



Study Abroad Helpful Hints

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Program: University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia Semester Abroad: Spring 2016

Can students contact you with questions about the program? Yes

PREPARING TO GO

What do wish you had brought with you? More sunblock, an extension cord, heavier clothes

What did you pack that you wish you hadn't? A hairdryer

Any food items you wish you'd brought with you? Buffalo sauce, American snacks to let people try

What general packing advice do you have? Pack and unpack a few times, you don't need nearly as much as you think you do!

Did someone from the university meet you at the airport? No, I got on a bus that took me to the university but I met other students on the bus!

How many days was orientation? Orientation was 5 days long.

How helpful was the university's international office? The office is super friendly and helpful, I only went in a couple times but every time they helped me tremendously!

COMMUNICATION

Cell phone providers: Optus, Vodafone

Where to find cell phone providers/buy minutes: I brought an old unlocked cell phone and bought a sim card in the airport when I landed, they also have representatives on campus during orientation to buy SIM cards

Other recommended method(s) of communication (apps, etc.): Viber, Skype, WhatsApp

Is internet available in your accommodation? You have to buy a router, do not buy it from the accommodation, check the online Facebook page first!

Do you have to pay for internet? How much? You do have to pay for Internet; I believe it was \$30 a month

How do you connect to the internet (e.g., modem or wireless)? Wireless or Ethernet available

How good is the connection? It is slow at times but it does what you need it to do, free campus Wi-Fi is always an option too.

HOST COUNTRY INFORMATION

Common languages: English

How locals greet each other? The same as they would here for the most part

Is a plug converter necessary? Definitely bring a plug converter ***Is a voltage converter necessary?*** You will also need a voltage converter.

Currency: Australian Dollars, 1 AUD is about \$0.70-\$0.80 USD

Time zone change from home: I believe there was a 14 hour time difference (Australia is ahead)

National holidays: Lots of holidays including Australia Day and the Queen's Birthday

University-wide breaks: Easter break, study break

What was the weather like during your stay? The weather was pretty nice, it was very hot when we got there and cooled down quite a bit when we were leaving.

How did people in your host country view the US? People seemed to like the US, a lot of them said they'd be scared to visit because of gun laws though. They also asked about Donald Trump every time I mentioned I was American

GETTING AROUND

How accessible is public transportation (and what kind)? Public transportation is awesome! The busses run everywhere you need to go, make sure you get a GoCard—the public transportation card.

What are the hours of public transit? Busses run really early in the morning till around 9:30 at night, free busses to the grocery store on Tuesday and Thursday, and free busses to town on Thursday-Sunday nights

Do you tip taxi drivers? No

Advice for navigating the city: Google Maps! Also, everyone is very friendly so if you need directions just ask.

What is the cheapest and/or most efficient way to travel outside of the city (e.g. student rail passes, discount airlines, etc.): A lot of Australian students have cars, often times you can offer someone some money to drive you wherever you need to go, if your roommate has a car they probably won't mind giving you a lift. Tigerair and Jetstar have super cheap flights and often have specials to fly to different places.

ACADEMICS

How did academics differ from the US? Class attendance policies are much different than at home. It's up to you to show up to class. Also you meet twice a week; one lecture and a smaller class tutorial.

Hardest adjustment to teaching style/instruction/academics in general? You have to be on top of your work; professors won't pressure you to do anything, you have to do it for yourself.

Expected citation method: Harvard Referencing

How was your knowledge of course information determined (e.g., tests, essays, research papers)?

Normally there were 3 or 4 assessments, which ranged from papers to projects. No real homework.

Do you have to buy books? If so, how much did you spend? You can probably get away without buying books for the most part. If you do need books, ask on the Facebook page you'll be able to find them a lot cheaper there than from the bookstore. If you do need to buy books from the bookstore, buy a Co-op card and you'll get a big discount.

What are helpful resources of your host university? Tutoring is always available.

Is there a health center on campus? I don't think so but there are a lot in easy walking distance.

What are helpful resources off-campus? There's a ton of places that you can walk to off campus or take the bus to.

STYLE OF DRESS (DRESSY VS. CASUAL)

Dress code for classes: More dressed up than at home. You can't really go in sweats and a t-shirt, people tend to put in a lot of effort.

Dress code for going out: Very dressy and pretty unique. Everyone kind of looks like they came out of the 80s/90s. Google Australian fashion for a better idea.

Dress code for sight-seeing: Nothing is super strict, wear comfortable sneakers for walking around.
(keep in mind places with strict dress codes like churches, cathedrals, etc.)

DINING CUSTOMS

Typical hours of operation for restaurants: Everything closes pretty early, at the latest 9/10.

Cost of a typical lunch: \$10/15

Cost of a typical dinner: \$25

Standard meal times: Pretty much the same as here.

Water expectations (fee, free, tap, sparkling, etc.): Free water almost everywhere!

