



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

Australian Capital Territory  
Canberra Government Schools

# International Students Pre-Departure Guide



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### YOUR PERSONAL EDUCATION PROVIDER

**Congratulations on your decision to study in Australia's capital city, Canberra. Located in Australia's Capital Territory (ACT), Canberra's educational institutions welcome more than 8 000 international students from more than 100 countries every year.**

Studying in Canberra is a rewarding and exciting experience. This may be your first experience of visiting a foreign country and living away from home. You will enjoy a balanced education with opportunities for personal, intellectual, sporting and cultural development. You will be made very welcome, with high quality Government education in a safe, friendly and multicultural city.

All government schools in Canberra offer high quality learning in modern, well-equipped and supportive environments. Our schools have developed a range of programs specifically designed to meet the needs of international students with the ability to tailor educational programs just for you.

You will develop English language skills while studying at Canberra's government primary schools, high schools and colleges, alongside native English speakers. All Canberra government schools provide English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for international students.

Government schooling in Canberra is leading the way in preparing young people for the opportunities and

challenges of life in the 21st century. With one of the best government education systems in the country, government school students consistently rate as the best educated in Australia and among the brightest in the world. An international education in Canberra will set you apart from your peers and provides multiple pathways to success.

Canberra is unique in that we are able to provide you with a personal level of service that the larger Australian capital cities cannot provide. Your school teachers and the officers of the International Education Unit (IEU) will get to know you by name and IEU officers are contactable at all times (on-call 24 hours a day) to assist you in case of an emergency. An officer from the IEU will visit you at school on a regular basis to discuss your experiences both in and out of school and help you with any problems that you might face.

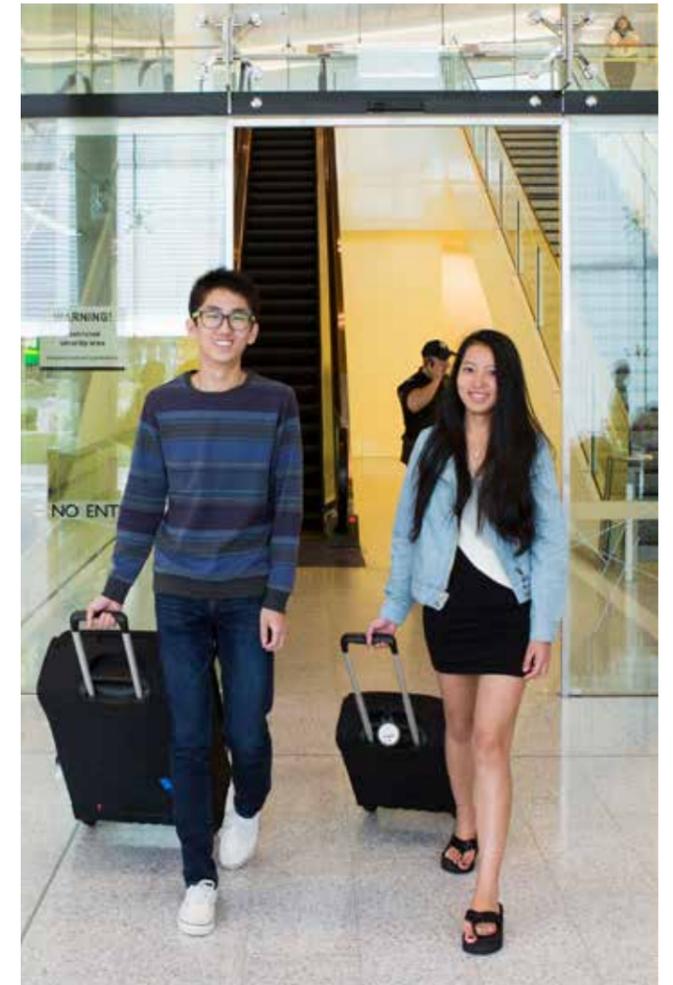
If you are studying in a Canberra government college, you will be given the opportunity to complete your Year 12 Certificate, and if you choose to, obtain an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). Your Year 12 Certificate is recognised around the world, representing the world-class standard of education you will receive during your time at a Canberra government school.

We commend you on your choice and know that you will enjoy your studies in Canberra. We know that you are well on your way towards a rich and rewarding future.

**Studying in Canberra is a rewarding and exciting experience.**

This guide contains essential information for students preparing to come to Canberra. You will need to make a range of preparations, such as completing your application form, acquiring a passport and visa, ensuring you have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) and advising the International Education Unit (IEU) of your arrival details.

Read through this guide carefully and make sure you are well prepared. Arriving with everything you will need at your homestay accommodation in Canberra will make it easier for you to relax, settle in, and will allow you to enjoy your first day of school.



The IEU and your homestay family will make sure you know how to get to school on your first day. When you arrive at your school, you will be met by your International Private Student (IPS) Coordinator.

Every high school and college has an IPS Coordinator. Your IPS Coordinator is a teacher from your school who is dedicated to helping international students adjust to life in Australia. Together, the IEU and your IPS Coordinator will guide you through your new school experience and life in the broader community.

Your IPS Coordinator is your first point of contact. Some of the things you should consult your IPS Coordinator about include:

- Subject choices
- Part time work
- Homestay concerns
- OSHC
- Complaints and appeals
- Getting a visa extension

It is normal to feel both nervous and excited about coming to Australia. Most students will feel a little homesick when they first arrive. Our aim is to make your stay in Canberra an exciting and rewarding experience, so that missing your family will not prevent you from enjoying your time with us.

Your international education in Canberra will set you apart from your peers and create a pathway to success in whatever direction you choose.

## ABOUT CANBERRA

### A brief history

Canberra, located in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), is the capital city of Australia. Home to 397,000 people, including around 8000 international students, Canberra offers the perfect mix of learning and lifestyle.

