



Australia Awards

# On track for Australia pre-departure guidebook

Australia Awards  
Scholarships



## Map of Australia

Major cities and towns with higher education institutions



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For further information, contact:  
Scholarships and Alumni Branch  
GPO Box 887  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone 02 6261 1111



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# 1. You're coming to Australia

Congratulations on your Australia Awards Scholarship. It's a great achievement and we're looking forward to welcoming you to Australia to complete your studies.

When you arrive, you'll join over half a million international students from all around the world who are currently studying in Australia. You will be part of the Australia Awards network of scholars, academics and alumni that will help you build valuable knowledge, skills and links both in Australia and around the world. Through this network you will contribute to the long-term development needs of your homeland.

This guide will help you settle into life in Australia. It combines recommendations from the Australian Government with feedback and advice from many Australia Awards recipients who have studied in Australia before you.

We think you'll find studying in Australia a rewarding experience, and hope that you'll enjoy your time here learning new skills and making new contacts with likeminded people.

## 1.1 About the Australia Awards

Announced in late 2009, the Australia Awards is a whole-of-government initiative. The Australia Awards help Australia to build future leaders, assist your country with its development goals, strengthen regional trade and economic linkages, and foster people-to-people networks.

Australia Awards are offered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Department of Education and Training; and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the Australian government department that manages the overseas aid program. The Australia Awards include long term study through Australia Awards Scholarships and short term professional development through the Australia Awards Fellowships.

### **1.2 Why we give aid**

The purpose of the aid program is to help people overcome poverty. Australia works with the governments of other countries to help improve their economic and social development.

Australia's aid is delivered through a variety of methods:

- goods and services (e.g. humanitarian relief, building health clinics and schools, immunising children)
- building local institutions through training of staff, improving management systems and institutional cultures
- policy dialogue and reform through ongoing discussions between Australian development advisers in the field and their local counterparts in government civil society and business.

### **1.3 Australia's development priorities**

Through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Government is particularly committed to investing aid in the sustainable development of Australia's close neighbours in the Indo-Pacific region.

The aim of the Australian aid program is to lift the living standards of the most vulnerable people in our region through aid for trade, better health and education outcomes, empowering women and girls and leveraging private sector involvement.





As a recipient of an Australia Awards Scholarship you are not just studying for a degree. You are helping to build an international partnership for economic development. You are studying in a field that has been mutually agreed between Australia and your own government as critical to the future of your country. The successful completion of your studies is important to you, to Australia, and to your homeland.









## 2. Preparing to come to Australia

This will be a journey of a lifetime. But there won't be much time after your aircraft touches down to organise your new life in Australia—just four to six weeks between the baggage carousel and the lecture theatre or laboratory. Most of this time will be spent establishing your living arrangements and undertaking your compulsory Introductory Academic Program, where you will learn everything you need to know about succeeding in your studies, and setting up your new life.

It is best to prepare early for your stay in Australia. The better prepared you are when you arrive, the sooner you'll be able to focus on your studies.

The advice in this booklet is based on feedback from Australia Awards alumni, our staff and tertiary institutions—it will help you on your journey.

### 2.1 Research your new home

Australia covers 7.7 million square kilometres and is a land of extremes.

Educational institutions are spread across the country. Some, such as the University of Melbourne, are in big cities. Others, including Charles Sturt University at Bathurst, are in smaller regional centres. All of Australia's six states (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) and two territories (the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory) host universities.



**“In Australia it’s a bit in extremes, when it’s cold it gets colder, and I’m not good friends with the cold. Again, when it gets hot, it gets hotter.”**

Aaron Simwanza, Australia Awards Scholar, Zambia

## 2.2 Weather

From November to May, monsoonal rains pour down on Townsville, home to James Cook University in north Queensland, where temperatures soar into the high 30s. In contrast, students at the Australian National University in Canberra have hot dry summers and cold winters with temperatures sometimes below 10 degrees Celsius during the day.

Australia is in the southern hemisphere so our seasons are opposite to the northern hemisphere. This means that Christmas (December) in Australia is in summer when it’s hot, and winter starts in the middle of the year from June.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has information about Australia’s climate and weather as well as handy weather tools for your laptop or mobile phone [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).





## Our seasons

Summer	December to February
Autumn	March to May
Winter	June to August
Spring	September to November

## Average temperatures for each Australian capital city

City	Season	Average daily minimum	Average daily maximum
Sydney	Summer	18°C	26°C
	Autumn	14°C	22°C
	Winter	8°C	18°C
	Spring	13°C	22°C
Melbourne	Summer	13°C	26°C
	Autumn	10°C	20°C
	Winter	6°C	14°C
	Spring	9°C	19°C
Brisbane	Summer	21°C	29°C
	Autumn	16°C	26°C
	Winter	10°C	21°C
	Spring	16°C	25°C
Adelaide	Summer	15°C	27°C
	Autumn	12°C	22°C
	Winter	7°C	16°C
	Spring	11°C	21°C
Perth	Summer	16°C	31°C
	Autumn	13°C	26°C
	Winter	8°C	18°C
	Spring	11°C	23°C
Canberra	Summer	13°C	27°C
	Autumn	7°C	20°C
	Winter	1°C	12°C
	Spring	6°C	19°C
Darwin	Summer	25°C	32°C
	Autumn	24°C	32°C
	Winter	20°C	31°C
	Spring	24°C	33°C
Hobart	Summer	12°C	22°C
	Autumn	9°C	18°C
	Winter	4°C	13°C
	Spring	8°C	17°C

Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology climate statistics for Australian locations

### 2.3 Think about where you want to live

While you're doing some research about coming to Australia, start looking at options and availability of accommodation and develop a plan to find a place to live. Your educational institution will arrange temporary accommodation for you when you first arrive, but you'll need to have a plan for a more permanent place to stay. Accommodation can be one of the biggest challenges Australia Awards scholars face.

The cost of living and availability of rental accommodation differs between regions. In some places, such as Sydney and Darwin, there is high demand which can make finding private accommodation challenging. We recommend you start researching and looking for accommodation before you leave home. There are plenty of housing types to choose from, including on-campus, home-stay and private rental, but these fill up quickly. Think about factors including cost, location, transport and safety. You can also check with your institution to see if they have accommodation support services and find out which suburbs or areas are nearby and recommended for students. Having a good understanding of the types of accommodation options available, as well as their quality, location and cost, will make it much easier and less stressful when you arrive.

Public transport and other services, including banking and medical services, as well as the availability of part-time jobs, also vary widely between cities. Access to transport, services, facilities and amenities, as well as the location of your institution, will have an impact on where you choose to live. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection's booklet *Life in Australia* ([www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/values/book/](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/values/book/)) has essential information on services, public transport and accommodation for each state and territory.

If you think on-campus accommodation is the best option for you, you should register with your institution early and contact them before leaving home. More information on accommodation can be found in chapter 3.