Tipping customs (expected? At what rate?): No tipping

Is it permissible to take leftovers home from a meal at a restaurant? Yes!

DINING/GOING OUT

Where do you go for inexpensive "take out?" McDonalds (Maccas), EagleBoys Pizza, Dominos, Subway, The Brasserie on campus also offers really good student meals! They're very cheap but are big portions and actually taste really good. You can also go to the student guild for free lunch on Wednesdays (pasta, hot dogs, burritos)

What is the dining situation like in your living area? The brasserie is available for meals as well as numerous cafés on campus. There is also a lot of restaurants in walking distance and on the bus route

What are the cooking facilities like where you live? Great cooking facilities, everyone gets their own cabinet and fridge space. Full kitchen.

Where is the best place to buy groceries? Woolworths

Can you walk there from where you live? Yes, it's a pretty long walk so take the free shuttles if you're buying a lot of stuff. Also it is acceptable to walk back with a shopping cart.

Legal drinking age: 18

What kind of identification is needed for clubs and bars? Driver's license was fine.

Standard times to go out: 10pm

Comments: Alcohol is VERY expensive, chocolate is very good, save room in your bag to bring home TimTams

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

National Landmarks: The Big Pineapple, Noosa, Mooloolaba, Pt. Cartwright, Lonepine Koala Sanctuary, Southbank

Specialty foods to try: Vegemite, Milo, TimTam, kangaroo

Bars to try: O'Malleys, the Helm, Taps

Specialty drinks to try: Bundy Rum, Goon

SOCIAL ADVICE

What did you find is the best way to meet new people (including locals)/make friends while abroad?

There is a ton of barbeques in the beginning of the semester. Definitely go to those and talk to everyone! Just walk around, hang out in the pavilion or near the pool and introduce yourself to people hanging out there.

Any activity the locals tend to do more than we do that students should be prepared for (e.g. dining out, social drinking, theater, sports, etc.)? There is a lot of social drinking. A lot of people also make dinner together and hang out at home.

What is typical school vacation activity/destination? A lot of kids went to New Zealand on school break

What did you typically do on weekends in your host city? I traveled for most of my weekends but if I was home I'd go to the beach for the day and then to local bars at night. My friends and me would make dinner a lot too.

FINANCIAL

What is the easiest way to access money? Westpac ATM

What did you find more affordable than in the USA? [Click here to enter text.](#)

More expensive? Everything is slightly more expensive. Keep in mind that the US Dollar is stronger than the Australian dollar though.

How much did you spend including food but not housing? \$4,000-\$5,000

How much did you spend on:

Food from grocery store: 50/week

Housing: I'm not sure

Dining out: 20/week

Travel: \$2,000

Souvenirs: \$500

Clothing: \$50

HOUSING

Keeping in mind your housing situation and those of friends you may have visited – do you have a recommendation for housing? Unicentral is nice! Varsity has air-conditioning but is a farther walk to school and you have to pay for laundry.

Does the university have a Housing office? Were they helpful? Yes, the office is helpful.

Were linens, towels, dishes, pots and pans, cutlery, etc., included? You have to buy linens, I got the pre-used linens from UniCentral and they were brand new. Its much cheaper to buy the used things and they're barely used or brand new. Pots and pans are all included.

How far from the university do you live? 3-5 minute walk.

TRAVEL

Where did you travel outside of your host city? I traveled around most of Australia, Melbourne, Sydney, Cairns, Brisbane, everywhere!

Other places in host country to visit (and accommodation recommendations): YHA hostels are really nice, they tend to be a bit more expensive but for the most part they're worth it. Don't be nervous to do the dorm style accommodation, it's cheap, clean, and safe.

How did you plan your travel? Any advice? Find other international students who are interested in traveling to similar places as you!

Where was your favorite place you traveled to? Why? Melbourne was awesome! It's a really cool city, there's amazing food and a lot of cool artwork and shops.

In the city that you were living in, was it easy to access airports, bus, or train stations? The airport was a bit tricky to get to but it is definitely manageable.

Travel advice: When traveling to places like the Blue Mountains or Great Ocean Rd. use the travel agent on campus to book tours. They'll be able to find you great deals and going on the tour will be much easier than trying to get to certain places on your own. If you're there in the spring semester, go on 1 Fish 2 Fish for Easter Break.

OTHER ADVICE

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone planning to study on your program? Don't be nervous about going abroad! Once you get there be optimistic and open, take everything as an opportunity. If you get lost walking around, just soak up all the Australia around you! Don't be nervous about talking to random people or doing things you normally wouldn't. Take every opportunity to travel!

What is one thing you wish you knew before you left? I wish I had known about how nice New Zealand was. I would have tried harder to get there if I had known what a nice place it was to visit.

Were there any major cultural differences that you had a hard time adjusting to? Walking on the left side of the sidewalk and crossing the street.