Pre-Departure Guide
2012
Welcome to ACU

Welcome to Australian Catholic University (ACU). You are about to commence a new stage of your life that will open up a host of new and exciting opportunities. During your studies, you will have the opportunity to experience new cultures, meet many new people and develop lifelong friendships. I hope that you will take the time to enjoy many of these new experiences.

The International Office is here to assist you in any way it can so please feel free to drop by. On each campus you will also find available, academic skills advisers, counsellors and campus ministers who are there to support you and to help you to succeed in your studies.

The ACU International Pre-Departure Guide is designed to assist you in preparing to the academic and social life of the University and the broader Australian community. The information contained in this guide provides a good introduction to the University's services and procedures, as well as offering important information regarding student visas, Australian culture and the facilities in the local area.

Mr Chris Riley
Executive Director,
International Education
Australian Catholic University
The aim of this guide is to help you to with your preparations to leave home and come and study at ACU in Australia.

You can also find a lot of useful information on the ACU webpage: www.acu.edu.au

How can your International Student Adviser (ISA) help you?

- General International inquiries
- Accommodation advice
- Student visa inquiries (ESOS Act)
- Orientation programs
- Social events
- A ‘go to’ person when you don’t know who to ask

See opposite for your ISA’s contact details

Did you know ACU offers 24 hour support to International students?

Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm:
ACU International Office is available to help you

Out of Hours
(Monday to Friday, 5pm 9am and 24 hours on the weekend):
ACU Student Assistance Hotline is available for you
PH: 1800 180 391
PREPARING TO COME TO AUSTRALIA

What should I pack?

What should I pack?

Documents

Even if you have already submitted copies of your academic transcripts and proof of previous study you should be all original documents with you as they may be required to apply for Prior Recognition of Learning also known as Credit.

Australia’s climate is variable and has four seasons. These seasons are:

**Autumn (March to May)**
Autumn is mild to cool. You can expect an average temperature range of 11–20 degrees Celsius with between 10–13 hours of daylight.
Bring: light jumpers, jeans, waterproof shoes and jackets, plus umbrella.

**Winter (June to August)**
Winter is usually cold and relatively wet with a day temperature range averaging 6–18 degrees Celsius and approximately 10 hours of daylight. At night, the temperature can drop to near zero degrees in certain areas. Of all the cities, Melbourne and Canberra are likely to be coldest, especially at night.
Bring: warm jumpers, thick waterproof coats, scarves, gloves, jeans/warm slacks, warm waterproof shoes, and an umbrella.

**Spring (September to November)**
Spring is mild and usually wet. The average temperature range is 10–22 degrees Celsius with 12–14 hours of daylight. This is usually the wettest season of the year. Bring: light jumpers, t-shirts, light casual pants and jeans, water proof shoes and jacket.

**Summer (December to February)**
Summer is the hottest season. The average temperature range is 14–30 degrees Celsius with 14–15 hours of daylight. However, the temperature can get above 35 or 40 degrees from time to time, especially in February.
Bring: light summer shirts and jumpers, shorts, light casual pants, sandals and water proof shoes. Wear sunscreen with Sun Protector Factor (SPF) 30+ for protection against UV rays and skin cancer, the Australian sun is very harsh and can burn quickly (even on a cloudy day). It is really important that you cover up and wear sunscreen.

Please be advised that if you will be studying in Queensland, the range of temperatures will be much higher than Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

For more specific information about the weather in each Australian city, please refer to the following website: [http://www.bom.gov.au/](http://www.bom.gov.au/)

**Daylight Savings (excluding Queensland)**

During the warmer months most Australian states have daylight savings time, when the clocks move forward one hour to allow the daylight to last longer into the evening. Daylight savings usually is from the last Sunday in October to the last Sunday in March, but each state can vary.

Most international airlines only allow around 20kgs of luggage per person, so you need to be diligent in packing to come to Australia. Make sure you read the Australian Quarantine information in this guide before you start packing!

When you arrive you will find that most students who study here dress very casually to come to class and attend to their studies. If you will be undertaking a work experience placement in your course you need to wear a uniform (Bachelor of Nursing students – more information will be given about your clinical uniform during Orientation) or you may need to bring some smart business clothes (dress pants, a shirt and tie for males) for Business and Education students.

You may also find a smart business outfit useful if you are intending to apply for a part time job in Australia – you may need something to wear to a job interview!

Many students also bring along some traditional clothes from their home country, which can be useful for Cultural Events on campus or even just to remind you of home when you are feeling homesick. You will find many people wearing some type of traditional dress on a day to day basis (especially around larger cities and towns) so don’t be shy to express yourself through your clothing.

Documents

Even if you have already submitted copies of your academic transcripts and proof of previous study you should be all original documents with you as they may be required to apply for Prior Recognition of Learning also known as Credit.
Preparing yourself emotionally

Studying in a new country can mean leaving family, friends and familiar places. Whilst this can be incredibly exciting, it can also be an extremely emotional time. You may experience feelings of homesickness at some stage, but remember that this is normal. Whether or not this will be your first overseas trip you will need to do some mental preparations to help you adjust smoothly to the changes you are going to experience.

You may be about to experience one or more of the following major changes:

- Long absences from your closest family and friends
- Australian English in social and academic contexts
- Unfamiliar styles of learning and teaching
- A different lifestyle sharing accommodation or living by yourself.
- Different social customs, values and religions
- Differences in the number of people you see around you, distances to and from places, and transportation.

For many people such changes may be quite challenging and may involve loss of self-confidence, and withdrawal from the new environment. It is important to know who to ask for help and not to feel shy about doing so. The students who do best are always those who are not afraid to ask for help when they need it. Just remember that asking for help is not a sign of weakness. It actually shows great strength as it takes a brave person to admit that they need help.

