



Guide to studying and living in Australia.

www.studyinaustralia.gov.au


STUDY IN AUSTRALIA
Live. Learn. Grow.

Australia's emergency phone number is 000. It is a free call from every phone in Australia, including mobile phones.

You should call 000 if you are in a life-threatening situation and need the help of the police, fire brigade or ambulance service. This includes if you are witnessing a crime in progress. Do not call 000 if it is not an emergency, for example if you have a cold and need to see a doctor, if you are lost and need directions, or if you are locked out of your house.

When you call 000, you will be connected to an operator who will help progress your request for help. You will need to tell them which service you need—police, fire or ambulance. It is important that you try to stay calm and give the operator clear information on what the emergency is. Answer any questions as best you can. It is extremely important that you tell the operator where you are, and any landmarks that are nearby (a statue, bridge, store, etc).

While you are waiting for help to arrive, try to stay calm and don't do anything that will put yourself or others in danger. Generally, help will arrive very quickly and it is best to leave these situations to the people who are trained to deal with them.

Reporting a crime

If you need police assistance and it's not an emergency, for example to report a theft, either go to the nearest police station or call the police help line in your state.

In the ACT, New South Wales, Tasmania, Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia, you can call the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 and you will be connected to the police in your state. If you live in Victoria or Queensland, you will need to contact your local police station.

Emergency Services

Every state and territory in Australia also has a State Emergency Service (SES) organisation that assists police, fire and ambulance services in the event of severe floods, storms, bushfires etc. They also assist in emergency evacuations, search and rescue, and mass casualties.

If you need assistance from the SES because, for example, your home has been damaged in a storm, you can call them on 132 500, no matter where you are in Australia.

Welcome to Australia

Congratulations on choosing Australia as your study destination. When you arrive, you will join students from over 150 countries already taking advantage of Australia's world-class education system.

In Australia you will experience a unique kind of education promoting a learning style that encourages innovative, creative and independent thinking. We will help you build valuable skills to give you academic, personal and professional advantages.

This guide has been prepared to help you as you make your transition to student life in Australia. It provides practical information about moving to and living in Australia and outlines your rights and responsibilities as an international student. For further information visit **www.studyinaustralia.gov.au**.

We wish you every success with your studies and hope you enjoy your time in Australia—it will be a life changing experience!

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Before you leave

Congratulations! Your student
visa is secured and you're ready
to study in Australia – we
want to help you be properly prepared
for your trip down under.

Before you leave

Once your Confirmation of Enrolment comes through and you've secured your student visa, it's time to start thinking of some of the practicalities of travelling to Australia.

Packing

It's worth packing a few mementos from home that will give you some comfort when you're missing your friends and family, but keep in mind that most airlines have a checked baggage restriction of about 20kg (about 44lb).

The type of clothing you should bring with you depends on the part of the country you will be living in, and the time of year you arrive. The Australian summer coincides with the first academic semester in February, which is when most international students arrive. This means that you can probably get by with jeans, t-shirts and light jackets. If you arrive in time for the second academic semester around July, you'll need to pack some warm jumpers or sweaters, long-sleeved t-shirts and a coat to cope with winter weather. However, Australian winters are mild in comparison to the icy weather you'd encounter in the Northern Hemisphere. Check out www.bom.gov.au for the latest weather information around Australia.

You can bring your mp3 player along for the journey, and mobile phone and other electronic equipment, but make sure to get power adaptors suitable for use in Australia so you can charge it.

Lots of international students bring pre-packaged food from home in their luggage. Unfortunately, most of them have to throw out this food when they land in Australia. Australia has very strict quarantine laws which prohibit the importation of a variety of fresh, dried and pre-packaged foods, along with other items. You can find a list of these items on the Arriving in Australia page.

While you're trying to squeeze another pair of jeans into your luggage, you should also try to find a place for photocopies of all your important documents: passport, visa, travellers' cheque receipts, flight tickets, insurance documents, credit cards, ATM cards and your Confirmation of Enrolment. Put the originals in your hand luggage where you can access them easily—when you have to present your passport at every checkpoint in the airport, you'll be glad you did. Make sure you also leave copies of all these documents with someone at home in case you lose the originals or your copies.

You should 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, or let another person pack your luggage. It may contain something illegal and you will be held accountable for it.

Insurance

Chances are pretty good that your trip will go smoothly and you won't encounter any problems. Even so, you should plan for the unexpected. Cancelled flights, lost luggage and wallets can end up costing you a lot of time and money, so take out travel insurance before you leave. It won't guard against bad things happening, but it will protect you against having to cover unexpected costs.

All student visa holders entering Australia must have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their stay. OSHC will help you pay for any visits to the doctor you may have while in Australia. Go to the Overseas Student Health Cover page for information on what your OSHC will cover.

Money

You should bring enough Australian currency in cash for your first few days, without carry large amounts of cash on you. You should also have easy access to about AU\$1500–3,000 in travellers' cheques (in your name) so that you can start establishing yourself and setting up your new home quickly.

Note that if you are carrying more than AU\$10,000, or equivalent currency, you must declare it to Customs officials when you enter Australia.

Short-term accommodation

It's a good idea to try to organise a permanent place to live before you arrive in Australia. However, you may decide to wait until you arrive to get an idea of distances between your campus and surrounding suburbs, or to inspect private rental accommodation.

At the very least, you will need to arrange temporary accommodation for your first few days while you look for something more permanent. Your education institution might be able to help you, or you can look up hostels and book online at www.yha.com.au. For last-minute bookings at hotels and short-stay apartments there are a number of internet booking services. However, hotels in particular are expensive at upwards of AU\$150 per night, so you should find something cheaper as soon as possible.



Arriving in Australia

For many students, arriving in Australia comes at the end of a very long flight. Here are a few tips to make your arrival quick, easy and stress-free.

Arriving in Australia



At some stage during your flight to Australia you will be handed an Incoming Passenger Card to fill in. Answer the questions accurately and truthfully, especially those about the items in your luggage that you may have to declare to Customs officials.

If you're unsure of where to go or what to do when you disembark from your flight in Australia, ask an official for help. They will guide you.

Clearing Immigration and Customs checkpoints

Once you land, you will follow the signs to an Immigration check-point. Here, you will need to show your passport, visa and Incoming Passenger Card. You may also have to show your Confirmation of Enrolment. Once you have cleared this checkpoint you will enter the baggage hall where you can claim your luggage and proceed to Customs and baggage examination.

Green (nothing to declare) and Red (something to declare) channel

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

If you follow the red channel, your luggage, including your hand luggage, will be x-rayed. A Customs official will ask you to open your luggage so that they can inspect these items. If the Customs official decides that an item is not quarantined, you will be allowed to keep the item and move through the Customs checkpoint. If the item is quarantined, the item will either be confiscated and destroyed, or held for decontamination and returned to you at a later date.

Declare or beware! This is the message that greets all passengers arriving in Australia on international flights. It means that you should declare all items listed below. 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.**

Quarantine matters!

Many items are prohibited from entry into Australia. You can find a full list on the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service website at www.aqis.gov.au. Some items that international students often try to bring in include:

- food (includes cooked and raw food and ingredients, dried fruit and vegetables, canned meat products, dairy products, egg and egg 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)
- 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)
- 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.

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

All firearms, weapons and ammunition are also prohibited.

Leaving the airport

Once you have cleared all incoming passenger checkpoints, you will be welcomed to Australia and directed to the arrivals hall. If you need to exchange some money into Australian dollars you will find Currency Exchange booths throughout the airport.

If you have arranged for a representative from your institution to pick you up from the airport, or have friends or relatives meeting you, they will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall.

Public transport is available at all international airports (see below) and most regional airports. You can generally expect that a taxi service will be available, and you may also find buses and trains.

Sydney Airport: www.sydneyairport.com.au

Melbourne Airport: www.melbourneairport.com.au

Brisbane Airport: www.bne.com.au

Adelaide Airport: www.aal.com.au

Perth Airport: www.perthairport.net.au

Canberra Airport: www.canberraairport.com.au

Darwin Airport: www.darwinairport.com.au

Hobart Airport: www.hobartairpt.com.au

If you are transferring to a domestic flight, follow the signs to the domestic terminal. At some of the larger airports this may be some distance, so look out for intra-airport terminal shuttle services to get you there faster.