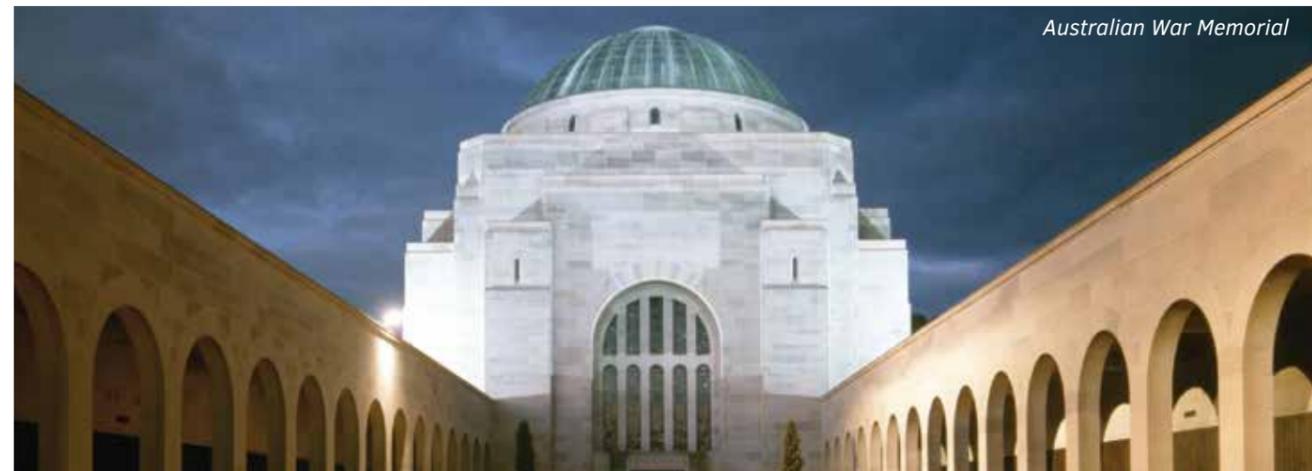
Canberra is located in the traditional lands of the Indigenous Ngunnawal people. The word Canberra comes from the Aboriginal word Kamberra, meaning 'meeting place'.

Also called the 'Bush Capital', Canberra is a planned city that uniquely blends natural parks and wildlife with the comforts, convenience and excitement of city living. Mr Walter Burley Griffin, an architect from Chicago,

democracy and our journey from an indigenous continent to a modern nation.

Statistically, Canberra boasts:

- The most educated workforce in Australia; the result of a world-class education system.
- The highest rates of enrolment in educational institutions in Australia.
- The highest median Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) in Australia.
- The lowest unemployment rate, and the highest average salaries in Australia.
- One of the safest cities in the world.



Australian War Memorial

designed the city in 1912. From that time onwards, the area's rural heritage has become intertwined with its history as a purpose-built capital.

Canberra is home to some of Australia's best educational institutions, including the Australian National University (frequently ranked within the top 20 universities in the world) and the University of Canberra (whose graduates are considered the most employable and best paid in the nation). Canberra also hosts the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). It is the diplomatic capital of Australia, featuring the embassies of the world, as well as being home to Australia's Federal Government.

The essence of Australia's culture, history and way of life is reflected in the national museums, art galleries and other icons that are spread throughout Canberra. They hold and share the treasures of our nation, offering an intriguing insight into Australian character and

There are also excellent entertainment and sporting venues, schools and hospitals, great shopping, affordable public transport and much less traffic than other Australian cities.

Whether you are aiming for an ATAR, a vocational qualification or to complete secondary school (Year 12) in Australia, Canberra is a clean, safe, and beautiful city that provides the ideal backdrop for your studies.

## Climate

The national capital's four distinctive seasons, each with their own beauty and charm, make Canberra a rare treat amongst Australian cities. Canberra's wonderful seasons turn the city into a kaleidoscope of colour throughout the year.

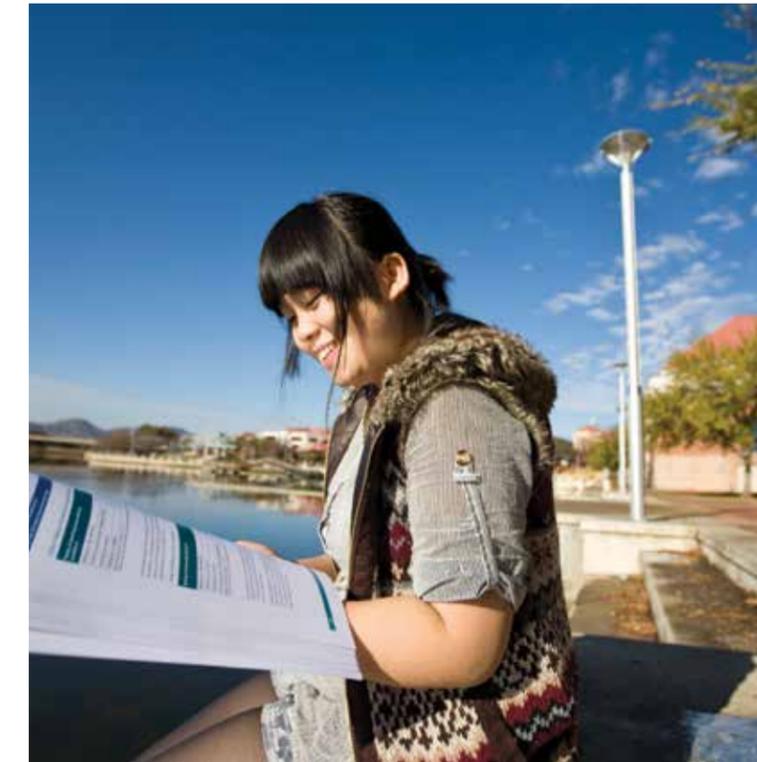
**Summer (Dec/Jan/Feb)** offers endless opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors, especially on Lake Burley Griffin where plenty of water sports and activities await. The days are warm to hot, with plenty of sunshine and little humidity and are followed by mild balmy nights.

**Autumn (Mar/Apr/May)** is a delight as the city's parks and gardens take on a special appeal. Canberra's stunning landscape changes as leaves of red, gold, russet, ochre and crimson emerge and are balanced by the soft greys and greens of native eucalyptus and coniferous trees alongside them. The season is blessed with cool nights and warm days.

**Winter (Jun/Jul/Aug)** is the perfect time to snuggle up in a comfortable chair with a warm drink and a good book. The nights and early mornings are brisk, but frosts and occasional fog generally clear to striking sunny days.

**Spring (Sept/Oct/Nov)** brings the promise of summer fun. The city bursts into colour as the trees reveal their spring blooms and the regional vineyards awaken with the first bud bursts. You can expect moderately fresh mornings, bright sunny days and brisk nights.

	Month	Min. (°C)	Max. (°C)	Season
Average Daily Temperatures (°C)	Jan	13.1	27.6	Summer
	Feb	12.8	26.8	
	Mar	10.6	24.4	Autumn (Fall)
	Apr	6.4	19.7	
	May	2.9	15	
	Jun	0.9	12.1	Winter
	Jul	0.3	11.1	
	Aug	0.8	12.7	
	Sep	2.9	15.9	Spring
	Oct	5.9	19.1	
	Nov	8.4	22.4	
	Dec	11.1	26.2	Summer



**“I love Canberra in the spring. I like to walk through the park, or go on a family barbecue with my homestay family on the weekend”**

International student,  
Alfred Deakin High School

## Cost of living

Australians enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world. The cost of living in Australia compared to that of many other countries is relatively high. It is important to do your homework before you come to Canberra to ensure you have a realistic understanding of the day-to-day costs of living in Australia.

