Pre Departure and arrival Information for International Students

This guide has been prepared for International Student who are considering taking up study in Australia. It has been prepared as a guide only and depending on which State and location the student studies there may be some variations.

Australia is home to some of the world’s leading educational institutions, academics and researchers who are conducting universally acknowledged research that attains the highest standard when measured against international benchmarks.

Our areas of academic excellence include medical and health sciences, physics, chemistry, information technology, Asia-Pacific studies, biotechnology and astronomy. Australia is also well regarded internationally for its graduates in engineering and business studies, the arts and social sciences.

The Australian education sector is the natural choice for students seeking an education that provides global reach, ongoing growth and development, and ultimately the very best return-on-investment.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the Student Handbook which has detailed information related to study, orientation, courses, content and fees, locations, English proficiency and enrolment information regarding deferring, suspended or cancellation of enrolment.

This guide and the Student Handbook are available on the NorthEd International College website.

www.northed.edu.au
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1.1 Fast Facts

- Population over 22.5 million
- The only country that is also a continent, Australia is situated in the Southern Hemisphere in the southwest Pacific Ocean. Nearest neighbours to the north are Papua New Guinea and Indonesia (about an eight-hour flight from Sydney). New Zealand lies to the east, about a three-hour flight away
- Almost one in four Australians was born overseas. You will meet people from all corners of the globe who have settled in Australia – from Europe and Asia, to Africa, the Middle East and the Americas
- Australia is a country of innovation. Australian scientists have invented many world-changing technologies including: the black box flight recorder, the heart pacemaker, ultrasound, the influenza vaccine, the bionic ear, wireless internet, Google Maps and spray-on skin for burn victims.

1.2 States and Territories

Before outlining the opportunities that await you when studying in Australia, a quick geography lesson will help you understand the layout and makeup of this diverse and beautiful country. It will also help you understand the state or territory where you will be living as well as other areas that you may wish to visit during your time in the ‘land downunder’.

Australia has six states and two territories, each with its own distinctive history, personality and attractions. The six states are New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC), South Australia (SA), Queensland (QLD), Western Australia (WA), South Australia (SA), and Tasmania (TAS). The two territories – the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) – are partly self-governing, and partly controlled by the federal government.

New South Wales

www.visitsw.com.au
Capital Sydney
State population About 7.2 million
Climate Jan: 66–80 °F, 19–27 °C
July: 46–60 °F, 8–16 °C

Victoria

www.visitvictoria.com
Capital Melbourne
State population About 5.5 million
Climate Jan: 58–80 °F, 14–27 °C
July: 46–60 °F, 8–16 °C
Queensland
www.queenslandholidays.com.au
Capital Brisbane
State population About 4.5 million
Climate Jan: 70–87 °F, 21–31 °C
July: 50–70 °F, 10–21 °C

Western Australia
www.westernaustralia.com
Capital Perth
State population About 2.2 million
Climate Jan: 64–88 °F, 18–31 °C
July: 48–64 °F, 9–18 °C

South Australia
www.southaustralia.com
Capital Adelaide
State population About 1.6 million
Climate Jan: 62–89 °F, 17–32 °C
July: 47–60 °F, 8–16 °C

Tasmania
www.discovertasmania.com.au
Capital Hobart
State population About 507,600
Climate Jan: 52–72 °F, 11–22 °C
July: 38–52 °F, 3–11 °C

Australian Capital Territory
www.visitcanberra.com.au
Capital Canberra
Territory population About 358,900
Climate Jan: 56–84 °F, 13–28 °C
July: 31–52 °F, -1°–11 °C

Northern Territory
www.travelnt.com
Capital Darwin
Territory population About 229,700
Climate Jan: 78–93 °F, 26–34 °C
July: 70–90 °F, 21–32 °C
2.0 Studying in Australia

2.1 Academic year, qualifications and duration of study

Vocational Education and Training (VET) colleges

The academic year for most Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) colleges is based on two semesters. The first usually commences in February and ends in June, while the second runs from July to November. Entry for most courses is available in both February and July.

TAFE and VET colleges specialise in courses that provide you with skills for a particular industry or trade, or prepare you for further education. These range from Certificate courses across four levels (Certificate I, II, III and IV that take from 6 months to one year), Diploma courses (one to two years) and Advanced Diploma courses (two to three years). Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas are qualifications that can be accredited toward other higher education.

2.2 Orientation

Orientation plays an important role in helping you quickly become familiar with NorthEd and its teaching style. Many international students find the Australian way of teaching to be quite different from what they are used to. In Australia, the focus is on practical learning that encourages creative, independent thought and debate. Teachers aim to provide a thorough understanding of a topic rather than just teaching the right words, phrases or formulas to remember for exams.