## 2.4 Travel arrangements

The Australian Government will arrange and pay for your economy class airfare to Australia. We strongly advise you to not arrive more than a week before the start of your compulsory Introductory Academic Program.

## 2.5 Visas

All scholars must travel on a Student Visa (subclass 500).

In many cases, Award conditions overlap with visa conditions. Breaching visa conditions, for example, by working more than the allowed number of hours, may result in your visa being cancelled.

It's your responsibility to make sure you have a valid passport and visa while you are studying in Australia. If you have any issues while you're here, see your Student Contact Officer at your institution as soon as possible.

Immigration processes often take time, so don't leave it to the last minute.

## 2.6 Thinking about bringing your family?

Your first semester of study will be busy and demanding, and you'll need all your focus and attention to ensure you settle into your study routine. While the support of family is important, many scholars find the extra costs very hard to manage. They recommend that it is best to wait until you're established and in long-term accommodation before your family arrives.

We strongly encourage you not to bring your family members to Australia in the first six months of study.

Family of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sponsored students must lodge a Subclass 500 dependent visa application with a letter of no objection from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

More information on bringing your family can be found in chapters 3 and 4.

## 2.7 Important documents to bring

As well as your ticket, passport and travel itinerary, bring your driver's license if you have one, your letter of offer from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as any other documents that are listed in your letter of offer. Carry photocopies of these documents in case you lose them.

Also, consider bringing your medical history and, if you are travelling with medication, a letter from your doctor and copies of your prescriptions.

Other documents that could be useful for you, and your family if they join you in Australia, include birth certificates, your marriage certificate, academic records, job references, and property rental references.

## 2.8 Cash

Your *Establishment Allowance and Contribution to Living Expenses* will be paid into your bank account soon after you arrive. But you'll still need Australian currency to cover expenses in the first few days of your stay. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade recommends you







have at least \$500 Australian dollars when you arrive to cover costs such as food and temporary accommodation. You can change money at the airport when you arrive in Australia and credit cards are also widely accepted.

## 2.9 Health Insurance

Health services in Australia are of a high standard but are expensive. The institution will arrange and pay for basic medical insurance, which is called Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). Your Student Contact Officer will provide you with more details regarding OSHC once you arrive at your institution.

## 2.10 Arrangements for people with disability

Australia is an inclusive society and has excellent services and facilities for people with disability. All educational institutions are required to ensure access and equity for students with disability. If you have a disability, be sure to let the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and your educational institution know of your needs well before you travel. This will help us ensure that the support you need is available when you arrive. You might need to provide some additional information or documents to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or your educational institution before you leave.

## 2.11 Travel light

Airlines limit the weight of luggage you can bring free of charge. If you bring too much and exceed these limits, you'll be charged an excess baggage fee, which your Australia Award Scholarship won't cover. Before you pack, check with your airline to find out what the baggage limits are. This information is often included with your tickets.

Be sure to pack for the season and your destination's climate. If you're arriving in Townsville in summer for example, you won't need warm clothing. If you're arriving in Melbourne in winter however, then warm clothes will be essential.

Remember, you'll be able to buy most, if not all the items that you need in Australia, including clothing and household goods.



**“Well I think that everything is available here in Australia. You just bring with you your documents and some essentials like clothing or something like that. I think everything is available here in Australia.”**  
Modesto Lopez, Australia Awards Scholar, Timor-Leste



## 2.12 Quarantine

Australia has strict quarantine laws to protect our native plants, animals and agriculture against pests and diseases. When you arrive in Australia, you must declare all food and other plant and animal material as many of these are banned.

If you are carrying food or plant items, declare them even if you think they are allowed. The airline staff will give you an incoming passenger card, which you must use to declare these items before your aircraft lands. If you don't, you could be given an on-the-spot fine or face prosecution.

Other items you should declare include medicines and large amounts of cash in foreign currency. There are also strict limits on the number of cigarettes and the amount of alcohol you can bring into Australia.

You can bring up to three months' worth of prescribed medicine with you – you will have to keep it in the original packaging, declare it when you arrive and make sure you have your prescription with you to prove the medicine is yours. Make sure you check that the medicine is allowed into Australia – you can find a list of restricted medicines at the Therapeutic Goods Administration website ([www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au)). You are not allowed to bring in prescribed medicine for family members.

The Department of Agriculture is responsible for managing quarantine laws and its officers are located at every international port in Australia. Officers review and assess each incoming passenger card and X-ray and inspect baggage. They also have dogs at baggage carousels that are trained to sniff luggage and detect prohibited items. If you are carrying prohibited items, including food or plant items, you are very likely to be caught.

There have also been many cases of prohibited goods, mainly foods such as spices or seeds, being mailed to overseas students studying in Australia. Warn your family and friends not to send you food or other plant and animal products, because the Australian Quarantine and





Inspection Service checks all parcels for illegal items and heavy fines are levied.

Australia is a multicultural society, and specialty shops mean nearly all the food or ingredients you want can be purchased here.

### 2.13 Other Illegal Imports

Never carry illicit drugs. Penalties for drug offences in Australia are severe and could result in a jail term.

#### Departure checklist

- Research and explore your educational institution and new city online.
- Have an early look at accommodation options available to you.
- Read your health insurance policy and be sure you have the right coverage.
- If you want your family to come to Australia, make arrangements for them to arrive at least six months after you have started your study.
- Pack important documents and make sure you have copies.
- Bring copies of your prescriptions if you're travelling with medicines.
- Have enough money to exchange on arrival. You'll need at least \$500 Australian dollars.
- Check your luggage does not exceed airline limits.
- Pack only allowable food items in an accessible location ready to be declared to Customs on arrival in Australia.
- Remind your family and friends that they can't post food items to you while you're in Australia.
- Read the scholarship policy handbook.



**“I wouldn't suggest anything for them to bring from home because I think we get everything. There are Asian foods. Anything that they want — spicy food, your Mexican food, everything is here...”**

Sonam Choiden, Australia Awards Scholar, Bhutan



### Check out these websites to learn more about Australia before you arrive

- The Australia Awards webpage has lots of useful information including the scholarships handbook that outlines your contractual obligations. Visit <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/pages/australia-awards-scholarships-policy-handbook.aspx> or the Australia Awards website [www.australiaawards.gov.au](http://www.australiaawards.gov.au)
- Information for international students on living and studying in Australia can be found at: [www.studyinaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au)
- The Department of Immigration and Border Protection has essential information on local services, public transport and accommodation for each state and territory. Visit [www.border.gov.au/Trav/Life/Aust/Life-in-Australia-book](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Life/Aust/Life-in-Australia-book)
- Australia's national broadcaster, the ABC, has up-to-the-minute national and local news and weather, as well as an Australian perspective on international events. Visit [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics—our national statistical agency—has statistics, information and services on economic, social and environmental matters as well as information on Australia's geography and climate, the environment, government, international relations, defence, education, and our health and welfare systems. Visit [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)
- The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has the latest weather forecasts as well as information on severe weather warnings. Visit [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
- Google maps will help you pinpoint your new city or town, locations and addresses. Visit [www.maps.google.com.au](http://www.maps.google.com.au)
- The Department of Agriculture manages quarantine controls at Australia's borders. For information on Australian quarantine restrictions and what you can and can't bring into Australia. Visit [www.agriculture.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.gov.au)



**“When I came to the university my Student Contact Officer was right there to welcome each and every one of us with a big smile, and a big lunch, and she had made provision for everything.”**

Anusha Ramasamy,  
Australia Awards Scholar,  
Mauritius

## 3. Arriving in Australia

You're about to start a demanding course. You're also about to enter an unfamiliar multicultural society.