While it is not possible to set an exact guide of what your expenses will be while living in Australia, the Australian Department of Home Affairs advises that living costs are approximately A\$20,290 per year for a student or a guardian. This cost of annual living amount is valid as of 1 February 2018 and will increase in line with Australia's Consumer Price Index.

This figure includes accommodation, food, transport, clothing, power, telephone, with a little extra spending money for entertainment activities, such as visiting local tourist attractions, or seeing a movie.

This figure does not include buying expensive items such as a television, video or computer; or owning and maintaining a car.



In addition to the cost of living, students also need to pay school fees. These will vary depending on your age group. In all cases, school fees include textbooks, curriculum based school excursions and the 'consumables' that students use in class – such as craft supplies or wood in a woodwork class. Recreational camps e.g. ski trips, private tuition and/or private music lessons are not included in school fees.

It is possible to live cheaply in Australia and your cost of living will depend on your choice of lifestyle. We recommend that you build a budget taking into account all your projected expenditure. You can find help in building a budget at [www.moneysmart.gov.au](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au).

## Location of Schools

There are 87 ACT Government primary schools, high schools and colleges scattered throughout Canberra. When you apply to study in Canberra, you will be given the opportunity to nominate 3 schools at which to study. You are guaranteed entry into one of the schools that you nominate.

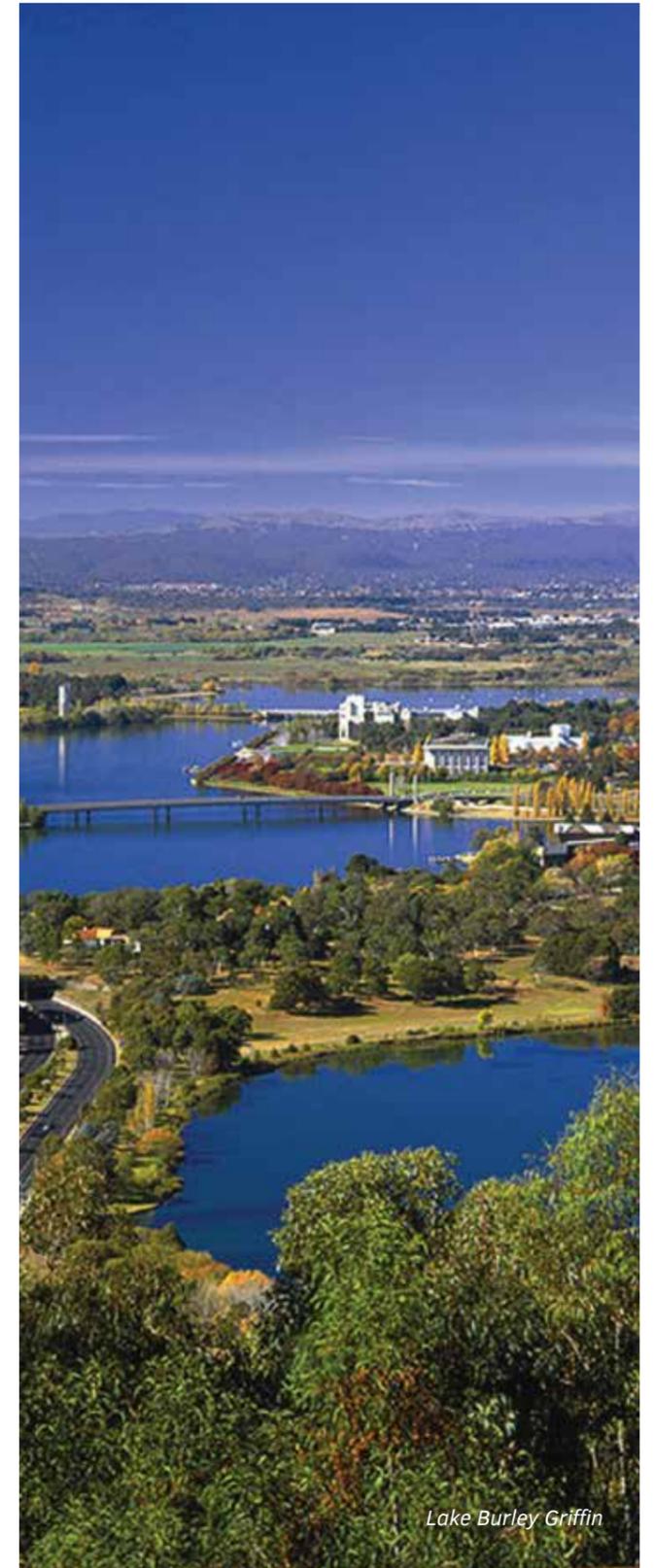
## Location Snapshot

### Secondary Colleges—Years 11 and 12

<b>Canberra College</b> (Years 11 & 12) <a href="http://www.canberrac.act.edu.au">www.canberrac.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Hawker College</b> (Years 11 & 12) <a href="http://www.hawkerc.act.edu.au">www.hawkerc.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Gungahlin College</b> (Years 11 & 12) <a href="http://www.gungahlincollege.act.edu.au">www.gungahlincollege.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Dickson College</b> (Years 11 & 12) <a href="http://www.dicksonc.act.edu.au">www.dicksonc.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Lake Ginninderra College</b> (Years 11 & 12) <a href="http://www.lakeonline.act.edu.au">www.lakeonline.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Erindale College</b> (Years 10 – 12) <a href="http://www.erindalec.act.edu.au">www.erindalec.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Melba Copland Secondary School</b> (Years 7 – 12) <a href="http://www.mcsc.act.edu.au">www.mcsc.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Lake Tuggeranong College</b> (Years 11 & 12) <a href="http://www.ltc.act.edu.au">www.ltc.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Narrabundah College</b> (Years 11 & 12) <a href="http://www.narrabundahc.act.edu.au">www.narrabundahc.act.edu.au</a>	