Once you have successfully enrolled for study in Australia, you will receive pre-departure, arrival, and/or orientation material that will provide additional valuable information to prepare you for studying and living in Australia.

Universities and VET colleges

Most Australian higher education institutions such as universities, TAFE and VET colleges offer comprehensive and compulsory orientation sessions for international students. Many institutions also have dedicated International Student Advisers (ISAs) who guide new international students through orientation programs designed to help them understand the Australian education and training system. The advisers will help you become familiar with the institution’s structure and governance, the campus layout, the available support services and the various student associations and clubs. Advisers can also give you advice about Australian culture and general issues associated with living in a new country.

2.3 Classes

VET colleges

At TAFE and VET colleges, lectures and tutorials are generally not separated. That is, the presentation of information and its discussion occurs at the same time. Tutorial support is provided for some subjects where it is recognised that some students may need additional guidance or more intensive tuition in particular topics. In such cases the tutorials act more as a remedial class, and attendance may not be compulsory.

As VET courses are designed to increase professional and practical skills they combine classes with practical hands-on learning sessions. Class sizes are generally smaller than classes at university or TAFE.
2.4 Assessment

VET Colleges
Your College will provide you with details of the assessment criteria for your chosen course. Depending on what you are studying, assessment may include: assignments and practical assessments that require you to show you can carry out tasks to a required standard; and oral or written tests to determine your knowledge and understanding of the learning area. Most VET Colleges use the following grading system: competent; or, not yet competent.

2.5 A Brief note on plagiarism
Plagiarism – taking someone else’s work (including that of published authors) and submitting it for assessment as your own, without referencing the source of the information – is regarded very seriously in the Australian education system. Tough penalties for plagiarism can include the automatic fail of a subject, or even that a student’s visa may be put in jeopardy. It is important that all students understand precisely what constitutes plagiarism (for example, how to reference). NorthEd International College and International Office can advise you here.

2.6 Course information
By law, NorthEd must ensure that their marketing materials (such as brochures and handbooks) 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.

This information is available in the NorthEd Student Handbook available on the Web site or hard copy.

2.7 Student support services
NorthEd will support international students in adjusting to study and life in Australia, as well as achieving their learning goals and attaining the learning outcomes of their course. You will be provided ongoing access to student support staff and NorthEd will provide you with information about which academic or administrative personnel you should contact if you require any assistance with your course and enrolment or any personal difficulties you may be encountering.

2.8 Quality education assurance
NorthEd are committed to providing quality education and training to international students. For this reason, the Australian Government has enacted a number of laws to ensure that students are protected. These laws are grouped together under Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) legislation. Under this legislative framework, all Australian institutions accepting international students on a student visa are legally required to provide quality courses, as well as to meet the national
standards for student services and institutional facilities. For example, the ESOS legislation provides consumer protection if an institution defaults on a course in which a student with a student visa is enrolled. This protection includes either a refund of course money to the student or, if a refund is not possible, placement into an alternative course through a Tuition Assurance Scheme. For more detailed information about the protection and assurance provided by ESOS legislation, visit www.aei.gov.au and click on the “ESOS” link in the shortcuts bar.

3.0 Preparing for your Australian study journey

3.1 Checklist of things to do before leaving home

- Apply for a passport, and make sure the passport is valid for all of the time you plan to be abroad.
- Arrange for a student visa.
- Make contact with the Australian educational institution where you plan to study to confirm your enrolment and start date and check if your institution or college has an airport greeting service.
- Arrange for immunisations and medications from your doctor.
- Apply for a credit card and/or arrange for sufficient funds to be available for you to access.
- Confirm overseas access to your funds with your bank.
- Make travel arrangements, including travel insurance.
- Advise your educational institution of your travel details.
- Arrange accommodation for at least your first week in Australia, if not longer.
- Arrange transport from the airport to your accommodation, and change enough currency into Australian dollars before you leave so that you can catch a taxi or make a phone call in the event of an emergency.
- When packing your bags, make sure you include the name and contact details of your institution’s international representative.

3.2 Important documents

Prepare a folder of official documents to bring with you to Australia, including:

- Valid passport
- Printout of your student visa confirmation letter
- Your letter of offer of a place/admission
- Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE)
- Receipts of payments (e.g. tuition fees, OSHC, bank statements)
- Insurance policies
- Original or certified copies of your academic transcripts and qualifications
- Other personal identification documents (e.g. birth certificate, ID card, driver’s licence)
- Medical records and prescriptions
- Photocopy of credit/debit card(s)
- Prescriptions and generic names of medications
- Reference letters for potential employers/landlord.