Visa requirements

Student visa conditions

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) is the Australian Government department which manages everything relating to your student visa. You must make sure you meet the conditions of your visa.

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, for example, working longer hours than permitted by their visa or overstaying their visa.

If you break your 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 provider, 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 contact DIAC.

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.

Australia has many accommodation options for international students – here's an overview of what you can expect.

Accommodation



Accommodation

Finding the right accommodation is one of the biggest challenges facing a new international student, and finding a place in your price range can be even harder. The fact is that there is a shortage of affordable housing across Australia that affects everyone, from international students to Australian residents. It is extremely important that you factor the high cost of housing into your budget before you come to Australia, and have access to funds that will cover possible rent increases.

You should also use the information in this book in conjunction with your own research. If your institution has an international office, contact the staff long before you arrive for information on housing options on or off campus. They might be able to provide you with links to accommodation boards on your institution's website, or within the community. Also, keep an eye on websites like www.domain.com.au and www.realestate.com.au which list accommodation for rent. This should give you a good idea of the type of accommodation that is available to a person with your budget.

Another good tip is to get references from people you may already have rented accommodation from at home. Providing copies of these to a real estate agent when you apply for a property can show them that you have a proven record of being a good tenant. You should also be prepared to provide them with evidence that you have enough money to pay for your accommodation, for example with a bank account statement.

Types of accommodation

There are many different types of accommodation available, so you should be able to find something that suits your needs. Most accommodation, except homestay, does not include electrical items, furniture, bedding or kitchen utensils. Cheap household goods are available from second-hand retail outlets or are advertised for private sale in newspapers or on institution noticeboards, but you may wish to bring some of your own basic items.

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.

Here's a guide to what to expect from various accommodation options.

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

Homestay is when you live with an Australian family in their home. It is popular with younger students and those studying short-term English courses. Single or shared rooms are available and the costs vary. 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 incoming 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?

If you're not getting along with your homestay family, talk to your homestay coordinator or student services office at your institution. You won't get in trouble, and they'll try to help you find a solution.

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

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

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

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

Campus accommodation (about \$100 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. If you are interested in this type of accommodation, contact your institution and apply early. Places are in high demand, and in Australia you are not guaranteed a room by simply being accepted for study.

Renting accommodation and tenancy agreements

Shared accommodation (about \$50 to \$160 a week) and rental accommodation (about \$200+ a week)

Renting a house or flat by yourself or with other students is a popular choice for lots of international students. However, the shortage of rental properties across Australia means that the cost of accommodation is rising, and competition for places is getting tougher.

If you plan on renting, do your research and make sure you are aware of your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Gather information on the types of properties available, the costs and good locations from your institution, other students, real estate agents, university noticeboards, student and local newspapers and websites such as www.domain.com.au and www.realestate.com.au. Also, check out the Residential Tenancy Tribunal's website in your state for information about your rights and obligations.

Inspecting a property

Once you see a property advertised as available for rent, you will need to find out the date and time it will be open for inspection. You can generally find this information in the advertisement for the property or on the website for the real estate agent handling the tenancy. Generally, you will not be permitted to rent a property that you have not inspected.

Turn up to the inspection looking neat and tidy, and don't be afraid to speak to the real estate agent showing the property. If you have references from the owners of properties you have previously rented (at home or in Australia), bring a translated copy along with you. This will help prove to the real estate agent that you will be a good tenant. Be aware that if you decide to apply for the property, you will also need to show evidence of your ability to pay for the rent.

When you inspect the property, you should ask yourself if this is the right place for you. Is there enough space for your needs? Is it close to public transport? Is the amount of rent being asked for within your budget, and appropriate for the condition of the property? You should also look out for things that might need fixing: cracks in the walls, broken tiles and water damage are common problems that the owner of the property is responsible for fixing. If you see many faults with the property, you might want to reconsider applying for the property.

Your tenancy agreement

If you are successful in applying to rent a property, you will need to sign a tenancy agreement. The terms of this agreement will vary from state to state, but you can generally expect to find clauses regarding the payment of rent and your bond, the condition of the property, maintenance and access, inspections, changes to the cost of renting the property, and ending a tenancy.

Bond: The bond is the money that you pay as a kind of security deposit. It is usually equal to between four and six weeks' rent, and you will have to pay it to the real estate agent in cleared funds (i.e. not by credit card or cheque) when you sign the tenancy agreement. You should get this money back at the end of your tenancy provided that the property is in the same condition as when you moved in (general wear and tear excepted). You cannot use your bond to pay for the last few weeks of your rent.

Rent: The rent is the amount of money you must pay each week or month, depending on your tenancy agreement. Rent must always be paid in advance. If you fall behind in your payments, you may be evicted and your bond might be given to the owner of the property to cover the money you owe them. Before you sign your tenancy agreement, discuss with your real estate agent how you will be required to make these payments. For example, you may have to pay in cash at the office of the real estate agent, or you may be able to set up automatic payment from your bank account.

Period of tenancy: You might be asked to sign one of two types of tenancy agreements—fixed-term or periodic. A fixed-term tenancy is for a definite period, usually six or 12 months. During this time, the amount of rent you pay cannot increase. A periodic tenancy has no definite end date. This usually means that tenants are on a month-to-month agreement and, in theory, their rent could increase several times in one year. There are good and bad sides to both types of agreement. For example, while a fixed-term tenancy may offer you peace of mind that you'll have somewhere to live for a period of time, you will be stuck there if you don't like the place. And while a periodic tenancy might only last a few months before you are asked to leave, you will also have the freedom to move to a more suitable property if you find one.

Rent increases: If you are on a fixed-term tenancy, your rent cannot increase for the period of your contract. However, if you move to a periodic tenancy at the end of your contract, your real estate agent may provide you with notice of their intention to increase your rent. Each state has different laws surrounding this issue, so contact your Residential Tenancy Tribunal for more information.

Condition report: When your real estate agent hands you your copy of your tenancy agreement and the keys to your property, they should also give you a condition report. This report is a document of the condition of the property at the time you move in. It should list, for example, every crack, every dirty spot on the carpet, every bit of mildew in the bathroom, and the condition of every light, heater, kitchen appliance and bathroom fixture in the property. The report is an extremely important part of your tenancy. If you notice anything about the property that is not listed in the report, you must add it in. This will protect you when you move out. For example, if you notice a scratch on some floorboards that is not listed in the condition report, and you do not add it to the report yourself, you may be liable to fix the scratch when you move out as there is no proof that

you were not responsible for it. It is also a good idea to take photos of the items you are adding to the report and forward them to your real estate agent. You will generally have about three days to return a copy of the complete condition report to your real estate agent, and keep a copy of it for yourself.

Inspections: It will be a condition of your tenancy that you will allow your real estate agent to inspect your property throughout your stay. The purpose of these inspections is so that the real estate agent can check that you are taking good care of the property and report back to the owner. You will be given at least two weeks' notice before an inspection. If the real estate agent is not satisfied that the property is being kept clean and in good condition, they will generally make an appointment for another inspection soon afterwards. If the property is still not clean at the second inspection, you could find yourself being asked to leave the premises.

Maintenance: Property owners are required to maintain their properties in a condition that is appropriate to live in, and in a state of good repair. Their responsibilities vary from state to state, but generally they are responsible for fixing things like burst water pipes, roof leaks, electrical faults, and the breakdown of essential services. Your real estate agent will provide you with detailed information on what the property owner is responsible for, and how you can get things fixed, in your tenancy agreement.

Utilities: In most cases, you will be responsible for connecting gas, water, electricity and telephone to the property. You will also be liable for the cost of connecting these services, and your usage of them.

End of tenancy: A tenancy can end in two ways—either you can end the tenancy, or the owner can end it. If you are on a fixed-term tenancy, you can decide to leave the premises at the end of the contract period. In this case, you must provide written notice of your intention to vacate at least four weeks before you leave. If the owner decides to end the tenancy, either because you are being evicted for breaching your contract or because they might be selling the property or moving back in themselves, they will have to provide you with a written notice to vacate about six weeks before you must leave. The length of notice you are given varies from state to state, so check your tenancy agreement carefully.