### High Schools—Years 7 to 10

<b>Alfred Deakin High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.adhs.act.edu.au">www.adhs.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Canberra High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.canberrahs.act.edu.au">www.canberrahs.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Melba Copland Secondary School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.mcsc.act.edu.au">www.mcsc.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Amaroo School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.amaroos.act.edu.au">www.amaroos.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Gold Creek School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.goldcreek.act.edu.au">www.goldcreek.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Melrose High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.melrosehs.act.edu.au">www.melrosehs.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Belconnen High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.blch.act.edu.au">www.blch.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Harrison School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.harrison.act.edu.au">www.harrison.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Stromlo High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.stromlohs.act.edu.au">www.stromlohs.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Calwell High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.calwellhs.act.edu.au">www.calwellhs.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Kaleen High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.kaleenhs.act.edu.au">www.kaleenhs.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Telopea Park School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.telopea.act.edu.au">www.telopea.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Caroline Chisholm School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.chisholm.act.edu.au">www.chisholm.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Kingsford Smith School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.kss.act.edu.au">www.kss.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Wanniassa School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.wans.act.edu.au">www.wans.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Campbell High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.campbellhs.act.edu.au">www.campbellhs.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Lyneham High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.lynehamhs.act.edu.au">www.lynehamhs.act.edu.au</a>	<b>Lanyon High School</b> (Years 7 – 10) <a href="http://www.lanyonhs.act.edu.au">www.lanyonhs.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Namadgi School</b> (Years P – 10) <a href="http://www.namadgi.act.edu.au">www.namadgi.act.edu.au</a>	