ACU has very good student support services like your International student Adviser and the Office of Student Success. We encourage every student to take advantage of these free services for students. The ACU Counsellors can give you private help and support on family, religious/spiritual, emotional, physical and psychological problems and the Academic Skills Advisers can help you with adjusting to the new teaching and learning styles you may experience at ACU.

Look around your campus for the Office of Student Success and attend introductory sessions at Orientation to learn how these services can help you succeed:

- Academic Skills
- Campus Life
- Career Development
- Counselling
- Equity and Disability

Visit the webpage for more details:
Entering Australia: Australian Customs Service

Customs manages the security and integrity of Australia’s borders. It works closely with other government and international agencies, in particular the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and the Department of Defence, to detect and deter unlawful movement of goods and people across the border.

Unaccompanied goods

Unaccompanied baggage does not receive the same duty/tax concessions as goods that you bring with you. These goods may be subject to duty/tax unless you have both owned and used them for 12 months or more. This also applies to articles posted to Australia.

For more information check the Australian Customs website: http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page5889.asp

Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS)

If you are carrying food of any kind, plant or animal products with you, or packed in your luggage, you must tick ‘YES’ to declare this on your Incoming Passenger Card. These goods are of quarantine concern as they could introduce pests and diseases into the country.

Failure to comply with these strict laws can result in fines and in serious cases, you can even be sent to jail.

If you do not wish to declare, you can dispose of those items in specially marked quarantine bins in the airport terminal. When you declare items of quarantine concern, you will be directed to a Quarantine Officer to have them inspected. In most cases they will be returned to you. In some cases treatment may be necessary to remove the pest or disease risk. Items that require treatment attract a fee to cover treatment and postage costs to return the item to you. Prohibited items will be seized and destroyed by AQIS.

Prohibited Items

The following items are PROHIBITED and NOT ALLOWED into Australia:

- Eggs, egg products and dairy products
- Un-canned meat products (including fresh, dried, frozen, cooked, slated or preserved products)
- Live animals or live plants (including any parts of plants e.g. roots, bulbs, cuttings, stems etc.)
- Raw seeds and nuts
- Fresh fruits and vegetables

The following items are ALLOWED entry into Australia, but must be declared and inspected by Quarantine Officers:

- Food of any kind (herbal medicine, sacks, tea, juice, noodles, rice, lollies/candy etc)
- Plant materials (e.g. cane/rattan basket ware, wooden articles, dried flowers, straw products etc)
- Animal products (e.g. shell or coral, sins, hides, furs, feathers, animal hair, bee products etc.)
- Sporting and camping equipment

NOTE: Quarantine conditions may change without notice

You can be fined more than AUD$220, be detained at the airport or face legal action including jail or deportation if you do not declare and present items of quarantine concern for inspection. You must declare any of the above items on your Incoming Passenger Card.

For more information about what you can and cannot bring into Australia visit: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/travel/entering-australia/cant-take
Receiving mail or parcels from home

Australia’s quarantine and customs laws also apply to items that you might receive in the mail sent from family and friends at home.

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) operate in all the international mail centres, airports and seaports across Australia. The same strict regulations apply to goods arriving through the mail. Quarantine officers, X-ray machines and detector dogs screen mail to find items of quarantine risk. It is important that declarations on mail parcels are true and provide sufficient details about the goods inside.

It is a good idea to tell your family and friends about Australia’s quarantine requirements. Breaches of quarantine laws can lead to fines of up to A$60,000 and 10 years imprisonment.

More information about Australia’s quarantine requirements for passengers and mail is available in a number of different languages on the AQIS website at:

Help Protect Australia’s Fauna and Flora

Australia has a unique natural environment and important agricultural industries, protected by one of the strictest quarantine systems in the world.

Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) provides quarantine inspection for the arrival of the international passengers, cargo, mail, animals and plants or their products into Australia. Quarantine detector dogs are on duty at all international airports and every piece of luggage is X-rayed or screened for prohibited items.
Health Insurance/Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

If you have purchased your Overseas Student Health Cover with OSHC Worldcare through ACU, we will give you instructions on how to obtain your card once you arrive at the University. If you hold a student visa and have paid for your cover in advance, your OSHC Worldcare cover is valid from the date you arrive in Australia.

ACU’s preferred OSHC provider is OSHC Worldcare and if you have paid for your OSHC with your acceptance deposit then this is the company that will provide your cover.

If you obtain cover from another provider you are advised to confirm the details about commencement of cover with that provider.

Why OSHC?

International students are required by the Australian Government to have (OSHC). This is a private health insurance scheme similar to Medicare (for Australian citizens & residents).

OSHC ensures you can access appropriate healthcare without large cost. You are required to have OSHC for the duration of your stay in Australia because it is one of the conditions of your student visa. Students who do not maintain their OSHC are in breach of their visa conditions and may have their visas cancelled. OSHC allows you to claim some money back if you need see a doctor when you are ill. Your health insurance covers up to 85% of most medical services outside of hospitals and 100% scheduled fees in public hospitals.


It is important to know that OSHC does NOT cover all medical bills. It does not cover pre-existing medical conditions, pregnancy, optical, dentistry or injections/inoculations.

OSHC Worldcare 24 hour hotline:

OSHC Worldcare offers a 24 hour emergency helpline (including an interpreting service) including legal advice and medical assistance.

T: 1800 814 781 (free- call in Australia)
Money Matters

Australia’s unit of currency is the Australian dollar (A$), which is divided into 100 cents. Coins have values of 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents, and A$1 and A$2; notes have values of A$5, A$10, A$20, A$50 and A$100.