State/territory contact	Telephone	Website
ACT Residential Tenancies Tribunal	02 6217 4259	www.courts.act.gov.au
Queensland Residential Tenancy Authority	1300 366 311	www.rta.qld.gov.au
Consumer Affairs Victoria	1300 558 181	www.consumervic.gov.au
New South Wales Office of Fair Trading	13 32 20	www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au
South Australia Office of Consumer and Business Affairs	08 8204 9555	www.ocba.sa.gov.au
Western Australia Department of Consumer and Employment Protection	1300 304 054	www.docep.wa.gov.au
Tenants' Union of Tasmania	1300 652 641	www.tutas.org.au
Northern Territory Consumer Affairs	1800 019 319	www.caba.nt.gov.au

Disputes: It is important to try to maintain a good relationship with your real estate agent so that if problems arise you can communicate openly with them. Even if you don't have a good relationship with your real estate agent, you should first try to address the problem with them in a polite manner.

If the problem is not fixed, or you would like another opinion on the information they have given you, you can contact the Residential Tenancy Tribunal in your state. They will be able to provide you with information on the laws protecting tenants and property owners, and provide resolution services if they are needed.



Getting around

Whether bike or bus,
train or plane,
there's plenty of
ways for you
to get around when
you're studying in
Australia.



Public transport

Australia has plenty of transport options to get you around town or across the country. Australia's public transport system is comparably safe and affordable (in some cases, it's even free). Depending on where you live it can include trains, buses, trams and ferries. You can buy tickets at train stations, ferry wharves, at newsagencies or onboard buses and trams.

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

Sydney

For information on buses, ferries and trains go to www.131500.com.au.

Bus—Sydney's bus network extends to most suburbs. Fares depend upon the number of 'sections' you pass through. www.sydneybuses.info

Ferry—Sydney's ferries provide the most enjoyable way to get around the harbour. There are three kinds of ferry: regular STA ferries, fast JetCats that go to Manly and RiverCats that traverse the Parramatta River to Parramatta. www.sydneyferries.info

Metro Light Rail & Monorail—The Monorail and Metro Light Rail are good means of transport within the centre. The Monorail circles Darling Harbour and links it to the city centre. The MLR operates 24 hours a day between Central Station and Pyrmont via Darling Harbour and Chinatown. www.metrotransport.com.au.

Train—Sydney has a vast suburban rail network and frequent services, making trains much quicker than buses. Trains run from around 5am to midnight. www.cityrail.info

Melbourne

For bus, train and tram timetables, maps and fares go to www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au Metcards allow you to travel on any and all Melbourne bus, train and tram services, even if you transfer from one to another.

Train—Suburban trains are faster than trams or buses, but they don't go to many of the inner suburbs. Flinders St Station is the main suburban terminal. During the week, trains start at 5am and finish at midnight.

Bus—Generally, buses continue from where the trains finish, or go to places, such as hospitals, universities, suburban shopping centres and the outer suburbs, not reached by other services.

Tram—Melbourne's trams cover the city and inner suburbs. Tram stops are numbered from the city centre. There are also 'light rail' services to some suburbs which run along disused rail lines. Remember to look out for cars when getting off trams.

Brisbane

Information on Brisbane's bus, train and ferry routes and connections can be obtained at www.transinfo.qld.gov.au.

Boat—Brisbane's CityCat catamarans run every 20 to 30 minutes, between 5:50am and 10:30pm, from the University of Queensland in the southwest to Bretts Wharf in the northeast, and back. Also useful are the Inner City Ferries, which zigzag back and forth across the river between North Quay, near Victoria Bridge, and Mowbray Park.

Bus—The Loop, a free bus service that circles the city area, runs every 10 minutes on weekdays between 7am and 6pm. Other buses run every 10 to 20 minutes Monday to Friday, from 5am till about 6pm, and with the same frequency on Saturday morning (starting at 6am). Services are less frequent at other times, and cease at 7pm Sunday and midnight on other days.

Train—The fast Citytrain network has seven lines, which run as far as Gympie North in the north (for the Sunshine Coast) and Nerang and Robina in the south (for the Gold Coast). All trains go through Roma St, Central and Brunswick St stations.

Perth

Transperth operates the city's public buses, trains and ferries. A single ticket allows you to travel on all forms of transport. www.transperth.wa.gov.au.

Boat—Ferries depart every half-hour, on the hour, from 7am to 7pm daily from the Barrack St Jetty to the zoo.

Bus—You can get to most sights in the inner city with the free CAT bus services in the city centre, running from 6:50am to 6:20pm on weekdays. There's a bit of a longer wait on weekends.

Train—Transperth also operates the Fastrak suburban train lines to Armadale, Fremantle, Midland and the northern suburb of Joondalup. There's free train travel (in the free transit zone) between the Claisebrook and City West train stations. All local trains leave from the Perth train station on Wellington St.

Adelaide

The Adelaide Metro Information Centre has timetables and sells tickets for the integrated metropolitan buses, trains and the Glenelg tram. www.adelaidemetro.com.au.

Bus—Bee Line runs in a loop from the Glenelg tram terminus at Victoria Square to the City West campus of the University of South Australia. City Loop runs clockwise and anti-clockwise around the margins of the city centre from the train station, passing the Central Market en route. Both Bee Line and City Loop buses are free.

Train—Suburban trains depart from Adelaide Railway Terminal, by the casino.

Darwin

Bus—Darwinbus (City Bus Interchange, Harry Chan Ave) runs a comprehensive service from its small depot. The Tour Tub minibus tours Darwin's sights throughout the day and you can hop on and off along the route. www.tourtub.com.au.

Taxi—As well as a regular taxi service, Darwin has two taxi bus services—Arafura Shuttle and Unique Minibus.

Hobart

Bus—Metro operates the local bus network; there's an information desk dispensing timetables inside the main post office on the corner of Elizabeth and Macquarie Sts. One-way fares vary according to the distance travelled. www.metrotas.com.au.

Canberra

Bus—Canberra's public transport provider is the ACT Internal Omnibus Network (ACTION). The main Civic Bus Interchange is along Alinga St, East Row and Mort St in the city centre. Visit the information kiosk (East Row) or visit the website for free route maps and timetables. www.action.act.gov.au.

Personal safety on public transport

While public transport in Australia is comparatively safe, you should still exercise the same caution as you would at home. Keep your bag close to you and know where it is at all times. Keep your valuables, like your wallet, mobile phone or iPod out of sight. If you're travelling at night sit as close to the driver as possible. Always be aware of where your fellow passengers are sitting. If someone is making you uncomfortable or goes so far as to threaten you, tell the driver.

Never hang around train stations or bus stations at night. If you must get on public transport at a station at night, try to arrive right before the train or bus to minimise the amount of time you spend waiting.

In most cases taxis are a safe way of getting home at night. However, as with all forms of public transport passengers need to be alert.

Travelling interstate

Australia is a big country. In fact, it's almost as big as the US mainland. International visitors often think that they can get on a bus to get from Sydney to Melbourne. While that's true, the trip will take about 13 hours and cost you about \$60. If you have the finances available, you could look into flying. You can often find seats on low-cost airline carriers for less than the price of a bus ticket.

Airlines

Australia's two major airlines are Qantas (www.qantas.com.au) and Virgin Blue (www.virginblue.com.au). These airlines fly between all capital cities and many regional centres. You can book tickets through a travel agent, over the phone or over the Internet. An Internet search on their websites will also bring up a range of fares available, ranging from bargains available for a limited time only to business class seats. Do your research before you book—you might find a great deal on another carrier.

Australia also has several regional airline carriers. Jetstar (www.jetstar.com.au) is the low-cost airline affiliated with Qantas, Tiger Airways (www.tigerairways.com.au) which flies to most Australian capitals and some regional cities, and REX (www.rex.com.au) carries passengers to mostly regional areas in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Trains and buses

If you want to travel outside the city you live in you could also look at getting on a train. You can find a comprehensive list of train services, fares and timetables at www.railaustralia.com.au

You can always count on a bus to get you where you need to go. For a list of those operating within Australia, go to www.buslines.com.au

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.

Australians drive on the left side of the road. The maximum speed limit is 50km an hour in residential areas and 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 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.

Although the cost of living in Australia is comparatively low, setting a budget – and sticking to it! – is one of the best ways to ensure your study experience is successful.

Money

Money



Cost of living and budgeting

For many international students, arriving in Australia marks the first time they've ever lived away from their parents. It can also be the first time that they are responsible for things like paying for rent, electricity and food.