Don't be worried! Australian institutions have been educating international students for decades and will help you adjust.

### 3.1 Student Contact Officer

Your educational institution will appoint a Student Contact Officer to help you while you are studying in Australia.

This officer works with academic and administrative staff to answer any questions you have, and helps ensure you have the information and assistance you need to support you and your studies. Support can include daily contact to check you are managing in your new environment, help with your studies and/or emotional support and mentoring.

### 3.2 Temporary accommodation

When you arrive in Australia, a representative from your institution will meet you at the airport. They'll take you to your temporary accommodation, which will already be arranged.

If your family is arriving at the same time, you must let the institution know, so they can make the right arrangements for you and your family.

You must pay for your temporary accommodation, but your institution will ensure that it's moderately priced and has everything you need. There will be cooking facilities or places to buy food close by. Your institution can also give you information about shopping and public transport.

If you don't need temporary accommodation on your arrival, make sure you confirm this with the Australia



Awards staff in your home country and your institution. If you don't let the institution know, they will arrange accommodation and you will have to pay for it, even if you don't use it.

It is your responsibility to find and pay for long-term accommodation, but your institution will help you. Information on accommodation can be found in chapter 4.

### **3.3 Adjusting to our culture**

Australian culture is generally accepting and informal, but you'll still need to do some adjusting to be part of it.

There have been many influences on Australian society. We have an indigenous culture which dates back at least 50,000 years, as well as a British heritage from 1788 when Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay.

Today Australia is made up of many cultures as people have moved here from all over the world. More than a quarter of Australia's 24 million residents were born overseas and our country is regarded as a model of multiculturalism.



### 3.4 Compulsory Introductory Academic Program

As an Australia Awards scholar you must participate in a compulsory Introductory Academic Program before your course begins. This lasts for about four to six weeks and is a very important step in completing your studies in Australia.

The program is designed by your educational institution to prepare you for the hard work that will be required to gain an Australian tertiary qualification. It includes lots of practical advice to help you make major academic, social and cultural adjustments to life in Australia.

By the end of the program, you'll be equipped to overcome any barriers that might prevent you from completing your course successfully and on time.

Topics covered are:

- Australian tertiary education standards
- study and research skills
- academic writing, referencing and plagiarism
- accommodation
- living costs and budgeting
- equity and access
- chaplaincy and prayer rooms
- national and state laws
- support services provided by your institution.



#### Handy hints

**Remember: the Introductory Academic Program is compulsory so you must arrive in Australia in time to complete the entire program.**

**Be sure to confirm the dates of your program with your institution and plan to arrive a week before it starts so you have time to settle in and recover from your journey.**



### 3.5 Slang

Australian language includes unique terms, or slang, which many overseas visitors find hard to understand, even those who speak English as a first language. In Australia you'll hear words that are new or unusual as well as lots of abbreviations and shortened forms of words and phrases.

It's a good idea to purchase an Australian slang dictionary or access one online. Then, when someone says to you...

*'we're having a barbie on the weekend. If you want to come, it's BYO and bring a plate'*

...you'll understand what they mean: you are being invited to a 'barbie' or barbecue. This is a meal cooked outdoors on an open grill. Meat—often sausages, lamb or beef steaks—is always on the menu.

You have been asked to 'BYO' which means to 'bring your own' drinks, especially if you intend to drink alcohol, but also includes juice or soft drinks. You've also been asked to 'bring a plate' which means you should contribute a plate of food—perhaps a salad or dessert—to share with the other guests. It doesn't mean bring an empty plate.

As well as using slang terms, Australians have a habit of shortening words, or making them less formal, especially people's names. This is an indication of acceptance and friendship.

So, 'David' could become 'Davo', 'John' could become 'Johnno', 'Gajaadhar' could be called 'Gaj' and 'Fahran' could become 'Ranny'. Nicknames are also very popular.





## Aussie slang

<b>Aussie</b>	Australian	<b>Are you right?</b>	Do you need some help?
<b>Awesome</b>	Terrific	<b>Hard yakka</b>	Hard work
<b>Bloke</b>	A man	<b>In a nutshell</b>	Brief and concise
<b>Bludger</b>	A lazy person	<b>Journo</b>	Journalist
<b>Bender</b>	A big alcoholic drinking session	<b>Knock</b>	Criticise
<b>Bro</b>	A male friend	<b>Knock back</b>	Refuse
<b>Cuppa</b>	Cup of coffee or tea	<b>No drama or no worries</b>	No problem
<b>Cactus</b>	Not functioning	<b>Nut out</b>	Work something out
<b>Chockers</b>	Full	<b>Offsider</b>	Helper, assistant
<b>Crikey</b>	A term used to express surprise	<b>Oldies</b>	Parents
<b>I will shout you</b>	I will pay for you	<b>OS</b>	Overseas
<b>Cop out</b>	Not facing an issue	<b>Plonk or Goon</b>	Cheap wine
<b>Dag</b>	A person who takes little pride in their appearance	<b>Postie</b>	Postman
<b>Dunno</b>	I don't know	<b>Pull someone's leg</b>	Play a joke on someone
<b>Dummy spit</b>	Getting angry about something	<b>I'm rapt</b>	Really pleased
<b>Esky</b>	Portable insulated food cooler box	<b>Rip off</b>	Expensive
<b>Ear bashing</b>	Non-stop chatter	<b>Ripper</b>	Really good
<b>Fair go</b>	A chance	<b>Sanga</b>	Sandwich
<b>Footy</b>	Football—Aussie rules, rugby league or rugby union, not soccer	<b>Slam</b>	Insult someone
<b>Furphy</b>	A lie or exaggeration	<b>Spunk</b>	Good looking
<b>G'day</b>	Good day/hello	<b>Stubbie</b>	A small bottle of beer
<b>Geek</b>	A socially inept person	<b>Take a hike</b>	Go away
<b>Grog</b>	Alcohol	<b>This arvo</b>	This afternoon
<b>Hammered</b>	Drunk	<b>The Mrs</b>	Someone's wife or girlfriend
<b>Hectic</b>	Busy	<b>Uni</b>	University
<b>Heaps</b>	A lot	<b>Unreal</b>	Really good
<b>Hit the road</b>	To leave	<b>What's up?</b>	What is happening or going on?
<b>How are you going?</b>	How are you?	<b>Zonked</b>	Very tired

### 3.6 Addressing people

Australian culture is generally informal. People usually call acquaintances by their first names. However, formal titles such as Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Doctor and Professor are often used when addressing someone unfamiliar or older than you for the first time.