Before you leave, make copies of all your documents and leave them with someone at home who can send them on to you if the originals get lost. When flying, keep all your documents in your carry-on luggage.
3.3 Insurance

Travel insurance: It makes good sense to take out travel insurance. Although most travel is incident free, cancelled flights and lost luggage, when they happen, can end up costing you a lot of time and money.

Health insurance: 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 during the time you are in Australia.

3.4 How much money do you need

Bring enough Australian currency in cash for your first few days in Australia, however do not carry large amounts of cash on you. Instead, make sure you have about A$1500–$3,000 in travellers’ cheques (in your name) so that you can start establishing yourself and setting up your new home quickly. Please note that if you are carrying more that A$10,000, or equivalent currency, you must declare this to Customs officials when you enter Australia.

3.5 Accommodation upon arrival

Students will need to arrange temporary accommodation for your first few days in Australia while you look for something more permanent. NorthEd might be able to help you, or you can look up hostels and book online at www.yha.com.au or http://au.totaltravel.yahoo.com. There are a number of internet booking services for last-minute bookings at hotels and short-stay apartments. These include www.getaroom.com.au and www.wotif.com, however hotels can be expensive, and in major cities commence at upwards of A$150 per night.

3.6 Baggage allowances

When deciding what to pack for arrival in Australia, keep in mind that baggage allowances for your flight to Australia, as well as for travel within Australia, may be less than what you are used to.

- To avoid excess baggage fees on international flights into Australia, your checked bag should weigh no more than 50 lb/23 kg.
- For domestic flights within Australia, your checked bag must weigh no more than 44 lb/20 kg.

Check with your airline for exact baggage restrictions.

3.7 Clothing and seasonal considerations

Australian students dress informally. In general, comfort is the paramount consideration and you will find most of your peers at university and college wearing jeans and T-shirts or jumpers on campus. However, many school students wear uniforms.

Summer in Australia runs from December to February; autumn from March to May; winter from June to August; and spring from September to November. For most of the country the hottest months are January and February.

If you arrive in June or July, the coldest months of the Australian year, you may need to bring winter clothes.

3.8 Prescription medications

If you plan to bring prescription drugs into Australia, it is essential you refer to the Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) website for full information about what is allowed. For more information visit www.tga.gov.au and select “For travellers & visitors” from the “Consumers’ menu.
A huge range of medications is available in Australia, so another option is to have your prescriptions filled at a pharmacy when you arrive. To do this, you will first need to get valid prescriptions from a doctor in Australia.

3.9 Adaptors and converters
The standard voltage for electrical items in Australia is 240 volts. Most laptop computers and chargers for cell phones, MP3 players and digital cameras automatically adjust to 110 or 240 volts, but some electronic products may require a transformer as well as a converter.
Electrical plugs in Australia have three flat pins, one of which is a ground pin. You may need to buy an adaptor or have plugs changed when you arrive in Australia.

3.10 Bringing your computer
To most of us these days, our computer is our lifeline. To ensure that you can bring your computer with you to Australia, you need to be aware of Australian customs regulations.
If you are undertaking a short course, and not intending to stay in Australia for more than 12 months, the Australian Customs Service will allow you to temporarily import your computer without paying duty or the Goods and Services Tax (GST). In some cases, this may also apply if your stay is less than 24 months; however, this depends on a number of conditions, including the value of your computer.
If you are staying in Australia for more than 24 months, and you have owned and used your computer for more than 12 months prior to arriving in Australia, you will also be allowed to bring it in, tax free. However, as you may be required to provide proof of the date of purchase and the purchase price, you should bring a receipt. If the computer cost more than A$400 and is less than 12 months old, or if you do not have a receipt, you may be required to pay a 10 per cent GST.
To make sure you are fully aware of what you can and cannot bring into Australia, visit www.customs.gov.au and follow the “travellers” link from the main menu.

4.0 Entry into Australia

4.1 Australian Immigration
You have just arrived in Australia and cannot wait to get outside and get started on the next leg of your journey. But when you first arrive, you will be required to make your way through Australian immigration.
An immigration officer will ask to see your completed incoming passenger card (given to you on the plane) and your passport. The immigration officer will check your documents and may ask you a few questions about your planned stay in Australia. You may also have to show your Confirmation of Enrolment.