This kind of responsibility can end up being almost as stressful as your studies. It's only when you're out in the world on your own that you realise how many things you have to pay for, and how expensive those little conveniences you take for granted can be. But with a little bit of planning and research, and a lot of self-discipline, you can keep things from getting out of control.

Although international student visa holders are permitted to work up to 20 hours a week during study periods, **don't rely on your wages from part-time work to live on**. It can be very difficult to find part-time work—and even more difficult to find well-paid part-time work. You should treat any income you earn while you're in Australia as a bonus, not a necessity.

Research before you arrive

Besides your tuition fees, your accommodation costs will be your biggest financial burden. It's worth doing lots of research before you arrive on your accommodation options, including the type of accommodation you'll have (e.g. a rented house or on-campus dorm) and its location. You might find that there is accommodation available close to your institution, but that it's more expensive than accommodation a little further away. Also research when the advertised price of your accommodation covers. For example, the price of on-campus accommodation might just cover a shared room, or include dinner every night.

You should also research the costs of things such as utilities (electricity, gas, water, telephone), mobile phone plans, public transport, food and other school supplies not covered in your tuition fees (e.g. text books, stationery, compulsory excursions). The cost of all these things varies depending on the state, city, or town you'll be living in.

Here's a rough guide to how much you can expect to pay for general items in Australia. Prices are listed in Australian dollars.



Loaf of bread	\$3.50
Sandwich from café	\$6.50
Big Mac	\$3.95
CD purchase versus music downloads	\$25 v \$1.99 (iTunes)
Milk (1L)	\$1.60
Large take-away coffee	\$3.50
Bag of basic groceries	\$30
Rice (1kg)	\$1.60
Cinema ticket	\$10+ (student discount)
Gym memberships	\$10–40 a week
DVD rentals	\$7.00 overnight (new release)
Clubs, pubs, nightclubs	\$15+ cover charge
Professional sporting events	\$30+
Can of Coke	\$2.20

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 automatically included in the ticketed price of the item, so you don't have to do mental calculations on how much it'll cost at the cash register.

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. However, costs do vary slightly depending on the store. If you're making a purchase, especially of a big item like a TV or computer, you should definitely visit a couple of stores to find the best price.

Put yourself on a budget

The best way to avoid falling into financial stress is to come up with—and stick to—a basic budget. Here are some tips to help you manage your bank balance:

- Identify those things that you have to pay for every week or month (like rent, phone bills, gym membership) and see if you can set up an automatic payment from your bank account on the due date. In Australia this is called direct debit, and because it's automatic you don't have to worry about getting in trouble for making late payments or standing in line for an hour to make the payment in person.
- If you don't set up direct debits, make sure you pay your rent and utilities on time. Late payments often attract additional charges in your next statement.
- Try to give yourself a budget to 'live on' each week, and stick to it. For example, withdraw \$120 at the beginning of the week to cover all your food, transport and entertainment expenses.
- Be aware of how much money you have in your account at all times.
- Don't use a credit card. They're usually more trouble than they're worth. If you absolutely must have one, shop around for the best card for you (interest rates can vary from as low as 5.99% to as high as 24.99%) and try to use it only in emergencies. These emergencies don't include new shoes you don't need, concert tickets or a top-of-the-line mobile phone.
- If you buy things online, use a debit card (which is like a credit card, only using money you already have) or BPay (paying through your savings account). It offers you more protection online, and you won't have to pay interest on the purchase like you would using a credit card.
- Minimise the fees your bank charges by only using one of their ATMs, minimising the amount of withdrawals you make and your use of EFTPOS.
- Live economically. The choices you make can make a big difference to your weekly budget and overall costs of living. For example, you can pick up second-hand furniture and clothes in good condition at places like the Salvation Army or weekend markets.
- Look in free street press magazines (you can pick them up in places like music stores, cinemas and student refectories) for details of upcoming cheap or free activities, like concerts, art exhibitions, markets, sporting activities and festivals.

Banking and insurance

You will need to open a bank account when you arrive in Australia. There are dozens of banks and credit unions in Australia to choose from, all with slightly different fee and interest rate structures. You can work out which bank is best for you at www.infochoice.com.au. 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.

Once you've decided which bank to use, opening an account should be easy, so long as you have all the required identification and documentation. Each bank and credit union will have different policies about how much identification you need to provide them with, but generally your passport will be sufficient for your first six weeks in Australia. After this time, you may also need to provide your birth certificate and something that has your current address on it (such as a copy of your tenancy agreement). As an international student, you will also have to show your student visa. If you are under the age of 18, you might also need to show a school photo ID and a letter from your school principal.

When opening your account, advise your bank of your Tax File Number (see Tax and Superannuation). This will help you avoid higher tax rates on the interest you earn.

Credit cards

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

Transferring funds

Money can be transferred to Australia by 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 shorter time, but cost more. Cheques take about five working days to clear.

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.

Insurance

As an international student you will already have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) insurance, but you might also want to invest in other types of insurance to protect you.

Travel insurance will offer protection if your airline cancels your flight, loses your luggage, or if you are somehow injured on your trip.

Contents insurance will cover your valuable items in your home, such as your TV, jewellery, game consoles and furniture.

Third party car insurance is mandatory if you own a car or motorbike. This means that you are insured against damage you might cause to other cars. Comprehensive insurance covers damage to your car as well.



Health and wellbeing

Australia enjoys some of the best
health care services in the world,
but you'll need to make sure you
have appropriate overseas student
health cover before you get here.

Overseas Student Health Cover

Australia has a special system of health cover for international students called Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). You will need to buy OSHC before you come to Australia to cover you from when you arrive. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship requires you to maintain OSHC for the duration of your time on a student visa in Australia.

You might find that your institution has an agreement with a specific OSHC provider. You can choose to take out OSHC with this provider, or with the Australian OSHC provider of your choice. As at June 2009, there are four providers of OSHC in Australia. Visit these websites to find detailed information on what they cover and to decide which provider is right for you.

Australian Health Management www.ahm.com.au

BUPA Australia www.overseasstudenthealth.com

Medibank Private www.medibank.com.au

OSHC Worldcare www.oshcworldcare.com.au

Westfund www.westfund.com.au

Your OSHC will help you pay for any medical or hospital care you may need while you're studying in Australia, and it 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 treatments you will need to buy additional private health insurance, such as:

- extra OSHC provided by some OSHC providers
 - international travel insurance, or
 - general treatment cover with any Australian private health insurer.
- You can find a list of these providers and search for the one that suits you best at www.privatehealth.gov.au or www.iselect.com.au.

For more information on visiting doctors in Australia, go to the Doctors page in this book.

Maintaining good health

Taking care of your physical health will have a positive impact on your mental health and your ability to study. You should aim to include 30 minutes of moderate exercise, five times a week into your lifestyle. This activity will help you manage stress, pick up your mood when you're feeling down, and give you more energy (although it might not feel that way right *before* an exercise session). It will also help you maintain a clear head for study and provide a great opportunity to catch up with your friends and make new ones.

Regular exercise is also great for giving you a good night's sleep. This is important because without a quality rest every night you will lose energy, become more irritable and find it difficult to concentrate on your studies. After a long period of poor quality sleep, you might also notice that you get sick easier, and you get sad or depressed by things that normally wouldn't bother you.

Of course, being a student is a guaranteed way of *not* getting a good night's sleep. It can be hard to find enough time to go to your classes, study and still maintain a social life. Usually, sleep is the first thing that students sacrifice when they try to fit everything else in. But there are some things you can do to help regulate your sleep patterns.

- Try to get out of bed as soon as you wake up instead of closing your eyes for 'five more minutes'. Also try to get up at the same time every day.
- Do some exercise in the morning, preferably outside in the fresh air.
- Don't nap during the day. If you do, it'll probably take you longer to get to sleep at night.
- Don't use the time when you're lying in bed at night to think about all your problems. It'll only make you more anxious. Instead, set aside some time during the day for problem-solving.
- Don't go to bed too late, and try to go to sleep at the same time each night. Allow yourself some time, say 30 minutes, before you get into bed to relax and wind down.
- Don't study in bed—it'll train your brain to think of your bed as a place for study, not sleep.
- Avoid alcohol and cigarettes for a few hours before going to bed.