### 3.7 Dressing up or down?

Dress codes vary widely. Many workplaces and venues have high standards, while at other times, many Australians wear clothes which you may think immodest, especially in summer or at the beach.

Don't be surprised. You're not expected to conform. As a multicultural community, you'll find many people of different backgrounds dressing according to their cultural requirements.

Casual clothing is the standard campus 'uniform'. However, it's common to see international students in traditional dress among those in jeans and t-shirts. Australia Awards scholars often wear national dress to formal events, so it's a good idea to bring at least one set of your formal, traditional, religious or customary dress.

As easy-going as Australians are, there are some customs we observe, such as arriving on time and not spitting. Many are set out in the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's *Life in Australia* booklet.



#### Handy hints

- You'll be met at the airport by your educational institution's representative.
- Make sure you have Australian currency on arrival—at least \$500 Australian dollars to cover your food and temporary accommodation. You can change money at the airport, and can also use credit cards, which are widely accepted.
- Check-in to your temporary accommodation.
- You must inform Australia Awards staff and your institution if you don't require temporary accommodation, otherwise you will be charged for it.



**“Don’t just stay in one place. Travel around, look at the country, look at the beautiful sceneries, meet the lovely people. Get to feel the heartbeat of Australia.”**

Anusha Ramasamy,  
Australia Awards Scholar,  
Mauritius



### Handy hints

- **Make contact with your Student Contact Officer.**
- **Attend all of your compulsory Introductory Academic Program.**
- **Start exploring Australian culture. Visit some local landmarks, museums and galleries, visit a local cafe or a pub, or strike up a conversation with any of the locals. Most Australians are friendly, approachable and easy going.**
- **Refer to the scholarships policy handbook.**
- **Visit: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/pages/australia-awards-scholarships-policy-handbook.aspx>**

### 3.8 Staying healthy and happy

Most Australians enjoy a healthy outdoor lifestyle. We have access to good quality fresh food, clean air, safe drinking water, safe outdoor spaces and quality health and medical services.

Water is safe to drink straight from the tap and fresh fruit and vegetables are also safe to eat after a quick wash with tap water.

Hygiene is an important part of Australian culture.

It includes bathing every day, using deodorant, using tissues when sneezing or blowing our noses, using toilet paper, and washing our hands thoroughly, especially after using the toilet or before preparing and eating food. We usually use cutlery rather than our hands to eat.

These simple actions also help to keep people healthy and stop the spread of colds and flu and other illnesses.

### 3.9 Students with disability

If you have a disability, you’ll find services and facilities in Australia are well planned and easy to access. Australians are helpful and easy going, and don’t discriminate against those with disability. In Australia, most community-based services and facilities, including public transport, restaurants, shopping centres and public libraries, are accessible for people with disability.

Educational institutions and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade are required to provide support to ensure access and equity for all scholars. Support is provided to scholars with disability on a needs basis. If you are a scholar with disability be sure to let the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and your educational institution know well in advance of your arrival so your needs can be assessed and reasonable adjustments put in place.



### 3.10 Health insurance for you

When you come to Australia it's important you know what health and medical services are available to you.

Australia has a special system of health cover for international students called Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). It is the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trades' responsibility to ensure you are provided with OSHC by your institution. You are not covered by Australia's national health cover system, Medicare Australia.

OSHC will help you pay for any basic medical and hospital care you may need while you're studying in Australia, and will also help meet the cost of most prescription medicines, and an ambulance in an emergency. It is your responsibility to understand what your OSHC does and does not cover. Information regarding your OSHC provider and cover is provided by your institution. If you have not received this please contact the Student Contact Officer at your institution.

Pre-existing medical conditions aren't covered, and neither are dental or optical treatments or physiotherapy. If you want to be covered for these treatments, it is your responsibility to buy additional private health insurance at your own expense.



Pregnancy related costs may not be covered by OSHC and the costs of specialist medical services associated with being pregnant and having a baby in Australia are very high. Most insurers will require you to be a member for at least 12 months before you can claim any maternity-related expenses and it is your responsibility to check. We strongly advise you to consider deferring your offer if you are pregnant. You may incur significant out of pocket expenses by giving birth in Australia, particularly if the birth is complicated.

You are responsible for the gap between the OSHC refundable amount and the amount charged by your health professional. This occurs when a health professional charges more than the refundable amount provided by OSHC. For example, if they bill you a total of \$75 and the OSHC only provides \$50 for that service, you will be required to pay the difference of \$25. This gap amount is also paid by Australians but they pay using the Medicare system.



### Handy hints

- Check with your educational institution about the health and medical services available on campus.
- The Australian Government also provides further information on OSHC. Visit [www.privatehealth.gov.au/healthinsurance/overseas/](http://www.privatehealth.gov.au/healthinsurance/overseas/)

### 3.11 Health insurance for your family

If your family travels to Australia, they are not covered by your Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade funded insurance policy for any medical expenses they may have, including expenses associated with pregnancy. You will need to purchase additional health insurance for them. Your Student Contact Officer will be able to provide you with information or visit [www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud/More/Health-Insurance-for-Students](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud/More/Health-Insurance-for-Students)

### 3.12 Day-to-day health help

Australian institutions have health centres on campus where students can access primary health care and advice from dentists, registered nurses and doctors for a fee. You'll need your OSHC card before a consultation can be arranged.

As well as basic health care, these centres usually offer assistance with counselling support and advice. Your Student Contact Officer can point you in the right direction.

### 3.13 Cigarette smoking

Smoking cigarettes is permitted in Australia but is prohibited in a number of public places. Prohibited public places include schools, shops, restaurants, public transport, offices, workplaces and sports grounds. Non-smoking areas are usually indicated with a 'no smoking' sign, but signs are not always in place. Special smoking areas are provided in some locations.

### 3.14 Culture shock

After being very happy at first, many students experience emotional turmoil as they adjust to life in Australia. This is 'culture shock', and many will experience it again when they return home.

Educational institutions are aware of this reaction and can help you manage it, for example through on-campus counselling services.

If you feel sad and lonely, you are not alone. The first thing you should do is talk to your Student Contact Officer. They'll be able to talk to you about your feelings and advise you on actions that will help you feel better.

### 3.15 Make time for new friends

There will be plenty of people eager to make friends once you get into university life.

Have courage and don't be afraid to approach people and strike up a conversation. Meeting different people on campus and in the community can lead to rewarding friendships and support.

Some scholars find it difficult to meet new friends, especially PhD candidates who work in isolation, or scholars with disability. You can make the process easier by joining a campus club, doing volunteer work, playing sport or moving into shared accommodation. You can also meet people through religious or children's activities.