4.2 Clearing Customs in Australia
Once you have cleared the immigration checkpoint you will enter the baggage hall where you can claim your luggage and proceed to Customs and baggage examination.
People arriving in Australia clear Customs through one of two channels: the green channel is for those with ‘nothing to declare’; the red channel for those with ‘something to declare’. You must to declare any food, plant materials and animal products. For more information about what you can and cannot bring into Australia, visit www.daff.gov.au/aqis.
Regardless of the channel you follow, your luggage, including your hand luggage, may be x-rayed inspected or checked by a detector dog team.
- If you do not have anything to declare, follow the green channel
- If you do have something to declare, follow the red channel
As you go through the red channel of Customs, an official will ask you to open your luggage so that it
can be inspected. If the Customs official decides that an item is not quarantined, you will be allowed to keep it and move through the Customs checkpoint. If the item is quarantined, it will either be confiscated and destroyed, or held for decontamination and returned to you at a later date. If you go through the green channel, you may be subjected to a random check and asked by a Customs’ official to open your luggage for inspection.

Australia has strict quarantine laws so it is important to declare all the items you are carrying on the incoming passenger card. Those who do not declare honestly risk fines and prosecution.

4.3 Student visa conditions
The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) is the Australian Government department that manages everything relating to student visas. It is very important that you are fully aware of, and meet, all the conditions of your visa. Visa conditions are set out in the letter of approval sent with a visa or on a visa label. There may be special conditions for students on scholarships, so if you are on a scholarship, it is important to read and understand all these conditions.

For a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa conditions, visit www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions.htm

Unfortunately, a number of students abuse the law each year. For example, they may work longer hours than permitted by their visa or they may overstay their visa. Breaking these conditions can cause a visa to be cancelled and this has serious consequences: under the law, a student may be required to leave Australia and not allowed to return for three years after the visa is cancelled.

4.4 Changing or extending a student visa
If your circumstances change and you want to change your course or provider, or you wish to stay in Australia longer, contact the nearest Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) office for advice on how to make these arrangements.

It is also important to 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 not be allowed to return for three years.

If your student visa expires before you have finished your course of study, or if you wish undertake further study, you should contact your nearest Australian visa office. You can only extend your stay in Australia if your do not have a “No Further Stay” condition on your current student visa.

If you need help in understanding any of these conditions, contact the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), or visit www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions.htm

For further information, go to www.immi.gov.au and select “Students” from the “Visa, Immigration and Refugees” menu.

5.0 Financial matters

5.1 Australian currency
Australian currency is denominated as follows:

**Notes:** $5, $10, $20, $50, $100  **Coins:** 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, $1, $2

There are no 1c or 2c coins; these were been taken out of circulation some years ago. Items in Australia are priced down to single cents (for example $2.99) but when you pay, the total will be rounded up or down to the nearest five cents. Thus $2.99 becomes $3.00, and $12.42 becomes $12.40.

As with all currencies, the Australian dollar exchange rate can vary over short periods of time. You can find the current exchange rate at www.xe.com
5.2 Setting up a bank account

To open a bank account in Australia you must show several pieces of personal identification, each of which is allotted certain number of ‘points’. You will need 100 points of identification to establish your identity as the person who will be named on the account.

Your passport and proof of your arrival date in Australia will be acceptable as 100 points if you open an account within six weeks of arrival in Australia. After this time, you will need additional documentation. To open an account you’ll also need a minimum deposit (this can be as little as A$10).

As a student, you may be able to open an account with special student benefits. Many banks have ‘student accounts’ that offer a regular savings account with zero, or minimal, fees for transactions. To qualify for such an account, you will need your student ID card from your institution to prove you are a student. For a comparison of accounts in banks throughout Australia, visit www.banks.com.au

Most bank branches are open from Monday through Thursday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm, and on Fridays from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (except public holidays). Some branches have extended trading hours during the week and may be open Saturdays – check with your individual bank. Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are open 24 hours a day.

5.3 Credit cards

The most widely accepted credit cards in Australia are MasterCard and Visa. Some retailers may impose a surcharge on purchases made with a credit card, with many charging more for the use of cards such as American Express.

Most businesses accept credit cards as payment, but may set a minimum credit card purchase of A$10 or $15. It’s best to check with your credit card company about any fees they may charge for foreign transactions.

6.0 Student Handbook

NorthEd suggests that you read the Student Handbook for more specific information on what NorthEd can offer you as an International Student.

The student hand book can also be found on line at www.northed.edu.au

7.0 Application to Study in Australia

If you would like to proceed to Study in Australia you can complete the application form located on our website