If you have sleeping problems, talk to a doctor (known as a general practitioner, or GP). They may have some more tips that will help you get a good night's rest.

Another factor that impacts on your health is what you eat. Again, student life sometimes makes eating well difficult. Grabbing a snack on your way from the library to your friend's house may be convenient, but over time it will do you more harm than good. Eating well will boost your health and energy, give your body enough fuel to get through the day, and improve your immune system and ability to concentrate.

- Don't skip breakfast. It will kick-start your metabolism for the day and gives you energy.
- Include lots of fresh fruit and vegetables in your diet. Australia's diverse climate creates perfect growing conditions for a huge range of produce, and the quality is among the best you will find in the world. Take advantage of it!
- Drink lots of water throughout the day. Dehydration causes tiredness, headaches, lack of concentration and plenty of other health issues.
- If you are vegetarian, make sure you are getting enough essential nutrients in your diet. You can talk to a GP or nutritionist about substitutes for meat and animal byproducts.
- Enjoy food like take away or fast food, chips, chocolate, biscuits and soft drink or soda in moderation.

Sexual health

Australia is a fairly liberal country in regard to relationships and contraception. While the rate of HIV and AIDS infection in Australia is quite low (about 0.1 per cent of the population), the rate of those with sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially chlamydia and gonorrhoea, is growing. You can help protect yourself against infection and unwanted pregnancy by always using a condom, limiting the number of sexual partners you have, or simply abstaining. Women can also take the contraceptive pill to prevent pregnancy; however, this will not protect you from STIs.

Condoms are available for purchase in supermarkets and chemists (also known as pharmacies or drugstores). They are inexpensive and available to anyone who wishes to purchase them. The contraceptive pill is available by prescription from GPs.

Remember that you always have the right to insist that a condom is used. You also have the right to refuse your partner's sexual advances, even if you are in a relationship with them. Also take care that you don't let your guard down if you have been drinking. If you think that you may have been a victim of sexual assault, contact the police, your school counsellor, or a community organisation such as Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Alcohol and other drugs

The purchase of cigarettes and alcohol is legal for people over the age of 18. However, if you look younger than 25 you will still be asked to show proof of your age (e.g. with a driver's licence, student ID card). This practice protects the shop owner, as there are heavy penalties for selling or serving cigarettes and alcohol to people under 18 years.

Buying, selling, possessing or using all other drugs, including marijuana, amphetamines and opiates, is against the law. If you are caught you will face severe penalties, including fines, imprisonment and even deportation.

Smoking

Although smoking is permitted in Australia, it is not recommended. The long-term effects of smoking are well documented: cancer, heart disease, blood clots, respiratory infections and stroke. In the short term, you will suffer from bad breath and smelly hair and clothes, stained fingers and teeth, reduced physical fitness, and a severe cough.

Smoking is also linked to depression. And if none of that puts you off, consider the cost. High taxes are placed on cigarettes, making the smoking habit unaffordable.

Alcohol

Australia has a bit of a reputation for being a country that enjoys alcohol. There's nothing wrong with having a few drinks to unwind or celebrate, but binge drinking (drinking excessively to inebriation) should be avoided. Aside from giving you a hangover (headache, tiredness, nausea and vomiting), it makes you more susceptible to injury and assault, and can have an impact on your physical and mental health.

Women in particular should be careful when they drink in bars, clubs and pubs. Drink spiking, when someone places a drug in your drink, is a real concern. For this reason, you should **never** leave your drink unattended. If you must put your drink down, for example to go to the bathroom, leave it with a trusted friend to look after.

Doctors

If you're in Australia for more than a semester, chances are that you'll have to visit a doctor before you leave. You can be confident that Australian doctors are highly skilled and well educated, and you'll receive excellent care in a clean and sanitary environment.

What kind of medical care to seek

Unlike in many other countries, in Australia you should NEVER seek help from a hospital emergency room (ER) unless you are in a life-threatening situation. Every night of the week, hospital ERs become congested by people who want treatment for a cold or minor flu, headaches and minor injuries. This puts a lot of stress on the doctors and nurses, and puts the lives of people who are in genuine need of their immediate attention in jeopardy.

General Practitioners

General Practitioners, or GPs, are the doctors people have the most contact with. They treat any medical condition that isn't life-threatening. This includes viruses, colds and flu, infections—all the general, 'every day' conditions that make you feel sick. They can take blood and urine samples, give you injections and perform minor surgeries such as stitches and the removal of moles. They can also perform gynaecological exams.

If you need to see a GP, you will find a list of the ones near you in the Yellow Pages (www.yellowpages.com.au). GPs either work in a private surgery, sometimes with one or two other GPs, or in a medical centre with five or six other GPs. The service you get from GPs at private surgeries and medical centres is the same. Your doctor will be highly qualified, and they will treat your case with complete confidentiality. But there are some small differences.

Your GP may ask you some very personal or embarrassing questions, but it is important that you answer truthfully. Being honest will help the GP to diagnose your condition accurately and give you the appropriate medical care. Remember: anything you tell your doctor will be kept confidential. If you feel uncomfortable with a particular doctor, however, you may request to see someone else.

You will need to make an appointment. GPs do not usually visit you, nor have regular contact with you outside of your scheduled appointments. The cost of visiting a doctor will usually be partly covered by OHSC. However, you may have to pay the fee at the time of your doctor's appointment and later seek reimbursement from your OHSC provider.

Private surgery

You must book an appointment in advance. You will rarely get to see a doctor on the same day you call. In some areas of the country you may have to wait up to two weeks.

You must pay to see the GP, about \$50 for a 15-minute appointment.

You will be able to see the same doctor each time you visit, so the GP will become familiar with your medical history.

Open weekdays only during working hours.

Medical centre

No appointment is necessary. You can walk into a medical centre at any time, put your name on the list and you will be called when a doctor is ready for you. This may be a few hours.

GP services at a medical centre are free.

You will probably see a different GP each time you visit, meaning that you may have to explain your medical history each time you visit.

Open extended hours every day.

Specialist doctors

In some cases you may need to see a specialist doctor, for example an optician, podiatrist or dermatologist. Generally, you won't be able to see a specialist without first getting a referral for their services from your GP. Specialist doctors are a lot more expensive than GPs, but some of their services might be covered under your Overseas Student Health Cover plan.

A specialist doctor will assess your condition, sometimes with the aid of tests, and develop a treatment plan for you to follow. You will probably have to see your specialist several times to treat your medical condition.

Emergency room doctors

Emergency room (ER) doctors work in hospitals and treat patients with severe and life-threatening injuries or illnesses. With any luck, you will never have to see an ER doctor. But if you do, they will give you excellent care. **Call 000 if you or a friend needs urgent medical attention**, you may be advised to go to a hospital, or depending on the

circumstances an ambulance will come and pick you up. You will receive medical attention from ambulance staff, or paramedics, on your way to the hospital.

Prescription medication

Australian GPs may also dispense medication differently to what you are used to. Generally, you will not receive medication for things like the flu or a stomach bug, but you can buy over-the-counter medicine for pain relief and fever from a chemist (also known as a drugstore or pharmacy) and some supermarkets.

If your GP decides that medication will help your condition, they will give you a prescription. A prescription is a piece of paper that lists your details, your GP's details and the name and quantity of the medication you should receive. You must then take this prescription to a chemist, and they will provide you with your medication. GPs in Australia never give you medication themselves.

When your chemist gives you your medication, you will have to sign a form that confirms you have received it, then pay for the medication. The cost of the medication will depend on what it is, but your chemist might offer you a generic brand of medication, which is generally cheaper. It is your choice whether you buy the generic brand of medication or the brand name medication that is prescribed to you. The active ingredients in both are the same—the only difference is the packaging it comes in and the cost.

When you take your medication home, it is important that you follow the directions on the sticker your chemist put on the pack. This will include information on the dosage—how much medication you should take, and how often you should take it. Not following these directions can make you even sicker, and you may even overdose.

The Australian system of handing out medication might seem a lot more rigid or strict than what you're used to at home. This doesn't mean that Australian doctors don't think your health and wellbeing is important. In fact, it means the opposite. The Australian Government has put these strict rules and regulations on medical treatment in place in order to protect your health, and to make it difficult for people to abuse prescription medication.

