



Student Life in Australia

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The first few days you spend in Australia will be busy and emotional. Once you arrive in Australia you will be busy finding or settling into your accommodation, enrolling in classes, and making new friends.

There is a variety of student accommodation available in Australia from on-campus options to homestay with an Australian Family or accommodation shared with other students.

Australia has one of the highest standards of living in the world and is home to people from over 190 countries – at least 1 in 5 Australians was born overseas. Cultural diversity is part of Australia's national identity and one of Australia's greatest strengths.

As an international student in Australia, you will be subject to all state, territory and federal laws. The legal age for buying cigarettes and buying and drinking alcohol is 18 years in Australia. If you break the law in Australia your student visa would be cancelled and you may be deported.

It will take time to adjust to living in a new country and so far away from family and friends. Remember that these feelings are normal and you are not alone. You must stay positive and keep socialising. Making friends with students from other countries will help you to share your experiences and stop you feeling so isolated.

As time continues you will find yourself becoming more familiar with Australian culture and feel less homesick.

You will gain experiences and develop friendships which will stay with you forever.

Shopping

Woolworths, Safeway, Coles, BiLo and IGA are some of the major supermarkets.

Shopping is by self-service and goods are paid for at the 'checkout' before you leave. Prices vary between these stores and you should shop around for the best prices.

Asian supermarkets are also available in some suburbs and sell a large variety of Asian foods

Convenience stores such as 7-Eleven and Food Plus are generally open 24 hours but prices are slightly more expensive than supermarkets.

Fresh fruit, vegetables and meat are often sold at markets at cheaper prices than the supermarket. Markets also sell a variety of other goods such as clothing, plants, furniture etc.



Paying for Goods

There is a variety of methods that you can use to pay for goods:

- Cash
- EFTPOS (using your ATM card)
- Credit card

Will my ATM card work in Australia?

ATM (Automatic Teller Machines) cards can be used in Australia so long as they have been enabled for international access.

Your ATM card must carry either the CIRUS, PLUS or STAR international ATM mark or the Interlink or Maestro POS mark.

Transport information

Public Transport

Public transport is slightly different in every city as each State Government operates the system. Buses, trains and ferries operate in most Australian cities and run on a strict timetable.

In Sydney and Melbourne, international students are not eligible for student concessions and must pay normal adult fares. We recommend that you buy a weekly or monthly ticket as it is cheaper than buying a ticket per trip.

Taxis are relatively expensive in Australia. Higher rates apply in the evenings, weekend and public holidays.

All taxis in Australia must use the fare meter by law. The flag fall (starting charge) is approximately A\$3.00.

Cars

Australians drive on the left hand side of the road. The maximum speed limit is between 100 and 110 km/h (62 - 68 mph) outside cities, and 60 km/h (35 mph) in urban areas.

Australia is notorious for its speeding fines, so make sure you keep to the speed limit - although if you really want to let rip you should visit the Northern Territory, where some highways have no speed limit at all!

Seat belts must be worn by drivers and all passengers at all times. The minimum age for driving varies from state to state - make sure you check - but is generally 16 or 17. Car rental companies may require you to be older.

Australian driver licenses are administered at state/territory level, and regulations vary as a result.

If you hold a license to drive a car in your home country and would like to drive in Australia, you will need to get a state license.

Phones, internet and mail

Australia has an extensive network of Public Phones throughout the country - easily recognized by the orange and blue Telstra emblem.

The cost of local call is 40 cents with most phones accepting coins and prepared telephone cards.

International calls can be made from pay phones. Charges vary depending on the time of day and distance. Sundays are the best day to make interstate or international calls as all day discount rates apply.

The rates for Pre Paid Telephone cards are: \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50. They can be purchased at most News agencies, convenience stores and Post Offices.

There are numerous mobile providers in Australia, all offering different plans and services.

Landlines

There are 2 main telephone service providers in Australia: Telstra and Optus. The cost of call rates, monthly fees etc vary with each company. You Should contact them directly for further information.

Telstra Website - www.Telstra.com.au

Optus Website – www.optus.com.au

Email & Internet

There are many internet providers in Australia but the two main ones are Telstra and OptusNet Cable.

The best way to find a complete listing of Internet providers is to do a search for 'Internet Access Providers' in the Australian Yellow pages.

Mail

Australia Post is the national postal service provider. There are post offices located in most Australian suburbs and shopping centres.

Services include postage of letters, faxes, parcels, money orders (similar to a cheque) and a bill paying service.

To find the post office nearest you, visit the Australia Post website – www.auspost.com.au

Opening an Australian bank account

To open the account you'll need to take along some identification (ID), such as a passport, a birth certificate, and/or a driver's licence. Your bank can tell you exactly what you'll need to bring.

You will also need to provide your tax file number (TFN) so that you can be identified for tax purposes. While this isn't essential, if you don't provide your TFN, any interest your accounts earn will be taxed at the highest rate.

Tax file number (TFN)

Tax file numbers (TFNs) are unique numbers issued by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to identify individuals, companies and others who lodge income tax returns.

All international students are considered a 'resident for tax purposes' after they have lived in Australia for more than 6 months.

Application forms can be downloaded from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) website or you can apply in person at your local Post Office.

Australian Tax Office - www.ato.gov.au

Money

To cover your initial expenses we recommend you bring a bank cheque to the value of A\$1500.00.

Once you have opened a bank account, the bank cheque can be deposited into it. It may take a few days for the bank cheque to clear so we recommend that you bring approximately A\$300 in cash to cover costs until the funds are cleared.

Electrical Appliances

Electrical goods may be cheaper to buy overseas than in Australia. You may want to bring small electrical appliances such as a clock radio, iron, hair drier, cassette player or perhaps a rice cooker.

Australia's power system is 240 volts 50 Hz alternating current (AC). Appliances rated 220-240 Volts will work in Australia. Transformers or adaptor plugs will be needed to fit these sockets.



This is the three point socket used in Australia.

Your Australian Course

Most international students find the Australian teaching style to be quite different to what they have experienced before. Rather than teaching you the words to remember for exams there is a focus on practical teaching that encourages creative independent thought and debate in order to give you a thorough understanding of a topic.



Class participation will be encouraged throughout your course in order to encourage you to develop your thoughts and you may find this to form part of your assessment.

Classes at university will take the form of lectures and tutorials. A lecture can be attended by as many as 200 students whereas a tutorial will be much smaller and be attended by around 20 – 30 people. It is essential to attend all of your lectures in order to contribute to each tutorial.

Assessment

Depending on your degree you may be continually assessed throughout your course. This assessment will determine your final grade and will be based on your performance in assignments, examinations, and class participation.

Resources

Study Information

Study in Australia

The official Australian Government site for advice on study in Australia. Impartial information about courses, institutions, study and living costs.

Website: <http://studyinaustralia.gov.au>

Phones, Internet and Mail

Telstra

Mobile phone, internet, and wired telephone service provider to Australia, covering 94% of the population.

Website: www.telstra.com.au

Optus

Australian leader in integrated telecommunications, delivering cutting-edge communications, information technology and entertainment.

Website: www.optus.com.au

Australia Post

Website: www.auspost.com.au

Money Matters

Australian Tax Office

Set up your Tax file number here.

Website: www.ato.gov.au

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

The commonwealth bank are well equipped to help overseas students set up banking in Australia. Look for their overseas banking section online.

www.commbank.com.au/personal/youth-students/overseas-students/default.aspx

Other Australian Banks include:

National Australia Bank - NAB

Website: www.nab.com.au

Australia & New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ)

Website: www.anz.com

Westpac

Website: www.westpac.com.au