**“Don't be on your own, and don't isolate yourself. Get to mix with international students, get to mix with Australian students and then you should be OK, there shouldn't be any problem with that.”**

Karl Bongran, Australia Awards Scholar, Vanuatu





### Handy hints

- Familiarise yourself with the benefits provided by your Overseas Student Health Cover health insurance.
- Don't forget that it is a condition of your scholarship that you purchase health insurance for any dependent family members that accompany you to Australia.
- Let the Australia Awards team and your institution know if you have a disability or special accessibility requirements before you leave home.
- Find your campus health centre.
- Let your Student Contact Officer know if you are feeling depressed or anxious — they are ready to help.
- Research campus clubs and other organisations.
- Wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen if you're spending time outdoors.

### 3.16 Be sun safe

If you're out enjoying the Australian sunshine then sunscreen, hats, sunglasses and water are essential. The Australian sun is harsh and too much exposure without sun protection can result in sunburn and heatstroke.

Sunscreens sold in Australia include a Sun Protection Factor or SPF rating which measures protection from ultraviolet radiation (UVA and UVB)—the main cause of skin cancer. The Cancer Council of Australia recommends that a SPF30+ sunscreen is all that is necessary. Sunscreen rated SPF 30+ filters out 96.7 per cent of UVA and UVB and SPF50+ filters 98 per cent.

### 3.17 Practice safe sex and don't share needles

Unfortunately, STIs (sexually transmissible infections) are more common than you might think in Australia. Three quarters occur in people aged between 15 and 29 years. They are passed on through close body contact or the exchange of body fluids. Chlamydia is the most common STI in Australia. Others include gonorrhoea and syphilis, herpes, HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), HPV (human papillomavirus) and hepatitis B. HIV/AIDs is a risk in any country, although infection rates in Australia are low by world standards.

Always practice safe sex, and never share needles. In Australia, contraception including condoms, is inexpensive, easily available and widely accepted.

### 3.18 Stay safe

Australia is a safe place and free from high rates of crime but you should always take basic, practical measures to ensure you stay safe. This includes keeping your doors locked when you're at home, securing valuables out of sight and taking care when out after dark.



# 4. Living in Australia

From banking and budgeting to organising your rental accommodation and study arrangements, you need to prepare and get organised for life in Australia so that you can concentrate on your studies.

## 4.1 Money

You are responsible for your expenses in Australia and for supporting your family members, should they join you.

You'll receive an Establishment Allowance within the first month of your arrival, which will help cover expenses including textbooks, rental bond and insurance. This is currently \$5,000.

You'll also get a Contribution to Living Expenses payment every two weeks to help meet costs such as accommodation, transport, food, entertainment and communications.

The amount of your Contribution to Living Expenses is set by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Your entitlement starts on your first day in Australia and is paid in arrears (that is, it is not in advance). It ends five days after your examination results are released if you are a coursework student, or five days after you have submitted your thesis if you are a research student.

Payments are tax free and continue during public holidays and semester breaks, approved fieldwork and reunion visits to your home country, and for up to six weeks if you are hospitalised. Payments will stop if you are suspended from the Australia Awards program or convicted of a criminal offence.

For more details on your Establishment Allowance and Contribution to Living Expenses see the scholarships policy handbook.





### Handy hints

- **A one-off Establishment Allowance will be paid to you after arrival.**
- **You'll receive a Contribution to Living Expenses payment every fortnight.**
- **Having a plan for your money will leave you feeling less stressed and much happier.**
- **Ask your Student Contact Officer for tips on how to budget your payments or visit [www.moneysmart.gov.au](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au) for tips on preparing a budget.**
- **Refer to the scholarships policy handbook.**

## 4.2 Banking

Your first priority on arrival should be to open an Australian bank account.

Your institution will help you do this. You'll need an account so we can deposit your establishment allowance and your contribution to living expenses payments.

Some Australian banks include:

- Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ)
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- National Australia Bank (NAB)
- St George Bank
- Westpac Banking Corporation.

Building societies and credit unions also provide banking services.

Bank opening hours vary, but are usually 9am to 5pm. Some open later or close earlier, and some branches are open on Saturdays.

To open an account, you'll need photographic identification, such as your passport or drivers license. Once your account is set-up, you can register for internet banking and withdraw cash from automatic teller machines (referred to as ATMs) 24 hours a day, as well as from many stores.

In Australia, debit or credit cards are most commonly used instead of cash in stores. This system is called EFTPOS meaning electronic funds transfers at the point of sale.

### 4.3 Work

You and any dependent family members travelling with you are allowed to work. You don't need to apply separately for a work permit.

Some Australia Awards scholars get work on campus as tutors. Others work off campus, for example in the service industry. The different types of work available varies greatly between regions. However, few scholars meet Australian requirements for certain professions, such as medicine and teaching.

We advise against working during term as it could disrupt your studies.

You can work up to 40 hours per fortnight while your course is in session. Work that is part of your course is not counted. There is no limit to the hours you can work during session breaks.

A special provision for Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sponsored students enables dependent members of your family to work. If you are an undergraduate student, your dependants can work up to 40 hours per fortnight. For Masters and PhD students, your dependants can work unlimited hours, but not until the date that your course begins.

Jobs are advertised in newspapers and on the internet, and most institutions have employment and career services that can help you find part-time work, write resumes and perform well in interviews.

If your course lasts for more than six months, you are considered to be an Australian resident for tax purposes. If you work, you should get a tax file number from the Australian Tax Office at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) and you will be required to lodge a tax return at the end of the financial year (30 June). Any income tax deductions made by your employer will be returned to you if you have earned less than \$18,200 in one year.

**Internet sites that list lots of job opportunities include:**

- [www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au)
- [www.careerone.com.au](http://www.careerone.com.au)
- [www.jobsearch.gov.au](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au)



#### Handy hints

- **Consider your study load before taking on paid work.**
- **Be prepared to take on work that may be at a lower level to your skills and qualifications.**
- **Be prepared for your partner to have to work to support your family while you study.**
- **Visit [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au) and [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) for the rules on paid work and student visas.**
- **Consult your institution's careers adviser.**



**“I was looking for an apartment before my wife came, so a lot of landlords and agents seemed not to be sure of what kind of person they were dealing with. So I had a number of turn-downs, but finally one came up and I was offered.”**

Aaron Simwanza, Australia Awards Scholar, Zambia

#### Real estate websites

**Check out these real estate websites for up-to-date information, photos and prices of rental accommodation throughout Australia:**

- [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au)
- [www.domain.com.au](http://www.domain.com.au)
- [www.allhomes.com.au](http://www.allhomes.com.au)
- [www.homebound.com.au](http://www.homebound.com.au)
- [www.rent.com.au](http://www.rent.com.au)
- [www.realestateview.com.au](http://www.realestateview.com.au)

## 4.4 Accommodation

Finding the right accommodation is one of the biggest challenges most scholars face when they arrive. Rental housing is in short supply in many parts of Australia.