Bringing medication from home into Australia

If you need to bring medication from home into Australia, bring your medical records and medical prescriptions with a letter from your doctor at home. If you know you'll need to buy more of the same medication

when you're in Australia, you should bring English translations of your prescription with you that you can give to your Australian GP.

Dentists

The other kind of doctor you may regularly see in Australia is a dentist. You can find dentists in your area listed in the Yellow Pages. Dentists will generally charge a fee for their service, which can be quite expensive. Your OSHC may cover part of these costs—make sure you read your OSHC policy and know what kinds of dental procedures you are covered for. Generally you do not need a referral from your GP to see a dentist.

Personal safety

One of the scariest things about moving to a new country can also be one of the most exciting: anonymity. You probably won't know too many people when you arrive—if anyone—and this can give you a feeling of freedom like you've never had. Suddenly, you feel like you have the opportunity to be whoever you want. Without your family and friends around, you can reinvent yourself and perhaps feel less inhibited about the things that you wouldn't dare do at home.

While this can be one of the most liberating things about studying in a new place, it's important that you don't lose your focus on your personal safety. While Australia is a comparatively safe place to live and has relatively low crime rates, you must still take the necessary precautions to protect yourself—just like you would at home.

Here are a few general tips to help keep you safe.

- Never carry large amounts of money with you. You can access the money in your bank account at most stores with your ATM card.
- Make sure you close the zipper on your bag so that thieves can't reach in and take your purse or wallet, mobile phone, iPod, etc.
- Don't walk alone at night. Walk in a group and stay in well-lit areas.
- If you're going out, plan your trip so that you know how you're getting home, and make sure you have enough money for transport if you need it.
- Walk with confidence. Be wary of casual requests from strangers on the street, like someone asking for the time or money for a bus ticket. While most people will be genuine in their request, others might have ulterior motives.

- When using an ATM, prevent others from seeing your PIN number and secure your cash quickly in your bag. Don't count your money on the street.
- Don't let someone you don't know drive you home. If you are the driver, don't offer a lift to people who are unknown to you.
- Make sure your mobile phone always has enough battery power, or that you have change for a pay phone if you need to call for help. However, 000 emergency calls are free from any phone.
- If you're listening to your iPod on the street, don't turn it up so loud that you can't hear trouble approaching, either from other people or from cars, trams and buses when you're crossing the street.
- Always cross the street at pedestrian crossings (also known as a zebra crossing) or at traffic lights with pedestrian signals. Drivers in Australia generally don't expect to have to yield for pedestrians in traffic.

Water safety

There's nothing better than slipping into a cool pool, river, lake or ocean on a sweltering Australian summer day. Stay safe by following these steps.

- Always swim between the red and yellow flags at the beach. This is the safest area for swimmers, and where you will avoid dangers like rips, undercurrents, rocks, reefs, jellyfish and other hazards.
- If you do get caught in a rip, don't fight it. Float with the current and raise your arm to indicate that you need assistance.
- Obey the orders given by lifeguards on the beach. They know what they are doing, and your compliance with their requests makes you safer. After all, you might need their help if you get into trouble.
- Don't swim at beaches that don't have lifeguards on duty.
- If you're swimming in a river, creek or dam, always check the water depth first and check for submerged hazards like rocks or logs. NEVER dive into water without first checking the water depth.
- Never swim if you have been drinking alcohol.
- If you are on a boat, always wear a life jacket, even if you are not that far from land.
- Remember that water conditions change quickly. Just because a beach was safe to swim at in the morning does not mean that it will still be safe in the afternoon.
- Do not enter any body of water, from backyard pools to the ocean, rivers to dams and everything in between if you don't know how to

swim. You can take lessons from a certified instructor at many local pools. For a list of places near you, go to www.austswim.com.au.

Home safety

Australia is a safe country with low rates of crime. But that doesn't mean that crime doesn't happen. Don't make breaking into your home easy for thieves; follow these easy steps.

- Lock your doors and windows when you go out. It's a good idea to have them locked when you're at home as well, even if you are well above street level.
- Don't leave a set of spare keys outside your house.
- Be careful about the information you give to strangers over the phone, and never have an answering machine message telling the caller that you aren't at home or on holidays.
- Use deadlocks and door chains if you have them. If you don't, ask your landlord or real estate agent to install them.
- If your house has an alarm, make sure you use it.
- Prepare an emergency escape plan for your home in case of life threatening situations, such as a fire. See below for more information.

Fire safety

Smoke alarms

Legislation varies from state to state, but in most places it is now compulsory for all houses and units to have a smoke alarm installed. Smoke alarms are designed to detect fire smoke, and they emit a loud and distinctive sound to alert you to potential fire danger. Smoke alarms can provide you with precious time to evacuate from a burning house. They run on ordinary batteries that you can buy from any supermarket. For this reason, it is crucial that you check the batteries in your smoke alarm at least twice a year. If you find that the batteries have run out of power, you should replace them immediately.

Emergency escape plans

You should work out a plan to escape from your home in the event of a fire. Fires and smoke cause confusion and panic, so knowing ahead of time the safest route to get out of your house will save you time and increase your chance of avoiding injury.

You should start by drawing a floor plan of your house. Then, work out at least two escape routes from each room, for example a window and a door. Make yourself familiar with any locks or fly screens that might be on these windows and doors so that you can open them quickly. If you are escaping via a window, check the ground outside for hazards and clear them out of the way. Discuss the plan with anyone you might be living with so that everyone is aware of what to do and where to go. It is also a good idea to agree on a meeting place on the street outside your house so that you know everyone is safe.

You should call 000 after evacuation from your home, either on a mobile phone or from a neighbour's house. NEVER re-enter a burning house for any reason. Stay outside and wait for the fire brigade.

Avoiding home fires

- Check the batteries in your smoke alarm twice a year. The fire brigade often recommends that you check your alarms on the same day that you turn your clocks forward or backwards for the beginning and end of daylight saving time.
- Don't smoke in bed.
- Be careful when using heaters, electric blankets and open fires in winter. Don't drape clothes over heaters, and keep heaters away from your bed. Fires often start in winter when blankets are kicked over heaters while people are sleeping.
- Don't leave candles burning when you leave the room.
- Keep tea-towels, sponges and paper towels away from burning gas stoves.
- Keep electrical appliances away from water.
- Don't overload electrical power outlets and adaptors.
- If you live in an area that is prone to bushfires, keep your gutters and the ground area around your home free from fallen leaves and other debris.



Living in Australia

As you know, living in Australia means experiencing a country like no other – here's some tips to help you settle in and enjoy everything Australia has to offer.

Services

Shopping

Australia's major town centres and capital cities have world-class shopping facilities. Hours are generally 9.00 am to 5.00 pm seven days a week, with late-night shopping until 9.00 pm on Thursday or Friday. Some supermarkets are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most large chain supermarkets, like Coles and Woolworths, are open until about 10pm every day.

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. For this reason, it is not necessary for you to carry large amounts of cash with you.

Australia's four major banks with branches across the country are the Commonwealth Bank, ANZ, Westpac and National Australia Bank (NAB). There are plenty of smaller banks with good coverage, as well as credit unions. You can search for banks at www.infochoice.com.au.

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 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. They sell stationery, post bags, phone cards and stamps, and you can also pay your electricity and telephone bills and some other accounts.

Telephones

Australia has a modern communications system. Local calls generally cost about 30c and are not timed. Interstate and international call costs will vary depending on your service provider. If you have broadband access at home, it can often be cheaper to set up a VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) plan for your calls. 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. You can purchase a pre-paid phone or a post-paid phone. A pre-paid phone is a great option for students with limited funds. You pay for the phone handset upfront (you can buy a basic phone for under \$100), and then purchase credit that can be used for several months. A post-paid phone handset is generally free, but you will be locked into a contract with your mobile service provider for up to two years. However, post-paid cap plans are great if you use your phone a lot but don't want an expensive bill. You can find some plans that cost as little as \$20 a month that provide you with \$100 worth of calls and text messages. Shop around for the best plan for you.

Major telephone service providers in Australia are Telstra, Optus, Virgin Mobile and Vodaphone.

Internet

Australia has hundreds of Internet Service Providers. Plans vary greatly in cost and download limits though, so shop around for the plan that's best for you. You can search for an appropriate plan at broadbandguide.com.au.