How can I pay for things in Australia?

Major credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Bankcard, Diners Club – are accepted throughout Australia.

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs): 24-hour access seven days a week are available in convenient locations such as shopping centres, petrol stations, convenience stores, banks, along main shopping strips and in malls or plazas.

Banks: There are also bank branches in major cities and towns where you can withdraw money.

EFTPOS: (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale) terminals can be found where goods or services are sold, for example supermarkets, retail outlets and restaurants. You use your ATM card and account to pay for goods instead cash. At large supermarkets and retail stores you can also withdraw cash from your account when paying with EFTPOS. Some retailers have limits on the amount of cash you can withdraw.

It is important to check with your overseas bank that bank cards will be accepted in Australia and also check any fees associated with taking money out of the bank or ATM. Most students decide to open an Australian bank account when they arrive in Australia, some of the major banks will allow you to open an account from overseas before you arrive. You can find more information in the Living in Australia section of this guide.

Scams

Watch out for people who may be trying to take advantage of you. A scam is an unjust and unfair scheme designed to take your money dishonestly. Some things to remember:

- If a deal looks too good to be true—it probably is.
- Do not let anyone pressure you into making decisions about money or investments: always get independent financial advice.
- Do not open suspicious or unsolicited emails (spam emails): delete them.
- NEVER reply to a spam email (even to unsubscribe).
- Never send your personal, credit card or online account details through an email.
- Money laundering is a criminal offence: do not agree to transfer money for someone else.

***International students should also be aware when looking for accommodation you should never give a bond or pre-payment for accommodation without seeing the accommodation first and ensure you get a receipt for any payment made. More information about what to look out for can be found in the ACU Safety with your Money:

As a general rule it is not wise to carry around large amounts of cash on your person. Firstly it is not very safe and secondly, not necessary considering the amount of places you can pay through EFTPOS or obtain money from an ATM.
ARRIVAL AND ACCOMMODATION

Transport from the Airport

ACU Airport Reception Service

An Airport Reception (Pick-up) service is available to all new international students arriving to study at ACU. Students will be met in the International Arrivals Hall and will be provided with a one-way transfer from the airport.

Students requesting airport pickup will need to pay airport reception charges as follows:

- Brisbane Airport $AUD 99
- Sydney Airport: $AUD 132
- Melbourne Airport: $AUD 110

If you fail to appear for an airport reception that has been booked on your behalf, you will be liable for a cancellation fee which will be approximately $120.

Please complete the Pre-Arrival Booking Form if you require airport reception: [http://www.acu.edu.au/international/65494](http://www.acu.edu.au/international/65494)

If your arrival details change, please contact your International Student Adviser as soon as possible so we can make the necessary changes. When you make this booking ACU will give you the instructions on airport arrival and a phone number to call if your plane is delayed or you can’t find the representative to pick you up.

If you prefer to arrange your own transport from the airport, you will find Bus, Taxi and Trains (trains only in Sydney and Brisbane) will be able to take you to the city centre or to your destination. If you have not booked a service prior to your arrival, the Information Desk at the airport will be able to provide you with more information.

Public Transport

In each state there are different transport options to get into the city. Please visit these links for more details:


Taxis

For details on catching a taxi from the airport into the city please visit:

Accommodation

Short-term accommodation
ACU can provide suggestions for short-term accommodation for when you first arrive in Australia.

You can book short-term accommodation online using a credit card. Please refer to ACU’s Accommodation Guides for further information.

Long-term accommodation options
Your International Student Adviser can also provide advice to assist you in finding permanent accommodation once you have arrived in Australia. ACU Accommodation Guides are available for ACT & NSW, QLD and VICTORIA.

You can find these guides on the ACU website using this link:
http://www.acu.edu.au/international/301606

Homestay Accommodation
If you would like the experience of living like a local with an Australian family, you might like to try homestay accommodation. It’s a great way to immerse yourself in Australian culture and improve your English.

Prices start from $250 per week (depending on the city you will live in) and includes food and bills. There is a $230 placement fee for all locations.

For further details, please see the AHN website:
http://www.homestaynetwork.org/public

Please be advised that due to government regulations, we cannot arrange permanent accommodation for you prior to your arrival in Australia. Rental accommodation requires that you sign a lease and other documentation before taking possession of your accommodation.

ACU does not have student accommodation facilities, such as Halls of Residence (except for our Ballarat Campus: http://www.acu.edu.au/137237). As on-campus accommodation is not provided, students generally rent private accommodation off-campus, stay with Homestay families or stay in privately run student accommodation.

Your International Student Adviser can help you if you have any questions about accommodation and some campuses include a “Looking for Accommodation” session during Orientation to assist students.
ORIENTATION AND ENROLMENT

Why is Orientation important?
Orientation will give you the best possible start to your new course at ACU. It is essential that you arrive on time to participate in Orientation activities.

Orientation is an excellent time for you to ask any questions you have about ACU, your campus and your course.

What will you gain from attending Orientation?
- Some new friends from various cultures and backgrounds (including ‘Aussie’ students).
- The names and faces of some key University staff including your International Student Adviser, the Office of Student Success, your Course Coordinator and the Student Centre.
- How to get around the campus, including knowing where some of your classrooms, the Library and Canteen/Cafeteria are located.
- Some Accommodation information (if you need it)
- Some Hints and Tips from Academic skills about the difference Australian study compared to back home
- OSHC Worldcare information
- Some interesting and useful things about “Aussie Culture”
- Some important information on Safety

Campus Orientation Programs
Each ACU campus has its own specific orientation program designed to introduce you to all the services available on your campus.