If you're on your own, the simplest, safest and most convenient option is on-campus accommodation. Staying in a residential college saves you time and money on transport, and also protects you from the expense and uncertainties of the rental property market. On-campus accommodation can run out fast, so be sure to register as soon as possible before you leave for Australia. Register with your institution, or ask your Student Contact Officer for help. Note that a place in on-campus accommodation is not guaranteed.

Check with your institution to see if it provides accommodation support services and to find out which suburbs or areas are nearby and recommended for students.

You may also consider home-stay accommodation—boarding with a local family in their home—or sharing accommodation with other students. In a home-stay arrangement, the house is usually furnished and you only need to furnish your own room. Contact the student accommodation unit at your institution for more details. Many institutions have this information on their website.

If your family is joining you in Australia, renting a private house or flat will be your best accommodation option. However, available rental properties can be limited across all Australian capitals, and the cost of rent can be high.

The table on page 32 shows average weekly rents for Australia's capital cities as at August 2017.

## Average weekly rents in Australian capital cities August 2017

City (rent per week)	3 bedroom house (city average)	2 bedroom unit inner-city/suburbs	On-campus accommodation *	Bedroom in share house near campus
Sydney	\$720	\$550/\$400	\$250–\$550	\$200–\$300
Melbourne	\$510	\$450/\$350	\$200–\$550	\$170–\$250
Canberra	\$510	\$450/\$350	\$160–\$400	\$200
Brisbane	\$420	\$450/\$300	\$150–\$550	\$200
Adelaide	\$380	\$400/\$250	\$150–\$450	\$150–\$200
Perth	\$400	\$400/\$300	\$150–\$450	\$150–\$200
Hobart	\$380	\$350/\$250	\$150–\$300	\$200
Darwin	\$490	\$400/\$350	\$190–\$320	\$250

Sources: SQM Research; realestate.com.au; university websites

\* The cheaper rate is for a furnished single room with a shared bathroom. The higher rate is for rooms in residential colleges and may include meals and other services.

Types of properties available for rent include:

- separate houses, usually with three or four bedrooms
- semi-detached or duplex houses, which are usually smaller
- units (flats or apartments), which are common in inner-city suburbs and have one or two bedrooms
- studio apartments, which are open plan, typically with a small kitchen and combined living and sleeping space.

Some properties are furnished and some have garages.

Your university and Student Contact Officer can help you with information on finding a property in each State and Territory.

Past scholars tell us that renting privately can be difficult because there is a lot of competition for a limited number of properties, and prices can be high.



## 4.5 Signing a lease and paying your rent

After visiting private rental properties and finding one you like, you'll need to complete an application and, if successful, sign a rental lease agreement.

A lease is a contract that legally binds you and your landlord. It is usually for at least six months to a year.

You'll also have to pay a bond, which is normally equal to four to six weeks rent. A bond is used to cover any repairs or damage you cause to the property, or to cover the owner if you don't pay your rent. Your bond will be returned to you when you leave the property, as long as the property is left in good order.



### Important

Don't sign a lease until you have visited the property. It is usually a requirement that you have visited the property before you fill in an application.

Rents are usually paid every two weeks but may be every month, and normally in advance. So when you sign a lease, be prepared to pay up to eight weeks rent in advance, which is made up of the first four weeks of rent and another four weeks rent as a bond.

When you secure accommodation, it's your responsibility to arrange electricity, gas and telephone connections. Ask your institution or see the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's booklet *Life in Australia* for details of local utility companies.

You should also consider getting insurance for your belongings. While burglary is unlikely, insurance will replace your belongings if stolen.

State laws govern residential tenancy, so visit the website of the fair trading or consumer affairs departments where you're studying for details on the responsibilities of tenants, landlords and real estate agents.

More information on renting a private house or flat can be found in Department of Immigration and Border Protection's booklet *Life in Australia*.



## 4.6 Families and children

If you're thinking about bringing your family to Australia, we recommend you wait at least six months to enable you to finalise your living arrangements and settle into your studies. During this time, you'll also be able to seek places in childcare or school for your children.

You must have care arrangements in place for your young children if you plan to leave them during the day or at night. Under Australian law, parents have a legal obligation to make sure their children are safe and not leave them in dangerous situations. Very young children must be supervised at all times, as they are not capable of taking responsibility for their own welfare. Children of primary school age are also too young to manage themselves and must be supervised to ensure they are safe. Leaving your child in a car unsupervised at any time is extremely dangerous, and is illegal in Australia. For more information visit: [www.parentlink.act.gov.au/](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au/)

If you need childcare, you'll need to book early because there is often a long waiting period for places—sometimes six months or more. Childcare (long day care) is also expensive in Australia and costs an average of \$100 a day. Costs may be higher in some locations.

Your children can attend public government funded primary and secondary schools. If you want to receive the tuition exemption, or low tuition fees, make sure your children are attached on your Student Visa (Subclass 500) and that you provide proof of your Australia Awards scholarship at the time of their enrolment. Otherwise, you may have to pay full international student fees for your children.

Email your Student Contact Officer about schools and childcare providers near your institution.

Remember that your family must have their own Overseas Student Health Cover. This is not funded by your Australia Awards Scholarship.



### Handy hints

- **Wait at least six months before making arrangements to bring your family to Australia.**
- **During this time, register for childcare, and enquire about primary and secondary schools.**
- **Check for advice on applying for and receiving a student concession card.**
- **Always carry your student ID with you on public transport.**
- **Research public transport options including routes, timetables and prices.**
- **Investigate the cost of buying, running and insuring a car.**
- **Research your educational institution's facilities for cycling, including bike racks, showers and lockers.**





**“Learning things from other people is important so no matter what I’m doing there in my social time I play basketball, also soccer, I go there on the weekend and also I go out with some friends.”**

Francisco Napica,  
Australia Awards Scholar  
Mozambique

Please note that all accompanying family must travel on a Subclass 500 dependent visa. You will not be eligible to receive the reunion airfare entitlement if your family accompanies you during your studies, regardless of what visa type they travel on.

#### 4.7 Transport

Public transport varies widely between Australian cities, so visit your institution’s website for information on services.

Your Student Contact Officer will be able to advise you about student concessions on public transport and whether you can receive these.

Student concession cards provide you with discounted travel on buses, trains, ferries and trams in some, but not all states. You must carry your student identity card at all times when using a concession card. If a transport official asks for your identity card and you don’t have it, you can receive an on-the-spot fine.

Buses, trains and trams operate according to timetables. Public transport authorities generally have maps available of their routes and the times they operate. You must catch buses and trams from designated stops.

A good tip is to research public transport routes because this may help you decide where to look for long-term accommodation.

Cycling is popular among students, and most cities have good cycle networks. By law you must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or motorcycle. Keep your bicycle locked up when you’re not riding it. Your institution may have a secure place to store bikes.