Depending on where you live, you might have a few options for how your Internet connection is delivered. Dial-up Internet is available everywhere, but you can also get cable, ADSL and satellite broadband. Cable and ADSL are generally available in all capital cities and large regional centres, but if you live in a more rural area your best option for a fast Internet connection might be satellite.

Libraries

Aside from your institution's libraries, you will also find public libraries in each city and town. Most libraries are open six days a week (closed on Sunday). They stock books, CDs, DVDs, newspapers, magazines, journals and ebooks. If your library does not have what you are looking for, you can usually ask them to order it for you from another library.

Borrowing items is free, but you will need to join the library and obtain a membership card. Late return of items will usually incur a small fee.

Television

Australia has five free-to-air analog channels and dozens of pay-TV channels. The free-to-air digital network is expected to expand from March 2009, adding up to 15 digital channels. You do not need to purchase a licence to view free-to-air or digital channels, but there is a monthly subscription fee for the channels available on Foxtel, Austar, Select TV and several others.

Newspapers

The Australian (www.theaustralian.news.com.au) is Australia's national newspaper. Each state has its own major newspaper, as well as several regional newspapers and tabloids. You can do a search for your local paper on www.newspapers.com.au.

New South Wales

The Sydney Morning Herald www.smh.com.au

Victoria

The Melbourne Age www.theage.com.au

Queensland

The Brisbane Courier Mail www.news.com.au/couriermail

Australian Capital Territory

The Canberra Times www.canberratimes.com.au

South Australia

The Adelaide Advertiser www.news.com.au/adelaidenow

Western Australia

The West Australian www.thewest.com.au

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory News www.ntnews.com.au

Tasmania

The Hobart Mercury www.news.com.au/mercury

There are also locally produced foreign-language newspapers available in Australia, and you can find newspapers from international locales (mostly in Asia) in some districts.

Multicultural community groups

Joining groups associated with your home community can be a good way of finding support in Australia. You might also find it to be a good way of introducing your new friends to your culture and heritage. Here are some handy website links to find groups in your area.

Australian Capital Territory www.communitiesonline.org.au

New South Wales www.communilink.org.au

Victoria www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Western Australia www.multicultural.online.wa.gov.au

Tasmania www.tas.gov.au/tasmaniaonline

Queensland www.multicultural.qld.gov.au

South Australia www.multicultural.sa.gov.au

Northern Territory www.nt.gov.au/dcm/multicultural

Culture and society

In Australia, you'll 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* or *hi*.
- *Please* and *thank you*—say *please* when requesting something and *thank you* when anything is provided to you.

- Personal space—Australia is a big country with a small population, so we're used to having plenty of personal space. It's unusual to be in a situation where you must stand shoulder-to-shoulder with others. Try to leave at least an arm's length of space.
- Dress—Australians tend to dress casually. If more formal dress is required, you will usually be told. You should feel free to dress in the way you feel is culturally appropriate for you.
- 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 may not allow smoking by law. 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.
- Personal hygiene—to guard against the spread of germs and disease, use a tissue or handkerchief when you sneeze or need to blow your nose. Wash your hands before eating, after going to the bathroom, after playing with animals, or when you have a cold. In Australia, it is a courtesy to others to shower daily and use deodorant.
- 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.

Culture shock

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.
- 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 and 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.
- 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 and prepared to adapt to the changing environment.
- 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're 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 question.

Making friends

Having friends to support you and share your time in Australia will make a big impact on your happiness. The good news is that when you start your studies, you're probably going to be surrounded by people who are just like you. They're about the same age, quite likely have the same interests if you're taking the same classes, and have the same study pressures. Having these things in common can create a great opportunity to connect with new people and form new friendships.

Understand that friendships are rarely formed overnight. It usually takes a few days or weeks of bumping into each other around school and having brief conversations. But through these conversations you'll find that you'll learn more and more about each other and your conversations will become longer. Don't be afraid to ask them to have a coffee with you or catch up during lunch. Before you know it, you'll have a new friend.

Where to find new friends

The best place to find people you'll get along with is with clubs on campus. Sporting clubs, drama clubs, cultural clubs, book clubs, chocolate-lovers clubs, English clubs—join any club that you might find interesting. While you might find it easier to make friends with people from your home country, make the effort to reach out to Australian students and people from other countries. Australian friends will help you to quickly connect with your new home in Australia, and speaking to them will improve your English skills very quickly (although it might be difficult at first!).

You can also look around your community for other events. Try film nights, joining a local sporting team, religious groups, getting involved in community volunteer work, music nights, or online discussion groups for your institution.

How to make friends

Just turning up at a campus club or film night isn't enough. To make friends you'll have to talk to people. Not everyone you talk to will become a good friend (or even be someone you'll want to keep talking to after five minutes). But you'll never know who may turn into a life-long buddy.

Make eye contact with people, and smile. If you look friendly, people are more likely to respond to you in a positive way. Make small talk with them—the weather, the class you just had—and make sure you tell them your name. Typically, they'll respond with their own name, and this familiarity will make it easier to talk to them again. If you find that you have common interests—a TV show, a band, a love of animals—ask

them more about it and share your own thoughts. You could suggest getting together later to talk more and, if you're comfortable with it, maybe exchange email addresses. It could also be worth suggesting to them that you help each other study for a class you have together.

If someone isn't responding to your efforts to make friends, try not to take offence. Some people take a long time to open up to new people, some people aren't looking for more friends, some may like to keep to themselves. Everyone is different, and you have to respect their boundaries. Try to take things slower and don't force the friendship.

If you're finding it hard to make friends and it's making you upset, try talking to your institution's guidance counsellor. Talking to someone who understands the pressure you're feeling in a new country can help you feel much better, and they might know of the students in the same situation who you might get along with.

Australian laws

Australians enjoy a lot of freedom on our daily lives. We can live where we want, say what we want, dress how we want and have personal relationships with whomever we want. It's this freedom of lifestyle that makes Australia so attractive to visitors.

It's important, then, to have respect for and obey the laws that help keep Australia the wonderful country that it is. As an international student, you must also obey these laws, even those that are different to the laws you live with at home.

Some common laws you should be aware of include:

- You must be over 18 years of age to purchase alcohol or cigarettes.
- Smoking in many public places, including shopping centres, restaurants and on public transport, is prohibited.
- You cannot buy, sell, possess or use illicit drugs, including marijuana, amphetamines and opiates.
- You cannot carry weapons, including knives and guns.
- You must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle, motorbike or scooter.
- If you drive a car in Australia, you must have a driver's licence and make sure you are aware of and obey all road rules.
- Acts of violence against other people, property or animals is a criminal offence. This includes violence against family members.

- It is illegal to offer or receive a bribe for services, including those provided by a government official.
- It is illegal to discriminate against any person because of their gender, race, country of origin, political beliefs, religious beliefs, marital status, disability or sexual preference.

If you are the victim of a crime you should call the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 if you live in the ACT, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia or the Northern Territory. If you live in Victoria or Queensland, contact your nearest police station. Police in Australia are very approachable, trustworthy and helpful with strong ties to the community. They will provide you with the assistance you need, and you should feel confident in approaching them.



Working in Australia



International students
in Australia can work
up to 20 hours a
week, but you should
make sure you
understand your rights
and responsibilities
as an employee.

Working in Australia

From 26 April 2008, your student visa allows you to work up to 20 hours a week on a casual basis. All paid, volunteer or unpaid work counts toward the 20 hours a week limit. If you were granted a visa before this time, you can still receive permission to work by applying to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

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

Working and student visa conditions

While you automatically receive permission to work, your visa requires you to meet certain conditions including:

- You cannot commence working in Australia until you have started your course.
- You can only work up to 20 hours a week while your course is in session. This includes paid, volunteer and unpaid work, but does not include work experience you undertake as part of your course.
- You can work unlimited hours during holiday periods when your course is not in session.

Types of work for international students

International students often find work in retail, hospitality and administration. The wage you receive will depend 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 2861, 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.

Your employer will probably have an existing arrangement with a superannuation provider, but you can choose a different provider if you want. Visit the ATO website at www.ato.gov.au for more information on superannuation providers and how to change providers.

If you are eligible, you may be entitled to receive your superannuation when you permanently leave Australia. This payment is called the Departing Australia Superannuation Payment (DASP). You can apply online for the DASP at the ATO website.