Lake Burley Griffin

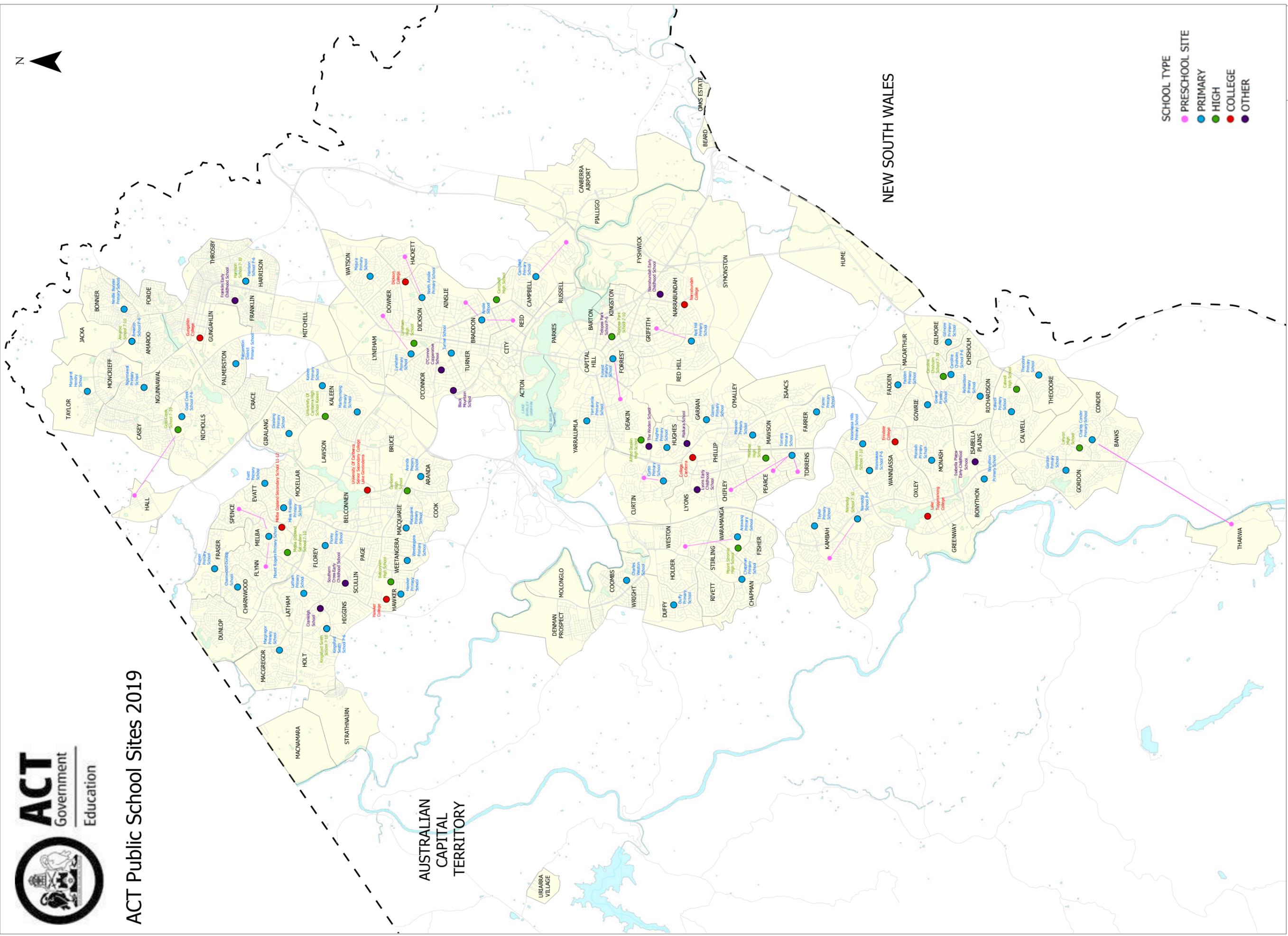
# ACT Public School Sites 2019



AUSTRALIAN  
CAPITAL  
TERRITORY

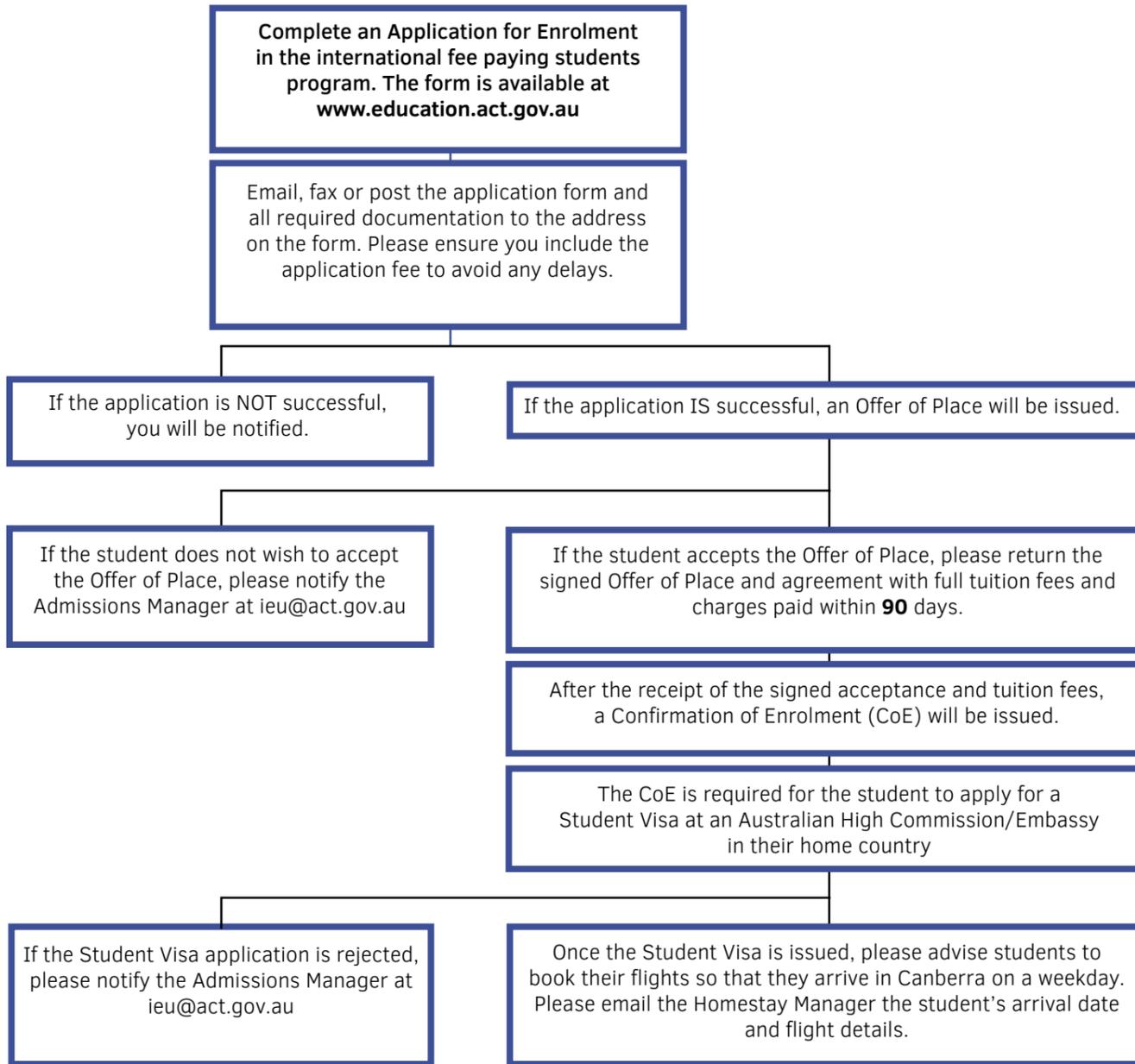
NEW SOUTH WALES

- SCHOOL TYPE**
- PRESCHOOL SITE
  - PRIMARY
  - HIGH
  - COLLEGE
  - OTHER



Scale: 1:39 000 @ AO  
Date : August 2018

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS



**“I was so excited when I received my Offer of Place letter... I was going to Australia to study!”**

International student,  
Canberra College

## YOUR STUDENT VISA

### Applying for a Student Visa

**All international students need a Student Visa to study in Australia. You must obtain the correct visa before you enter Australia. You can apply for a Student Visa online or at the Australian Embassy, Consulate or High Commission in the city where you live or your closest capital city.**

The first step in applying for a Student Visa is to pay your tuition fees. Once you have paid your fees to the International Education Unit (IEU), you will receive a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). You will need to take this CoE with you when you apply for your visa.

Students from some countries will also need to apply for a Pre-Visa Assessment before they pay for their tuition fees. You can check on all of your visa requirements on the Department of Home Affairs website, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/stud>

### Your Student Visa conditions and what they mean

The Department of Home Affairs issues visas for all international students in Australia. Student Visas carry certain conditions:

- You cannot travel to Australia before your visa commencement date.
- You must be enrolled in a full-time course and pass all of your courses of study.
- Schools expect you to attend school every day unless you are ill.
- You must notify your school of your address in Australia within 7 days of arrival, and notify your school and the Department of Home Affairs of any changes to your address within 7 days.
- You cannot change schools (providers) for the first 6 months of study. If your course is less than 12 months you must study for the full duration of the course before changing. We do not accept students transferred from other onshore schools.

- You must maintain your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) at all times while studying in Australia. The IEU can help you obtain OSHC when you apply.
- If you are older than 16 years, your student visa also allows you to work in Australia. However, the IEU recommends that you do not work more than 6 – 8 hours per week.
- If you have to extend your studies in Australia or you want to do some travelling before you return to your home country, you need to apply for an extension to your visa or a new visa.
- If you want to travel on your student visa before you turn 18, you need to obtain a permission to do so from the IEU, who will need a written permission from your parents and for you to complete a travel approval form.

**“The day I received my student visa was the best. I knew I was on my way to achieving my dream of studying in Australia”**

International Student,  
Narrabundah College

## ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

### Homestay

**Homestay is when local families open their homes to visiting international students and provide a safe and nurturing place to live during their stay in Canberra. In Canberra, the International Education Unit Homestay Coordinator places every student with an appropriate homestay family. The program is managed and implemented by the ACT Government.**

Homestay is one of the most valuable components of international education in Canberra. A homestay family provides the opportunity to experience life with a local family and is the best way for you to improve your English. Homestay families gain a unique understanding of cultural diversity through the relationship that develops with the student they host. Many of the Education Directorate's homestay host families have been providing accommodation for international students for over 16 years.

There is no 'typical' Australian family. While it is important to assist students in their language development by speaking English in the home, as a multicultural society, people from all cultural backgrounds are welcomed as homestay hosts.

The International Education Unit (IEU) will be able to provide you with some information about homestay before you arrive, such as who you will be living with; where the house is; and if they have pets, a garden or internet access.

Two weeks homestay fees will be required on your first days living with homestay. You will also be required to pay a deposit of two weeks homestay fees. This will be used to pay for the last two weeks of your stay. If you move out without giving your homestay 2 weeks' notice, you will forfeit your deposit.

On your application to study at an ACT Government School you have to indicate your preferences for your accommodation/welfare. These are discussed in more detail below. It is important to choose the option you want as it can be difficult to change, especially if your parents are not in Australia. Please contact the IEU immediately if you have selected the incorrect homestay option on your application

Your homestay family will have undergone a Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) check before you arrive and will be monitored by the IEU to ensure you are provided with the standard of accommodation that is expected for a student in Canberra.

Students over the age of 18 are required to stay with the homestay until they complete year 12 studies. Those, who wish to live independently or in shared accommodation, will need to obtain a special approval from their parents and the IEU, and must satisfy their school and the IEU that they can live and study independently. The approval will only be granted if you are 18 and older, and have a good academic record. Also, we believe you are capable of living independently and maintain good results in all study areas.



**“I’m so lucky! Now I have two families - my homestay family here in Australia, and my real family at home in Vietnam”**

International Student,  
Melrose High School

### Option 1: Live with a relative

**Approved by the Department of Home Affairs**

Living with a relative is the option to select if you can live with your parents or a close relative, such as an uncle or aunt in Canberra.