You can expect to buy a reasonably priced used car in Australia if you need to. It will be useful to bring an international driver’s license with you if you are considering this. While running a car or taking taxis can be expensive, there are some cheaper alternatives such as Uber in many cities.

## 4.8 Communication

Australia has good mobile phone coverage and fast internet services. There is a range of commercial internet providers and many of these offer discounts for long-term contracts.

It is important to read through all the internet options available and ask as many questions as necessary to ensure you are comfortable with the cost and benefits of the internet package offered. Most universities and colleges also provide limited internet usage from the university's computer labs, as well as free wireless internet connection on-campus.

Previous scholars recommend that you bring your mobile phone with you and buy a new SIM card on arrival. International phone calls can be very expensive, so look carefully at your options for deals on phone cards for international calls.

Pre-paid and post-paid deals for mobile phones are available. Pre-paid means you pay in advance for the service. Post-paid plans are contracts which may be long term, lasting 24 month, or short term, lasting 30 days. Be cautious about signing a long-term contract, you may be surprised at the size of your monthly bills.

Visit the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association at [www.amta.org.au](http://www.amta.org.au) for more information.

If you don't already have a computer, consider buying or renting a laptop or desktop computer in Australia so it will be covered by warranty.

Electrical outlets in Australia supply electricity at 220–240 volts. If you plan to travel with electrical appliances and a charger for your phone or laptop, you'll need to bring or purchase an adapter for Australia.

## 4.9 Religion

Australia is a diverse society and everyone is free to follow and celebrate their cultural and religious traditions. Most institutions have places of worship, including chapels, mosques and prayer rooms. You can also check online for places of worship in the area where you are living.



### Handy hints

- **Bring your mobile phone with you if you have one.**
- **Buy a prepaid SIM card on arrival.**
- **Research the best option for you before signing a phone or internet contract.**
- **Research the best deals for international calls, and consider using phone cards.**
- **Compare prices before buying a computer in Australia.**
- **Research and purchase any adapters you need for electrical appliances you bring to Australia.**



**“If you want to get some cheap stuff then just go to Salvos or Vinnies like second-hand... you know second-hand stores and also if you want to get groceries like there are many Asian stores where you can also get some cheap stuff as well.”**

Fajar Djati, Australia Awards Scholar, Indonesia



### Handy hints

- Check with your educational institution or on the web to locate a suitable place of worship.
- Talk to your Student Contact Officer and other students about where to find food you are used to eating.
- If you're eating at a café or restaurant, tipping up to 10 per cent is appreciated but not necessary.
- Research your local shops for good value groceries, clothing and household goods.

## 4.10 Sport in Australia

Australian culture is characterised by a love for sport. Sport is a significant part of the national identity as many types of sport are played or watched—in the winter it's football and in the summer cricket is very popular. In Australia, you and your family will have many opportunities to participate in the sport of your choice either as a player or spectator.

There are thousands of state and regional sports clubs so there's a good chance you will find one close by that will cater to your sporting tastes. Universities and local councils are good places to find out about these opportunities in your area. For example, many people enjoy going to their local gym for exercise and these are usually available on campus. Women can find gyms that exclude males.

As a spectator, you can usually go along to the venue and buy tickets on the day for most sports. Major sporting events though are likely to sell out early so you should buy tickets in advance through a ticket agent.

## 4.11 Shopping

Most shops in Australia can be found in malls where there are big supermarkets, department stores and specialty shops.

Shopping hours in Australia are between 9am–5pm, some shops are open 24 hours a day. Australia is a multicultural society, and scholars have told us they can buy most of the food they are used to here.

While there are many high-end shops and department stores in the big cities and regional areas, there are also many discount stores that provide good value shopping for food, clothes and household items.

Australian retailers rarely bargain, but almost all will match or beat their competitors' prices. Check if shops, particularly those selling computer equipment, software, books and travel products, offer student discounts and shop around for the best price.

In general, refund and/or exchanges are accepted on faulty products, as long as you provide your receipt of purchase. For information about your rights and responsibilities regarding shopping visit [www.accc.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights-guarantees](http://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights-guarantees)

## 4.12 Living costs in Australia

Knowing the average living costs in Australia is an important part of your financial preparation. For your reference, here are some of the costs associated with living and studying in Australia. (All costs are in Australian dollars.)

The average weekly cost of living for a single person\* is:

- Groceries and eating out—\$80 to \$280 per week
- Gas, electricity—\$35 to \$140 per week
- Phone and internet—\$20 to \$55 per week
- Public transport—\$15 to \$55 per week
- Car running costs (after purchase)—\$150 to \$260 per week
- Entertainment—\$80 to \$150 per week.

The suggested yearly cost of living for various households\* is:

- Single—\$19,830
- Couple—add another \$6,940
- Each child—add another \$2,970

\*Source: [www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/live-in-australia/living-costs](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/live-in-australia/living-costs)

Average Australian supermarket prices as of 2017	
Granny Smith apples, per kg	\$5.04
Bananas, per kg	\$2.60
Broccoli, per kg	\$4.27
Carrots, per kg	\$1.90
Potatoes, per kg	\$3.59
Loaf of white bread, 700g	\$3.29
Chicken breast fillets, per kg	\$11.55
Beef mince, per kg	\$13.95
Breakfast cereal, 500g	\$6.46
Potato chips, 170g	\$3.35
Block of milk chocolate, 200g	\$4.40
Soft drinks, 1.25L	\$2.75
Chocolate biscuits, 200g	\$3.46
Instant coffee, 100g	\$10.28
Orange juice, 2L	\$3.78
Jam, 500g	\$3.19
Canned tomatoes, 400g	\$1.48
Canned tuna, 425g	\$5.81
Cling wrap, 60m	\$4.51
Olive oil, 750mL	\$11.75
Pasta, 500g	\$2.22
All purpose flour, 1kg	\$3.01
White sugar, 2kg	\$3.35
Free range eggs, 12pk	\$6.59
Liquid handwash, 250mL	\$2.90
Laundry detergent, 1kg	\$11.62
Dishwashing liquid, 450mL	\$4.01
Face tissues, 95pk	\$2.25
Ice cream, 2L	\$5.28
Frozen peas, 1kg	\$4.46
Block of butter, 250g	\$2.45
Block of cheese, 500g	\$8.80
Milk, 2L	\$3.09

\*Source: CHOICE supermarket price survey 2017



## 5. Study

Students at university in Australia enjoy strong and often informal interaction with their lecturers and teachers. Everyone is encouraged to comment and ask questions in class and in lectures, and students address most lecturers by their first names.

Whether you are studying plant genomics, public health policy or international relations, you'll probably do much of your work as a part of a group. Group projects are designed to prepare you for teamwork in academia or in the workplace.

Plagiarism (copying other people's work, including published works) is forbidden, easily detected and grounds for exclusion. Learn how to cite your sources—for example, according to the Harvard system or by using footnotes.