Finding work

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers and on websites like www.seek.com.au, www.careerone.com.au and www.mycareer.com.au. It's also a good idea to contact your institution's careers office or student centre. They might have information on local businesses that are known to hire international students. Local businesses might also place advertisements on school noticeboards, and in their stores. Keep a look out for these position vacant notices.

It's also a good idea to let your friends know that you're looking for a job. They might know of a friend's business that's looking for another staff member. At the very least, they'll be able to let you know if they see a job advertised that you might like.

Applying for a job

Once you find an advertisement for a job you want to apply for, you'll probably have to submit a résumé, also known as a Curriculum Vitae or CV. Your résumé's job is to sell your skills to the employer. It should outline your work history, skills and experience, and detail your performance in these jobs.

While it might take you a few hours to prepare your résumé, the truth is that employers will only spend a few seconds scanning it before deciding whether to read more or move on to the next résumé. For this reason, you have to make your résumé stand out.

- Organise your résumé in a logical order. Put your personal details and contact information first, followed by your work history (most recent job first), education and skills. You might also like to include a section on your hobbies or interests if you feel it's appropriate. If you speak a language in addition to English, say so.
- Use headings for each section so that the employer can quickly locate the information they're after.
- Provide just enough detail to assure the employer that you have the skills they need. You can go into greater detail if you get an interview.

Make sure you submit your résumé by the advertised deadline. Employers rarely accept late applications. If the advertisement asked you to provide information on a particular skill, such as experience in customer service, make sure you address it. Submit everything that was asked for in the advert; sometimes you will be asked to provide a cover letter or references from previous employers. This can be tricky if you have

recently arrived in Australia, with your previous employers living overseas. In this instance, you may like to provide their contact information instead.

If you're submitting a hard copy application, make sure it looks neat and tidy, with no marks or creases. It's best to use simple white paper, and simple font (such as Arial or Times). People often use fancy fonts to make their résumé look more important or to stand out, but if the employer can't easily read what you've written, you probably won't get an interview.

What not to include in a résumé

You might find that the acceptable style of résumé in Australia is different to what you're used to at home. Some things to be aware of include:

- Don't include your height, weight, marital status or religion.
- You do not have to include your age or birth date, although many people still do.
- You do not need to include a photo of yourself.
- Don't discuss how much you would like to be paid, or any other benefits you would like to receive.
- Don't make any false statements about your previous jobs or skills.

The interview

If the employer calls you to set up an interview, you're halfway to a new job! The next challenge is to have a great interview and secure the position. How do you do that?

First of all, prepare yourself. Re-read your application and make sure that you can back up all the claims you have made. It might be hard, but try to stay calm. Interviewers will expect a few nerves, but if you get too nervous you probably won't perform at your best. Listen carefully to each question, and keep your answer relevant. If you're not sure you understand the question, politely ask them to repeat it or rephrase it. This is especially important if English is your second language.

Keep in mind that the interview is your time to promote yourself and discuss your skills in more detail. You have to show the employer why they should hire you and what you will bring to their business. Be polite and friendly not just to the interviewer, but to any other staff you might come across. You should also consider your appearance for the interview. There is no need to buy a new, expensive outfit, but you should make sure that you are dressed neatly.

Hopefully, your interview will be successful and you'll be offered the job. But if you don't get it, you can ask the employer for feedback so you can improve your interview performance for next time. Try not to get discouraged. Everyone gets knocked back a few times for jobs they have applied for, and it doesn't necessarily mean that you did a bad job in the interview. Try to put a positive spin on it: at least you now have the experience of an interview. You can use it as practice for next time.

Your rights and responsibilities in the workplace

As a student visa holder, you are permitted to work up to 20 hours per week while studying in Australia. Many international students find that part-time work is a great way to give them a little extra money, on top of their available funds, to spend on entertainment or unexpected bills. Do not rely on wages from part-time work to support your life in Australia.

Before you step into the workplace, make sure you're aware of your legal rights as an employee, and your responsibilities to your employer. Don't assume that because you're an international student that you don't have rights—you do. Don't believe any employer who tells you that workplace rights do not apply to you.

You can find the information below in more detail from the Workplace Ombudsman at www.workplace.gov.au or on the telephone information line 1300 363 264.

Pay

You are entitled to receive at least the basic rate of pay that applies to your age and job classification. Many employers will pay you at a rate above the basic rate. You should also note the following:

- Your employer must pay you the correct rate of pay for all the hours you attend work.
- They must pay you on a regular basis—casual and part-time workers are often paid either weekly or every two weeks for work they have already undertaken. That is, you are paid in arrears, not in advance.
- Your pay slip must include your employer's information (including their Australian Business Number, or ABN), the number of hours you are being paid for, the amount you have paid in income tax, your superannuation payment and, of course, how much you have been paid.
- You shouldn't have money taken out of your pay to cover things like a customer leaving without paying.

- You should be paid for 'trial work'.
- If you work on a public holiday, you may be entitled to be paid more for that day. You might also get a higher rate of pay if you work on the weekends.

Shifts

The time you spend at work is generally known as a 'shift'. This means you must turn up to work on a predetermined day and time.

- You should receive an unpaid break if you work more than five consecutive hours.
- You should start and finish your shift at the time you are rostered to. If you work extra hours, you should first have this approved by your manager or employer, and you should be paid in return.

Starting a new job

Before you start working for a new employer, it is very important that you understand exactly what your duties are, what is expected of you and how much you will be paid. You should also ask for information on things like meal breaks, completing time sheets (a record of the hours you work), what to do if you can't make it to work, and any training you will have to undertake before you start work. If there is anything that you don't understand, ask your employer for more information or talk to the Workplace Ombudsman. You can contact them through their website at www.wo.gov.au or call them on 1300 363 264. You can also contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 for translation help.

Ending your employment

If you choose to end your employment, you must give your employer appropriate notice. That is, you must formally inform them of your intention to leave at an appropriate length of time before you actually leave. This length of time will vary depending on your employment conditions.

If your employer terminates your employment, they must do so for a lawful reason. You cannot be fired because of temporary absence from work due to illness or injury, for making a complaint against your employer, or because of your gender, race, country of origin, religious or political beliefs, marital status, or physical or mental disability.

When you leave your employment, make sure that you have been correctly paid for all the work you have done. If you need help, contact the Workplace Ombudsman at www.wo.gov.au or on 1300 363 264.



Studying in Australia

Sometimes, teaching styles in Australia may be different to what you're used to – here's an outline of what your studies may involve and the support services available to you.

Studying in Australia

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 is 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 course, 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 too well in an exam, you will have the opportunity to lift your grade through other pieces of assessment.

The system of assessment is different between education providers, 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 may 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.

For help on how to reference properly, contact your International Office.

Consumer protection

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, for example.

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 course-related information, such as:

- the course content and duration
- the qualification it leads to
- teaching and assessment methods
- English language requirements
- previous work experience or educational qualifications required for admittance
- requirements for course completion
- course-related fees
- the facilities and learning resources related to the delivery of the course
- student support services (see below).

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:

- orientation
- academic progress
- further study
- accommodation.

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 represented by a nominee of your choice.

More information

You can find more information on your rights under this framework at www.studyinaustralia.gov.au.

What your International Office can do for you

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.

Many international students don't realise the range of services available to them through their international and student support offices. Students who do make use of them find them extremely useful, and report that the support they receive from these offices help make their time in Australia more rewarding. This is because they have someone to talk to about things like accommodation, problems with their studies and course advice, and it puts them in touch with other students to make friends with.

Orientation

International Student Advisors (ISAs) 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.

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.



Returning home

Your Australian living and learning experience doesn't end upon graduation – you can continue your Aussie connections through alumni networks around the world.

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 study with 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.

You can find a list of alumni associations on the Study in Australia website.



Useful links and information

Australia is committed to ensuring international students have the best experience possible, and a wide range of information is available to help you throughout your time living, learning and growing in Australia.

Useful links and information

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

Australian Government	www.australia.gov.au
Study in Australia	www.studyinaustralia.gov.au
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

Important numbers

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

Glossary


AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
ISA	International Student Adviser
OSHC	Overseas Student Health Cover

*Note: All costs listed are in Australian dollars.



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