You can find more information about your ACU campus Enrolment and Orientation program here: [http://www.acu.edu.au/international/294719](http://www.acu.edu.au/international/294719)

ACU Enrolment Process

Step 1. Register your arrival with the International Education Office, bringing all necessary documents and receive your enrolment pack*

*This step may not apply to your campus; check your specific orientation program for details

Step 2. Attend your enrolment session ensuring that you bring all necessary documentation with you*

*Check your Letter of Offer for requirements

Step 3. Activate your ACU email*

*This is very important as from the first day of semester the university will only correspond with you via your ACU email

Step 4. Update your personal details, including your contact details with ACU

Step 5. Enrol into your subjects/units

Step 6. Obtain your ACU card*

*This step may only be completed after you have enrolled

Step 7. Finalise your class timetable on Tutorial Direct*

*This step cannot be completed immediately after enrolment, but can be undertaken on any computer with Internet access
STUDYING AT ACU

Australian Academic Culture

The Australian education system may be different from what you are used to. First of all, the language of instruction is English. You will be expected to organise and communicate your knowledge in both written and oral English.

As a university student, you will be expected to demonstrate a high level of analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as well-developed problem-solving skills. You will need to demonstrate the ability to understand and apply key principles and concepts. You will need to be self-motivated and independent. Students are expected to research for their own assignments, read widely and apply the knowledge they have learnt when writing their assignments and exams. It is not academically acceptable to merely “repeat” what a teacher has said in class. Academic writing needs to demonstrate that you have digested the information you have learnt and been able to formulate your own opinion of the course content.

For postgraduate research students, your ability to handle theory and concepts at an advanced level and your research skills and techniques are very important.

Studying in a new Academic Culture

If you are studying in Australia for the first time, it is important to give yourself a positive start.

Here are some suggestions to help you understand the Australian educational culture:

- Practice listening to the Australian accent by listening to Radio Australia. Programs are available from your Australian Diplomatic Mission (Australian High Commission, Consulate or Embassy) or online: http://www.radioaustralia.net.au
- Keep up to date with Australian news and current affairs by reading Australian newspapers and magazines at websites such as http://www.theaustralian.com.au/ and http://www.news.com.au/
- Prepare for your program of study in advance. ACU produces undergraduate and postgraduate courses and unit handbooks, and a student resource guide that lists all the course regulations, course outlines, subject descriptions and preliminary reading lists. These course handbooks can be found at: http://www.acu.edu.au/348770
New study patterns

Studying at ACU will provide you with many interesting challenges as you work through your degree. One of the more challenging times will be in the first semester, when you will have to adapt to a new country and culture, and new academic culture. The following information may help you adjust – it provides a few hints to help you do well in your first semester.

Tertiary study

1. Use the Unit Outlines: for each of your Units (subjects) it is very important you read the outline very carefully as this will explain all the assessments, marking criteria, exam and structure of the semester for this unit.
2. Manage your timetable - You must plan your own long and short-term timetables.
3. For every hour of face to face study, it is expected that you undertake at least two hours of private study.
4. Assignments and Essays will form a large part of your assessment marks. Lecturers and Tutors will usually give these assessments out many weeks before the due date but will not follow you up to make sure you are completing them.
5. Lecture groups may be large. It is up to you to approach your lecturer or tutor if you are having difficulties. You can not expect them to be aware of your particular needs as a high school teacher is.
6. You may be given a reading list of relevant material to assist you with the content of your unit. Wide reading is essential. Do not expect to only need to use the reading materials or notes for lectures.
7. You must identify and make notes on the main points in lectures and texts.
8. **You must acknowledge all your sources.** To avoid plagiarism, you will need to learn referencing skills (footnotes including references, bibliographies). The University has Academic Skills Advisers who will be able to assist you
9. You need to: memorise information, ask questions and analyse the problem, examine evidence and think critically.
10. In most classes you will need to present your ideas to the class, either on your own or in a group. Presenting your opinions and ideas clearly is important; therefore it is vital to practice your spoken English as much as possible.

In other words you are expected think independently and demonstrate your ability to critically analyse. You will also be expected to give your opinions in class and participate in workshops and in class discussions – it is important to ‘get involved’.

Getting Help

It is important that you seek advice early if you are experiencing any confusion or difficulty in your academic study or in any other matters that affect your ability to study. On many matters you may find your classmates (international and local) can be helpful. Your Lecturers will also be an important source of help ensure you know where and when you can find them. The Academic Skills Unit is also here to assist you with any problems you may experience with your study.

It is very important to ask for help early and if you are uncertain where to go for assistance your International Student Adviser can help to point you in the right direction.
ACU International

ACU International provides support and services for incoming, current and departing international students. ACU International is a referral service for international students and connects them to ACU’s wider student services and services available to them external to the university. We provide:

- Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) information
- Airport reception and accommodation assistance
- Orientation and enrolment programs
- Referral to university services
- Liaison and information in co-operation with faculties and university services
- Social and cultural activities and programs
- Assistance with fees queries and issues
- Assistance with student visa inquires and the ESOS act
- Assistance with personal matters

ISV – The Voice

The ISV – The Voice is a monthly newsletter written by international students for international students and is published for the full university community. You can view the newsletter online at:

http://my.acu.edu.au/student/support/international/the_voice_international_student_newspaper/

If you would like to become a volunteer student reporter for The Voice, please contact your International Student Adviser. Getting involved in community activities is a major part of life at ACU. ISV – The Voice is a great way to get involved and have your voice heard.