Students who have enrolled in a primary school, or as a dependent of a parent who is studying in Canberra, must select this option.

- Appropriate for students of all ages.
- If the student is living with a relative (other than a parent) they must be approved by the Department of Home Affairs.
- The Department of Home Affairs approved relatives include: brother, sister, step-parent, step-brother, step-sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, step-grandparent, step-aunt, step-uncle, step-niece and step-nephew.
- Dependant students must reside with the approved relative for the duration of their enrolment.
- Airport Reception Service is not available under this option as it is expected that the family members will greet the student at the airport.

### Option 2: Nominated homestay

**Approved by the IEU**

A nominated homestay is the option to choose when your parents have arranged for you to stay with their friends or distant relatives in Canberra. The student must be 16 years of age or older.

- The person nominated by the student to provide accommodation will be required to complete a Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) check and their home visited to ensure they meet IEU homestay criteria.
- Once this process is completed the student will be issued with a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and a Confirmation of Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW).
- Students will be charged an accommodation placement fee to cover administrative costs.



### Option 3: Homestay

**Arranged by the IEU**

Having the IEU arranged your homestay is the most popular option. The Homestay Coordinator will arrange a homestay for you. This may be with a family who have their own children, or with a single person or even with grandparents. Students pay homestay fees per week to cover living costs, which includes their accommodation and meals.

- Students must be aged over 16 years.
- Students are charged a placement fee to cover administrative costs.
- Students are charged an Airport Reception Service fee.
- The IEU only arranges accommodation for the duration of the student's study.

Option 3 homestay includes:

- 3 meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner), 7 days a week.
- A bedroom with a bed, bed linen and blankets, desk/table with sufficient light or lamp for study, chair, cupboard space and heating.
- All gas, electricity, heating, cooling and water costs.
- Cleaning of common living areas.
- Students are responsible for cleaning their own bedroom and the kitchen and bathroom/toilet after use.
- Use of shared areas.

If you choose this option, you will become 'part of the family' and may be expected to participate in family activities, and/or complete household chores.

## Booking your flight

It is advisable to book your flight a few months in advance. Flights at the beginning of each school semester and in the summer holidays can be fully booked, so it's best to prepare early. In Australia, the school year starts in late January, and the second semester starts in July. Don't book your flights before you pay your tuition fees and receive your student visa.

You must arrive by the first day of school and you may not leave until the day after the last day of school.

If you can't arrive on time or you need to leave before the semester finishes, you will be in breach of your enrolment conditions.

It is best to arrive a few days before school begins so that you can settle in. The IEU recommends that you DON'T arrive on a weekend or a public holiday, because the orientation program, which provides you with a lot of useful information, is only available on weekdays.

Arriving too long before your course commences can cause complications with meeting your student visa requirements. The IEU asks that you arrive within the week prior to your course commences.



You should book your flights so that you arrive in Canberra on a weekday - Thursday or Fridays are best, so that you have the weekend to unpack and relax before you start school.

## Packing your bags

There is no need to pack a lot of household items, e.g. blankets, doonas or pots and pans. You'll find your homestay accommodation has all of these things. Australia has the same comforts and luxuries you find in countries throughout the world.

You can buy most things in Canberra that you can in any other major international city. If anything, most students bring too much luggage.

Most foods are easily available at supermarkets or specialty grocers. The International Private Student (IPS) Coordinator at your school will be able to help you find your favourite foods or products similar to those from your home country.

Canberra has a fairly temperate climate. In summer, light clothing such as t-shirts, skirts and shorts are suitable, but it is handy to have a jacket or sweater available for cool nights. In winter, you will need warm clothes, especially in the late afternoon. Winter in Canberra can be wet, so be sure to pack an umbrella or a rain jacket.

Keep copies of your passport and student visa in a safe place. Leave a copy with your family, just in case you lose your passport.

It is advisable to pack a suitcase with a sturdy handle and wheels, rather than one that you pull with a detachable strap. Please also ensure that you can lift your suitcase before you leave. If you cannot lift your suitcase, it will be very difficult to move it when you arrive in Australia.



## Customs / Quarantine

The Australian Customs Service has strict rules about what people can bring into Australia. Students may not bring foodstuffs, animal products or pets on their flight.

If you are unsure about something you are bringing to Australia you should declare it at customs at the airport. For more information see <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/ente>

Sometimes international students make a mistake of bringing a large amount of cash or food into the country. Not only is it ill advised, it can also be illegal. Australian Border Force (ABF) officers are friendly, but very strict. Luggages will be screened at the airport and sometimes specially trained 'sniffer' dogs are used to check luggages. If you're not sure, ask!

## Airport pickup

All international students about to commence study at one of Canberra Government Schools, who request our Airport Reception Service, are met at the Canberra airport by an officer from the International Education Unit (IEU). The officer will take you to the bank to set up an Australian bank account; and then take you to the IEU office for an orientation session, which includes tips on living in Australia and homestay, and the rules you need to follow during your stay. Your homestay family will pick you up from the office towards the end of the day.

You will need to advise the IEU well in advance what flight you will be on so you can be met at the Canberra airport. It is a good idea to have some cash with you when you arrive for any unexpected expenses, to pay homestay fees and for the purchases listed above. It is also a good idea to have the contact number (+61262059178) of the IEU with you just in case there is a problem.

**“The lady who picked me up from the airport was really nice. She was very friendly, and she made me feel like I was at home. It was great to know that I was welcome in Canberra”**

International Student,  
Hawker College



# Pre-departure

## PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

### Before leaving home

- Apply for a passport
- Paid your tuition fees and received Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and your Confirmation of Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) if you are under 18 years of age.
- Arrange to obtain your Student Visa
- Arrange for immunisations and medications from your doctor.
- Book your flight (to arrive on a weekday) not more than 7 days before your course start date. You must fly into Sydney International Airport and then book a domestic flight from Sydney Airport to Canberra Airport.
- Advise the International Education Unit (IEU) when you will arrive (including flight number and exact date and time)
- Ensure you have Overseas Student Health Cover
- Obtain a copy of your medical history, detailing any medical conditions that you suffer from (including a letter from your doctor)
- Leave a copy of your passport and visa with your parents, and pack a spare copy in your suitcase to bring to Canberra
- Pack your bags, including clothes (for all seasons), toiletries, stationary for school, any medication you may need. Do not bring linen, bedding or towels as these will be provided by your homestay.
- Do not pack herbal medicine or any food as it may be illegal in Australia
- Make sure that your parents have contact numbers for your homestay and the IEU
- Make sure you have \$5000 to \$8000 AUD with you when you first arrive in Australia for the first four week homestay payment. The remainder will be placed into your bank account. Make sure you carry all cash with you and do not put any cash in your luggage.
- Arrange to bring a mobile phone with international roaming SIM
- Bring a laptop with an English Operating System

### Upon arrival in Canberra

- Call home
- Settle into your new homestay
- Attend international student orientation
- Arrange a student ID card with your new school
- Start classes
- Apply for a Tax File Number (TFN) if you wish to work part time. You can ask your school International Students Coordinator to help you with this TFN application.