Universities, and within them faculties, often use different rules for citation and formatting. Be sure to find out the specific rules for your university and your faculty.

A good place to ask will be at your compulsory Introductory Academic Program. This will provide detailed information on plagiarism, teach you correct referencing and how to use commonly used referencing software such as the Endnote program. If you need extra help to manage your studies, ask your Student Contact Officer to arrange it.

### 5.1 Australia Awards surveys

You will be contacted by the Australia Awards team during your studies and asked to assist us by completing a survey. We strongly encourage you to use this opportunity to provide honest feedback. The information you provide will be used to make the program better.

### Your contract

The Australia Awards are a joint effort between the Australian Government, participating countries and Australian educational institutions. Many of the responsibilities and conditions underpinning the Awards are written into the contract that recipients need to sign in order to accept the Award. If you are unsure of any of the clauses in your contract, check with the Australian Government agency that awarded your scholarship or the managing contractors in your home country. Your institution also has a contract with the Australian Government that sets out its obligations in regard to your scholarship.

## 5.2 Your obligations

You must attend the Australia Awards Scholarships pre-departure briefing run by the Australia Awards team in your country, and attend your institution's compulsory Introductory Academic Program.

- You must take up the scholarship in the academic year in which it is offered. You can't hold another Australian Government scholarship at the same time as an Australia Awards Scholarship, and you must undertake only your approved program.
- With the exception of reunion visits, holidays and fieldwork, you must live in Australia during your studies.
- You must maintain an appropriate study load, attend all activities that are part of the program (including tutorials and lectures), submit assignments on time and sit all examinations. You must make satisfactory academic progress throughout the course and follow the rules of the institution.
- You must complete your Award within the period stated in your contract.



**“The contractual obligations of the Australia Awards Scholar pretty much refer to being consistent in their academic progress. The Australian Government wants awardees to do well in their studies.”**

Claudia Morales, Student Contact Officer, University of Queensland





### Handy hints

- Familiarise yourself with all your obligations under your contract.
- Make plans to ensure you honour your contract.
- Read the scholarships policy handbook.
- Make the most of your Australian experience to take home with you.

- You must not take on any work obligations if you cannot balance these with the pressures of study deadlines. Paid work during term could compromise your studies.
- You must leave Australia within 30 days of finishing your scholarship, or by the end date on your visa, whichever comes first.
- If your scholarship is terminated, you will no longer be eligible to hold the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sponsored visa. For information on your visa and departure dates from Australia, you should contact the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.
- You must return home immediately after your scholarship is completed and not permanently re-enter Australia for at least two years. Any time spent in Australia during the two-year return home period will extend your original end date of the two-year period.
- If you apply for permanent residence or for a visa to remain in Australia within the two-year period after completing your scholarship, you'll incur a debt for the full cost of your scholarship. This may be as much as \$280,000 for a PhD student.
- Your contract includes conditions about the collection and transmission of personal information between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and relevant parties, which may include information about you and your dependants. This information will be used for the purposes of administering your scholarship.
- Ensure that you read the scholarship policy handbook for a full list of your scholarship conditions. Your scholarship may be terminated if you breach your contract.

### 5.3 Your institution's obligations

- Provide you with an informal kit at least 14 days before you leave Australia
- Is obliged to organise temporary accommodation for your arrival, A representative will pick you up at the airport and take you to your accommodation, unless you advise in advance that you don't need this.
- Open a bank account so you can receive your establishment allowance and contribution to living expense allowance. An institution representative must help you do this. Please ask for assistance.
- Provide you with details of your Student Contact Officer and organise the compulsory Introductory Academic Program as well as monitor your academic progress.
- Arrange and pay for return home travel using the most direct route.



**“We look after all of the support services from arrival right through to when the awardees are about to return home.”**

Graeme Baguley,  
Queensland University  
of Technology

### 5.4 The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's obligations

- Conduct a pre-departure briefing in your home country and help you obtain your visa.
- Work with institutions to monitor your progress and welfare.
- Pay your entitlements to your institution, as outlined in your contract. Your institution will expend the fees and allowances in line with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's scholarship policy.



## 6. Returning home

When all of your hard work has paid off it will be time to celebrate your graduation and depart to make a difference in your homeland.

You can start planning early to make sure you hit the ground running to make the most of your Australia Awards Scholarship when you return.

To help you prepare, your institution will provide you with an Australia Awards Scholarship returning home booklet and may also offer a return home briefing of their own. Keep your eye out for both.

### 6.1 Contact your employer

If you are returning to the same job, contact your employer before leaving Australia to discuss arrangements for your return to work.

We strongly encourage you to stay in touch with your employer the entire time you are studying in Australia. Regular communication will help maintain your work relationships and keep you up-to-date with developments at work. It will help you make the transition back into the workplace when you get home.

### 6.2 Heading home

When it's time to depart you will have a lot to do to get ready—completing the paperwork to get your new qualifications, vacating your accommodation, freighting excess baggage, closing your bank accounts, and cancelling any insurance policies and phone contracts.

We strongly encourage you to leave Australia within two weeks of completing your program or you are likely to run out of funds. Coursework students should aim to leave two weeks after the release of exam results, while research students should leave two weeks after the submission of their thesis.



**“The knowledge that I’m acquiring from Australia is going to go a long way in trying to help my country get back on track in terms of being food secure, as well as reducing the levels of under-nutrition that the country is experiencing.”**

Aaron Simwanza, Australia Awards Scholar, Zambia

### 6.3 Saying goodbye and readjusting

Many scholars have mixed feelings about leaving Australia. For some, the emotional turmoil that followed their arrival in Australia returns. You'll go home a changed person, perhaps socially, culturally, politically and economically.

If your institution offers a return home briefing, it is a good opportunity to consider some of the issues you may face on your return.

### 6.4 Australia Global Alumni

Once you return home, the benefits of your scholarship continue as a member of Australia's Global Alumni. In many countries you can continue to receive benefits through Australia Awards supported local networks of alumni, and globally you'll remain connected to other alumni and the Australian Government through the Australia Global Alumni network. Your institution may also have a local chapter of its alumni network in your home country.

These networks can support you in your reintegration and provide ongoing professional development and networking opportunities. Contact the Australia Awards office or the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in your country for information about the alumni network in your region. You can find out more about Australia Global Alumni at [www.globalalumni.gov.au](http://www.globalalumni.gov.au)

#### Departing Australia checklist

- Arrange to get your degree or certificate and academic transcript.
- Finalise arrangements to vacate your accommodation.
- Collect copies of your important documents, such as medical files and school reports.
- Contact your employer back home.
- Update your reintegration plan.
- Check your institution has made your travel arrangements and paid for your fare.
- Keep in touch with the friends and contacts you made in Australia.
- Join Australia Global Alumni to increase your networks and continue to build your knowledge and skills.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

/ Preparing / Arriving  
/ Living / Studying / Returning



[www.australiaawards.gov.au](http://www.australiaawards.gov.au)