Study Abroad and Exchange Students

The ACU Education Abroad Office provides services for international Exchange and Study Abroad students who come to ACU for just one or two semesters. Your Exchange and Study Abroad Coordinators welcome all enquiries and can be contacted at the following email address or phone numbers:

**Inbound Exchange Students:**
Tim Johnson – Incoming Adviser  
Phone: + 61 7 3623 7340  
Email: studyabroad@acu.edu.au

**Outbound Exchange Students:**
Kate Reilly-Casali – Outgoing Adviser  
Phone: +61 2 9739 2074  
Email: studyabroad@acu.edu.au

International full degree seeking students wishing to undertake a semester exchange within their ACU degree are encouraged to contact the Outgoing Adviser. (Please note that International students are NOT permitted to undertake a program in their home country.)
Information about Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS)

The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 is an act of Parliament that imposes a range of obligations on education providers (schools, colleges and universities) in their provision of courses and services for international students. Its aim is to ensure that education providers are accountable for the services they provide and that facilities meet minimum standards and also to ensure that students are enrolled in accordance with their visa conditions.

Obligations that the Act (and the accompanying National Code) imposes on education providers include:

- To only enrol students holding a student visa in a CRICOS registered course
- To provide information about courses, facilities and local environments pre-acceptance
- To provide accurate information in advertising and promotional material
- To meet responsibilities regarding student support services, collection of fees, refunds and grievance procedures

Providers are also obliged to report students who breach visa conditions relating to attendance or academic progress to the government.

You should note that under the National Code, personal information provided by you to ACU as your education provider may be made available to Commonwealth and State agencies pursuant to its obligations. You can view the act at [http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011C00807](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011C00807)

What are my student visa obligations?

Your student visa obligations are determined by the conditions stated on your student visa. Some students may have a visa label in their passport and some may have an electronic visa. If you are not sure of your visa conditions or visa status you can check with the DIAC using the VEVO website: [http://www.immi.gov.au/managing-australias-borders/compliance/working-legally/evo-for-visa-holders.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/managing-australias-borders/compliance/working-legally/evo-for-visa-holders.htm)

You must ensure you comply with all the conditions on your student visa. A list of the conditions and how they apply to you can be found on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) website: [http://www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions-students.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions-students.htm)

ACU Events and Clubs on Campus

On every ACU campus there is a Student Association for all students to join. The Student Associations arrange events, parties and BBQ’s on campus. Your ACU International Office also organises student events throughout the semester so keep your eyes open at Orientation to see what’s happening.

Here are a few examples of some current activities on campus:

The McAuley United Club - Brisbane Campus

The McAuley United Club is open to all students and staff from every country including Australia. This Club is about creating a positive and safe space where people can share their culture with others and create friendships and support each other throughout their time studying together at ACU.


ACUMates – North Sydney and Melbourne Campuses

ACUMates is a social program aimed at new International Students on the Melbourne and North Sydney Campuses. ACUMates core objective is to assist in the integration of International and Local students in a fun and relaxing environment through social activities and events.

**Living in Australia**

**Australian social culture**

Australia is a diverse nation with a multicultural population. However, many of the social customs in Australia originate from an English background.

When in a new culture, it is a good idea to observe the habits and customs of people. You may find they express their feelings differently from people of your own culture.

Do not assume that because something is acceptable in your country that it will be in Australia. At ACU, you will have many opportunities to develop new friendships and to become involved in social activities or participate in sporting activities with students from many nationalities. Whilst it is very important that you are able to accept and adapt to local customs and traditions to help you assimilate into the Australian culture, it is equally important that you maintain your own customs and have confidence in them.


**Meeting new people and making new friends**

You will find that Australians are generally quite friendly people and will often say hello and may have a chat with you. You will also meet new people where you are living and when you come to ACU for Orientation. The best approach is to be cautious with any new friends when you first meet them until you get to know them better and trust them. To be safe don’t give anyone you don’t know your personal details such as your full name, phone number and address. Do not give cash to someone to make a payment or hold something for you and do not give you bank account details or security access codes (PIN – Personal Identification Number) to anyone.

---

**Keeping in Touch**

**Telephones**

Public telephones can be found at the airport, all suburban shopping centres, railway stations, other public centres and road sides. The cost of a local call is 50 cents and is untimed. Calls to mobile phones and STD are timed and charged by the minute. Most public phones accept coins and pre-paid phone cards, and some accept credit cards.

Public phones accept 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, A$1 and A$2 coins, and phone cards. International phone cards come in A$5, A$10, A$20 and A$50 amounts, and can be purchased from most shops at the airport and suburban newsagents and supermarkets. Reverse-charge (collect) and third-party-charge calls can also be made from the public phones.

**How do I call home?**

International calls can be made direct from all telephones in Australia including public phones.

Simply following these steps:

1. Dial the international access code: 0011
2. Dial your country code (if you are unsure of your home country code then dial 1225 for information)
3. Dial the area code for your city (remember not to dial “0” first)
4. Dial your home telephone number

A call connection fee applies for all successful connections. International calls are timed and charged according to the destination, time of day and day of the week. Check costs with your provider.
**Mobile phones, laptops and the internet**

If you are thinking about bringing your locally-connected mobile phone with you to Australia, make sure that you have global roaming which is supported in Australia. You must also check that your SIM card is not blocked from international use or locked to your network at home.

The bandwidth in Australia is 900 or 1800 GSM. This means that not all laptops with an internal modem are supported by Australian networks. For more information please visit the Australian Communications and Media Authority website: [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au).

When you arrive in Australia check with other students the phone and internet networks they use and what works best for them. You have the option to go onto a contract or to use a pre-paid system. Pre-paid phone connections are usually good for students on a budget as you won’t be faced with an unexpectedly high phone bill and you are not locked into a contract.


Ensure you check all terms and conditions before signing any mobile phone contract and ensure that you fully understand how much your plan will cost.