### Get involved in your new life at school and at home



## Visa conditions

If you are granted a visa, you must abide by its conditions. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in the cancellation of your visa. These conditions include (but are not limited to):

- Complete the course within the duration specified in the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- Maintain satisfactory attendance
- Maintain approved Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) while in Australia
- Remain with the principal education provider for 6 calendar months, unless issued a letter of release from the provider to attend another institution
- Notify your training provider of your Australian address and any subsequent changes of address within 7 days.

For a full list of mandatory and discretionary Student Visa conditions please visit <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/stud>

## What to bring

Students are often surprised by how strict Australian Customs Services and Quarantine can be. If you're in doubt about whether your goods are prohibited or not, declare it anyway on the

Incoming Passenger Card which you will receive on the plane. Students have received on the spot fines for not declaring items. Visit the Australian Department of Home Affairs homepage and read "Entering or leaving Australia" <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/ente>

Baggage allowances flying into Australia will vary according to your airline carrier, flight class and country of origin. Please check with your carrier prior to departure. Economy passengers are generally permitted 1 x checked luggage (25kg – 35kg) and 1 x carry-on (7kg) for international flights, but only 20kg of checked luggage on domestic flights within Australia. This will significantly limit the amount of things you can bring, especially if you will fly within Australia to get to your final destination. Therefore, it is essential to think the packing process through very carefully. You will be able to purchase most things upon arrival in Australia but the price may be higher than in your own country.

Summer in Canberra is from December to February, autumn - from March to May, winter - from June to August, and spring - from September to November.

If you arrive in June or July, the coldest months of the year, you will need to bring or buy winter clothing.

The standard voltage for electrical items in Australia is 240V. Electric plugs have three flat pins, one of which is an earth pin. You may need to buy an adaptor or have the plugs changed when you arrive.

## On your flight

Wear comfortable, layered clothing so that you are able to make adjustments according to the local weather. Remember – if you are flying from a northern hemisphere winter into the Australian summer it will be very HOT so wear light weight clothing underneath, and have a pair of sandals or lighter shoes in your hand luggage if you need cooler footwear. A jacket will be required on-hand if flying into the Canberra winter season.

Before landing in Australia, passengers are given an Incoming Passenger Card to fill in. This is a legal document. You must tick YES if you are carrying any food, plant material including wooden souvenirs, or animal products. This includes food given to you during your flight. If you have items you don't wish to declare, you can dispose of them in quarantine bins in the airport terminal. Don't be afraid to ask airline staff if you have any questions.



## Entry into Australia

### Australian Immigration

When you first arrive in Australia you will be required to make your way through Australian Immigration (follow the signs for Arriving Passengers as you leave the plane). An Immigration Officer will ask to see your completed Incoming Passenger Card (given to you on the plane) along with your passport and student visa evidence. The Immigration Officer will check your documents and may ask you a few questions about your plans for your stay in Australia.

### Baggage Claim

Once you have passed through the immigration checks you will move to baggage claim (follow the signs) and collect your luggage. Check that nothing is missing or damaged. If something is missing or damaged go to the Baggage Counter and advise them of your problem. Staff at the Baggage Counter will help you to find your belongings or lodge a claim for damage. You will then need to transfer to the Domestic Terminal for your flight to Canberra. In Sydney, there is a transfer bus and in Melbourne, you can walk to the Domestic Terminal.

### Detector Dogs

You may see a Quarantine Detector Dog at the baggage carousel or while waiting in line to pass through immigration, screening luggage for food, plant material or animal products. If you see a detector dog working close

to you, please place your bags on the floor for inspection. These dogs are not dangerous to humans and are trained to detect odours. Sometimes a dog will sit next to your bag if it sniffs a target odour. Sometimes dogs will detect odours left from food you have had in the bag previously. A quarantine officer may ask about the contents of your bag and check you are not carrying items that present a quarantine risk to Australia.

### Australian Customs and Quarantine

Once you have your luggage, you will go through Customs. Be careful about what you bring into Australia. Some items you might bring from overseas can carry pests and diseases that Australia doesn't have. You must declare **ALL** food, meat, fruit, plants, seeds, wooden souvenirs, animal or plant materials or their derivatives.

Australia has strict quarantine laws and tough on-the-spot fines. Every piece of luggage is now screened or X-rayed by quarantine officers, detector dog teams and X-ray machines. If you fail to declare or dispose of any quarantine items, or make a false declaration, you will get caught. In addition to on-the-spot fines, you could be prosecuted and fined more than AU\$60,000 and risk 10 years in prison. Some products may require treatment to make them safe. Items that are restricted because of the risk of pests and disease will be seized and destroyed by the Australian Border Force officers.



## ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA

Moving from one country to another can be exciting but you will also have to cope without your family and friends. It's normal to feel a bit confused, nervous and lonely at first.

When you arrive in Australia an officer from the International Education Unit (IEU) will give you an orientation pack. They will also introduce you to your homestay family.

When you go to school you will meet your International Private Student (IPS) Coordinator. This friendly person will introduce you to some staff and students at your school.

There is no point trying to memorise Australian slang or trying to know everything about the Australian way of life before you arrive. It is best to enjoy the new experiences you will have in Australia; it's all part of the homestay experience. You'll find you adapt very quickly.

Your IPS Coordinator and the IEU staff will understand the feelings most international students experience. You can rely on them to help if you are finding it difficult to adapt.

Most international students have similar feelings in their first few months. Remember, you're not alone. The other international students at your school will probably feel the same way.

Australians are fairly relaxed about formalities. While it is always important to say 'please' and 'thank you', you are unlikely to offend someone by using their first name or mispronouncing their name when you first meet.

It's normal for students to be a little nervous about their English. Try to use your English language skills as much as possible; they're probably better than you realise.

If you work hard at your English language studies when you first arrive, it will make school work and life in Canberra easier and more enjoyable.



