.au
Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service	www.aqis.gov.au
Australian Taxation Office	www.ato.gov.au
Tourism Australia	www.australia.com
Wages and Working Conditions	www.wagenet.gov.au
National Liaison Committee (for information on academic and welfare issues for international students in Australia)	www.nlc.edu.au

Useful numbers	Phone
Emergency services (police, fire, ambulance)	000
Visa issues	131 881
Dialling out of Australia (country code) (city/region code) (phone number)	0011
Australia's country code	61

Glossary.



AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
ESOS	Education Services for Overseas Students
OSHC	Overseas Student Health Cover
SCO	Student Contact Officer
VET	Vocational Education and Training



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Australian Government
Australian Education International

For sale only by the Australian Government.

*Note: This guide is primarily for tertiary education students. If your institution does not have an International Office talk to your Student Administration Office.

All costs listed are in Australian dollars.