Internet access is available at all campuses. Some accommodation will already have arrangements in place to enable internet access and you will probably be charged for using this. Most students prefer to arrange to have their own broadband, cable or wireless internet connection. A good place to start when comparing internet service providers is: [www.broadbandguide.com.au](http://www.broadbandguide.com.au).

Ensure you check all terms and conditions before signing any internet contract and ensure that you understand how much your plan will cost you and what the charges are if you exceed your download limits.

**Mail services**

Australia Post ([www.auspost.com.au](http://www.auspost.com.au)) manages most postal services within Australia. Post Offices can be found at most suburban shopping centres and main shopping streets.

Services provided: Telegrams, faxes, letters, parcels, money orders (similar to a cheque), and a bill paying service. The bill paying service allows you to pay most of your bills (telephone, electricity, gas, water, etc) at your local post office. The minimum postage cost of a standard letter within Australia is 60 cents.

Opening times: Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. However, in some major shopping complexes the post office may also open on Saturdays.

**When You First Arrive**

**Voltagess – Electricity**

Domestic electricity in Australia is 240/250 volts/50 Hz. The Australian three-pin outlet is different from most other countries, so you will need to purchase an adaptor plug for any electrical appliances that you bring with you. Transformers and adaptors are easily obtained from electrical appliance stores or travel goods stores or at the Airport when you arrive.

**Electrical goods**

If you come from a country that operates on a different voltage, you must ensure that you are equipped with the appropriate transformer/adapter. Alternatively, there are many discount electrical stores where you can buy various items (hairdryer, iron, etc) at reasonable prices (e.g. Bing Lee, Harvey Norman, Retravision, The Good Guys, Big W, Target, Kmart).

**Banks**

You should open an Australian Bank account shortly after you arrive in Australia. You will find banks are located around the city centres and in suburban shopping centres. The larger retailer banks are the Commonwealth Bank, National Australia Bank, ANZ Bank and Westpac Bank, you can go into any branch or check their websites for more details about their accounts and services. This website may be helpful for making a comparison between these and other banks and credit unions: [http://www.banks.com.au/](http://www.banks.com.au/).

You will find some of the banks have facilities to apply online for an account before you arrive (Commonwealth Bank for example). Westpac and ANZ (Australia New Zealand Bank) have branches in a number of countries outside Australia. If you are coming from the USA, you can operate a Bank of America account through Westpac in Australia. You will normally be required to show your Photo ID (passport), your address and proof that you are an ACU student – check with the bank exactly what you need to present to open an account.
Always remember to ask for and read the Product Disclosure Statement before making any decisions in regards to accounts and finances.

The common opening hours of most banks are:
- Monday to Thursday 9.30 am – 4 pm
- Friday 9.30 am – 5 pm

Some banks are now on Saturday mornings, however most banks are closed on weekends and on public holidays. Money can be withdrawn from an ATM 24 hours as day. Beware – if you use another banks ATM or generic branded ATM you may be charged A$2-$4 to withdraw money. Most banks have a daily withdrawal limit around AUD$1000.

**Safety tip:** Please only carry as much cash as is necessary for a few days. You should always be wary when using the ATM; don’t draw out money alone in the middle of the night, don’t let anyone see your PIN number (check for security cameras) and don’t count cash in front of others.

Most accounts come with phone and internet banking which makes it very easy for you to access your accounts at any time of the day or night. Most accounts will have facilities like BPAY (A Biller payment – very useful for paying phone, internet and ACU tuition fee bills) and the ability to transfer funds to your overseas accounts/credit card. Also most student accounts have little or no fees so check this out with the bank when applying for an account.

### Public Transport
Public transport modes and costs vary between Australian states:

***Most International Students are NOT eligible for student travel concessions. To find out if you are eligible attend Orientation or enquire at your INTERNATIONAL OFFICE.***

### Living Expenses
A single international student requires approximately **A$18,000** for living expenses per year. This **does not include** the tuition fees, text books or additional expenses associated with the running of a car or social activities like parties or tours. Some students can live well within the estimated cost whilst some may need more depending on location, lifestyle and preferences.

As a basic guide, you may like to consider the following guideline to help you formulate a **REALISTIC** budget.

#### Initial (set-up) Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Approximate Cost*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Accommodation (2 weeks)</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Transport (1 month)</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent in advance</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond (refundable after leaving)</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture, bedding &amp; kitchenware</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection charges (for utilities)</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,800</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All costs are in Australian dollars and can vary. Please use as guide only.

#### Ongoing Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Approximate Cost*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent (shared)</td>
<td>$140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food (home cooking)</td>
<td>$90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities (gas etc)</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transport</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (Week)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$350</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (Year)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How much do things cost in Australia?

**Food and entertainment**
- Lunch on campus: $6 – $12 per day
- Fast food (McDonalds, KFC, Hungry Jacks): $8 – $15 per meal
- Movies (cheaper with student ID card): $10 – $18 per person

**Haircuts (normal trim)**
- Men: $15 – $60
- Women: $30 – $80

**Clothing**
To give yourself an idea of the range of items and prices for clothing in Australia you can visit the online catalogue of departmental stores:
- Myer - www.myer.com.au
- Target - www.target.com.au
- Big W - www.bigw.com.au
- Kmart - www.kmart.com.au

**Shopping in Australia**
Shopping Wisely - Compare prices and also compare the quality of the items you want to buy. Read all tags, labels and signs carefully. Ensure you shop around when looking for more expensive and electrical items as you can often find a cheaper price by comparing retailers.

Department stores and most other shops are open during the following hours as a general guide:
- Monday – Wednesday 9 am – 5 pm
- Thursday (suburbs) & Friday (CBD) 9 am – 9 pm
- Saturday 9am – 5 pm
- Sunday 10 am – 4 pm

**Pharmacies**
At a pharmacy, you can purchase items such as medication for minor illnesses (coughs, colds, cuts and skin irritations) and personal items including make-up, perfume, after shave and a range of personal items. The resident pharmacist can give you general advice on the choice of everyday medication.

Medicines that require a prescription from a doctor, such as antibiotics, cannot be bought without a prescription. Most medication is more expensive in Australia than in your home country. You should always consult a doctor if you are not feeling well.

**Other shops**
Milk bars and convenience stores are small shops located in all suburbs. They sell everything from cold drinks and newspapers to canned food, breakfast cereal and milk. You will pay more for goods purchased from a milk bar. Their hours of trade are usually longer, so they can be useful when other places are closed.

**Laundry**
If there is no washing machine or drying facilities where you live, you can take your clothes to a launderette where you will find coin-operated washing machines and dryers. Look in the Yellow Pages (www.yellowpages.com.au) telephone directory to find your nearest laundrette.

**Furniture**
When moving into your new accommodation, you must remember that Australian properties are normally rented or sold without furniture (unless stated otherwise). You will need to arrange your own bedding, seating, utensils etc. Some larger trading stores (e.g. IKEA, Harvey Norman) have cheap new furniture and may provide a delivery service.

Second-hand furniture is available through the Trading Post online and at Opportunity Shops (www.vinnies.org.au) at very reasonable prices. You will need a car and trailer, or van to pick up the goods if the seller is unable to help with delivery.

Many students who are leaving ACU advertise their second-hand goods (including desks, beds, and cooking utensils) so check the notice boards around campus.

**Shopping list and prices**
Australian cities offer a large variety of shopping with a wide range of prices. Prices are often competitive; however, you will need to shop around to find the ‘best buys’. Supermarkets offer convenience, but not necessarily the cheapest. Many supermarkets stock their own generic or ‘home’ brands – they are always cheaper. You can also save money by looking out for weekly specials.

Markets are good places to buy fruit, vegetables and meat at cheaper prices; with fruit and vegetables a lot cheaper when in season.
You can get some idea of the prices of various items by looking up the information from the following websites:

- Coles Online www.coles.com.au
- Woolworths Homeshop www.woolworths.com.au

It is important to ask senior students during the orientation program about the best places to shop near your campus, also where you may be able to find shops that sell food from your culture—Asian or Indian grocery stores are often very helpful places for homesick students.

**Working in Australia**

You will be permitted to work in Australia but there are several conditions which apply. Students whose visas were approved after April 28 2008 no longer need to apply for permission to work. Work rights have been granted with your student visa. However, you will not be permitted to commence work until your course start date has passed.

During the semester (this includes the exam period) you are permitted to work a maximum of 20 hours per week. During the official University vacations there is no limit on the number of hours you are permitted to work.

More information can be found on the (DIAC) http://www.immi.gov.au/students/students/working_while_studying/conditions.htm.

If you have come to Australia with your spouse they may also have working rights, you should confirm these rights with DIAC.

**Tax File Number**

Anyone working in Australia must have a valid Tax File Number (TFN) which is issued by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

To obtain a TFN, you are required to complete a Tax File Number application or Enquiry for an individual form (NAT 1432). These forms are available from the ATO website (www.ato.gov.au) or phone (13 28 61).

You will need to give information such as:

- Your name and date of birth
- Current Australian address
- Date of arrival in Australia
- Proof of identity (documents to be examined by the Tax Officer)

**Paying tax in Australia**

International students are treated the same as Australian residents when it comes to paying tax. Once you have been in Australia for more than six months you are considered ‘a resident for tax purposes’. You will be required to pay tax on earnings from work or interest earned from banks.

If you are here for longer than six months and you are intending to work, please ensure that you give your employer a Withholding Declaration form from the Australian Taxation Office. By completing this form you become a resident of Australia for tax purposes.

At the end of the financial year, which is the 30 June, you will receive a Payment Summary OR Group certificate from your employer which you will then use to make your tax return.

For further taxation information relating to international students please visit: http://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/content.aspx?menuid=0&doc=/content/40793.htm&page=28H2
Students with Families – Bringing your family to Australia

Family members may be included in your application for a student visa and be processed at the same time. Family members who come to Australia after you have arrived will have to apply separately. They may also require you to nominate them for entry. There may be financial issues relating to bringing your family with you and you should assess what these may be by accessing the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au/students/students/bringing_family/index.htm for current information.

The cost of living for a student with family members will be significantly higher than that for a single student and will also depend on the number of family members you have. You have to take into consideration costs associated with childcare for children under the age of five, which can be as much as $300 per week for full-time care.

School aged children must attend school. School tuition fees must be paid for school aged dependents who study in Australia. Other costs include uniform, books, stationery, lunch, school excursions, and travel expenses.

To find out more information about government schools visit:

For Victoria (Melbourne and Ballarat students):

For New South Wales - NSW (North Sydney and Strathfield students):

For ACT (Canberra students):

For Queensland - QLD (Brisbane students):
Safety in Australia - Some Helpful Tips

You will find that Australia is a relatively safe place to live and study but it is still important to be cautious and not take unnecessary risks.

Did you know ACU offers 24 hour support for International students?

Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm:
The International Education Office is available to help you

Out of Hours (Monday to Friday, 5pm - 9am and 24 hours on the weekend) a ACU Student Assistance Hotline is available to you:

1800 180 391

Using Public Transport

- Be aware when using public transport at night
- Do not sit with your back to everyone on the train or tram
- Try to walk in groups at night as much as possible
- Keep expensive mobile telephones and other valuable items out of sight on the street. These can be stolen
- Do try to keep to areas/streets that are well lit
- It is very unlikely that you'll ever feel threatened, but if you do, shout and scream - This will often deter an attacker
- It's wise, not rude to avoid conversation or make eye contact with anyone behaving in an anti-social manner

In an Emergency dial 000: Police, Fire, Ambulance

When to call 000: when an urgent response is required from Ambulance, Fire or Police.

Remember: ‘Stay calm, stay on the line and answer the operator’s questions. This is a free call (so you can call even if you have no credit on your phone).

http://www.thinkbefore.com/

Have you met ‘George’?
Going Out at Night

- Make sure that your friends know where you are going
- Do stay sober and in control if out late at night
- Make arrangements for how you will get home before heading out; arrange to go home with friends or in a taxi
- To prevent drink spiking never leave drinks unattended – drink spiking is when alcohol or other drug are added to your drink (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) without your knowledge. Please see http://au.reachout.com/ for more information.

Personal Safety

- Do not accept rides from strangers; hitch-hiking is dangerous
- You should not walk alone with earphones and your mp3 playing so that you cannot hear what is happening around you. This is especially important when you are crossing the street!
- Stay alert if walking alone at night.

Road Safety

Remember in Australia we drive on the left side of the road. Always look left and right when crossing the road and use pedestrian crossings where possible.

Beach safety

At the beach make sure you swim at lifeguard patrolled beaches and that you swim between the flags, the Australian ocean can be dangerous to those not used to it.

Check out this website for more information about staying safe at Aussie beaches: http://www.beachsafe.org.au/

Keeping your Valuables Safe

- Keep lap-top computers with you at all times. Do not leave them unattended in a library or classroom, even for a minute. Thieves are opportunists and you need to ensure that you never give them an opportunity
- Many burglaries happen when a door or window has been left open. Always lock up whenever you go out!
- If possible, use atms during the day - put your card and cash away and be vigilant - never write down your pin
- Always lock your car and put valuables out of sight - never leave the keys in the ignition even when paying for petrol
- Be vigilant when using your mobile phone - if your phone is stolen, call your provider to immobilise it.
- Do not trust strangers who offer to help you in financial matters, for example an offer to sell you a cheap computer. Students have lost hundreds or even thousands of dollars through such scams.
- Never give your personal details such as full name, date of birth, address, telephone number, or passport number to anyone except an official authority such as the department of immigration and citizenship. Doing so can result in identity fraud which is a very serious offence.
Fire Safety

The fire services recommend this simple safety checklist to assist in keeping your home fire safe.

- Installing an adequate number of suitable smoke alarms and testing them regularly is the first step in your home fire safety plan.
- Having a written escape plan in case of fire and practicing it regularly.
- Make sure keys to all locked doors are readily accessible in case you need to escape.
- Never leave cooking or any other open flame including candles or oil burners unattended.
- Clean the lint filter of your clothes dryer each and every time you use it.
- Never smoke in bed and take extra care if consuming alcohol whilst smoking.
- In Winter take extra care when using heaters, electric blankets or open fires.
- Don’t overload power points and switch off appliances when not in use.
- Always keep lighters and matches away from children and educate them that they are “tools not toys” to only be used by responsible adults. If you have a garage or shed remember to take extra care with any stored chemicals and fuels and always refuel mowers, edgers etc when they are cold and in the open.
- If you have a gas, electric or wood BBQ always check that it is in safe working order before lighting and that it is always in the care of a responsible adult when in use.
- If you live in a bushfire prone area keep the ground around your home clear of leaves and other litter and remember to clean your gutters regularly.
Canberra Campus

North Sydney Campus

## Pre-departure Checklists

### Essential checklist before I leave home:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What needs to be done</th>
<th>✔</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrange student visa</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make travel arrangements &amp; book flights</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrive in time for the Enrolment and Orientation programs</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange for immunisations and medications from my Doctor</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure I have optical/dental check-ups and have spare spectacles/contact lenses</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for a credit card and/or arrange sufficient funds</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm overseas access to your funds with your bank</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange some Australian currency for your arrival/first few days (for taxi’s, trains, trams, phone calls etc)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange temporary accommodation and airport pickup (if required)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Arrange my file of important documents, it should include:

- Letter of offer from ACU
- A copy of your electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE)
- Receipts of payment for tuition fee and Overseas Student Health Cover (if applicable)
- Certified copies of your academic transcripts and certificates, **Original documents will be needed if you are gaining credit for prior studies.**
- Letter of scholarship award (if applicable)
- Other formal identification
  - international drivers licence/drivers licence from your home country,
  - certified copy of your birth certificate (English translation)
  - citizenship certificate
  - country ID card
- Final medical and dental check up report – bring all documentation and written medical advice relating to any existing medical condition.
- References from landlords if you have rented or leased housing before
- Immunisation records for all nursing students

Take some time to prepare yourself emotionally for all the changes, new places people and experiences that you will encounter very soon
### On Arrival Essential checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What needs to be done</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call home to let family and friends know I arrived safely</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Register my arrival</strong> at the ACU International Office and find out details about enrolment and Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend <strong>International Enrolment and Orientation</strong> programs for my course/campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore my new city, use public transport and visit my ACU campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open an Australian bank account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for tax file number if seeking work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase household items and food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure I know my budget and keep check of my spending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settle into accommodation or start searching for Permanent Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### I’m at ACU – what happens now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What needs to be done</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get my ACU student ID card (after enrolment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange my timetable on Tutorial Direct (after enrolment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log online to get my OSHC Worldcare card (if applicable- after enrolment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get involved in student life and associations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure I am aware of my rights and responsibilities as an International student on a student visa and I know where to find answers to my questions about my visa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>