### Tips to help you settle in:

- Be positive – remember the reasons why you chose to study in Australia.
- Make conversation – try talking to other international students.
- Keep a journal- this can help you gain perspective on the feelings you are experiencing as your time in Australia continues.
- Stay occupied – use your spare time to play sport, or take up a hobby. This can help you meet new people and keep you too busy to think about being homesick.
- Socialise – spend time with students from other countries and Australia. This will enrich your study experience and it can reduce your feelings of loneliness.
- Be flexible – be prepared to adapt to your new environment.
- Watch people around you – listen and observe the behaviour of others. If you don't understand, ask questions.
- Say 'hello' – Try to be friendly and say 'hello' or start a conversation with other students. Australian students will respect you for this and talk to you. If you are too shy, Australian students may not talk to you for fear of upsetting or offending you.

## Emergencies – Dial 000

In Australia dial 000 from any phone for fire, police or ambulance services. 112 may also be dialled from mobile phones. Dialling 112 will override key locks on mobile phones and therefore save time. Emergency Services operators answer this number quickly and to save time will say, "Police, Fire, or Ambulance". If you are unsure of what emergency service you need tell the operator what the emergency is. You will then be connected to the appropriate service to assist. It is wise to think ahead with the most important information which will help them to respond.

Where you are; (note street names and the closest intersection), what has happened and to whom; what their condition is. The operator may then ask you to stay on the phone until the emergency services arrive. In life threatening situations the operator may also give you some instructions to assist until the emergency unit arrives. If you are concerned about your English, remain calm and work with the operators who are very experienced with all cultures.

**Emergency 000 lines should not be used for general medical assistance.**

### Police

In Australia police protect people and properties, detect and prevent crime, and preserve peace for everyone. They are not connected to the military or politics. The police can help you feel safe. In a non-emergency situation you can contact the local police station directly on: (02) 6256 7777

### Fire

The fire brigade extinguishes fires, rescues people from fires in cars and buildings, and helps in situations where gas or chemicals become a danger. As soon as a fire starts call 000 no matter how small or large the fire may be.

### Ambulance

Ambulances provide immediate medical attention and emergency transportation to hospital. Dial 000

## Lifeline

Lifeline's 13 11 14 service is staffed by trained volunteer telephone counsellors who are ready to take calls 24-hour a day, any day of the week from anywhere in Australia. These volunteers operate from Lifeline Centres in every State and Territory around Australia. Anyone can call Lifeline. The service offers a counselling service that respects everyone's right to be heard, understood and cared for. They also provide information about other support services that are available in communities around Australia. Lifeline telephone counsellors are ready to talk and listen no matter how big or how small the problem might seem. They are trained to offer emotional support in times of crisis or when callers may be feeling low or in need of advice.

## Poisons Information Line

The poisons information line provides the public and health professionals with prompt, up-to-date and appropriate information, and advice to assist in the management of poisonings and suspected poisonings. The seriousness of a poisoning situation is assessed after a detailed history is obtained from the caller. Members of the public may be then given first aid instructions, information on possible symptoms, and advised on the need for assessment by a doctor or referral to hospital. The Australia-wide Poisons Information Centres have a common telephone number: 13 11 26.

## Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) is insurance that provides cover for the costs of medical and hospital care which international students may need while in Australia and is mandatory for international student visa holders. OSHC will also cover the cost of emergency ambulance transport and most prescription drugs.

### How do I get OSHC?

You will already have paid for OSHC in the education offer package you received before we issued your CoE. You will receive your card when you arrive in Canberra.

### What am I covered for?

OSHC provides a safety net for medical expenses for international students, similar to that provided to Australians through Medicare. Additionally, OSHC includes access to some private hospitals and day surgeries, ambulance cover and benefits for pharmaceuticals.

### How do I use my OSHC card?

If you need to visit a doctor or medical centre, show your card at the end of the visit. You will be charged the doctor's fee and the government fee component of that may be processed by the medical centre. If the medical centre is not able to process the government fee, pay the total amount, keep the receipt and you can claim the government fee back from your OSHC provider.

### How do I make a claim?

Visit the following website.  
[https://www.oshcassistance.com.au/member\\_student/login.aspx?os160.aspx](https://www.oshcassistance.com.au/member_student/login.aspx?os160.aspx)  
 or you may choose to visit the office in Canberra at:  
 ANU Student Exchange, Building X-005,  
 121 Marcus Clarke Street, Acton

## Attending an Australian hospital

Few private hospitals have emergency departments, so, in an emergency, most Australians rely on the public hospital system. If you attend an Emergency Department in a hospital you will be attended to by a triage nurse for information about you, your cover, and your current health condition.

The triage nurse will determine the urgency of your condition in comparison to others in need in the emergency room and it is likely that you will remain at

the emergency room for a VERY long time if you are not critically ill.

## General Practitioners (GPs)

In Australia you do not have to go to a hospital to see a doctor. You can see a doctor (also known as a GP – General Practitioner) in their private practice or medical centre, with part or the entire doctor's fee being covered by your OSHC. You must make an appointment to see a GP. It is important to note that some GP surgeries will request full payment from you at the time of consultation and you will need to present the receipt to claim the rebate back from your OSHC provider. Your school teachers and your homestay will assist you to find a doctor if you are sick.

## General health

Maintaining good health is of vital importance when studying abroad. While living in another environment is a good way to change a daily routine, it is important for students who are experiencing difficulties in their home country (relationships, health, emotional, computer addictions etc.) not to expect their problems to go away once they arrive in Canberra.

Going abroad is not a "geographic cure" for concerns and problems at home as you cannot solve your



personal problems by moving from one place to another. Sometimes students and their parents feel that a change of venue will help them to move past their current problems. However, living and studying in a foreign environment frequently creates unexpected physical and emotional stress, which can exacerbate otherwise mild disorders.

It is important that all students are given the space and time to adjust to potentially dramatic changes in climate, diet, living, and study conditions that may seriously disrupt accustomed patterns of behaviour.

A big part of staying healthy involves eating healthy foods, and getting enough exercise for fitness and relaxation. When you first arrive, it will be very tempting for you to drink a lot of milk and consume dairy products such as yoghurt, ice cream and cheese. Australian milk and dairy products are very rich and if you are not used to these food, you may experience acute diarrhoea and stomach disorders. You should only consume small amounts until your body adjusts.

## Sexual health

Taking care of your sexual health means more than being free from sexually transmissible infections (STIs) or sexually transmissible diseases (STDs). It also means taking responsibility for your body, your health, your partner's health and your decisions about sex. Talk freely to your partner to ensure you are both ready for sex.



Always use condoms as condoms are the only form of contraception that protects against STIs and unplanned pregnancy.

## Working in Australia:

### Permission to work

From 26 April 2008, applicants granted student visas will automatically receive permission to work with their visa grant. You are not permitted to start work until you have commenced your course of study.

You can work a maximum of 6 - 10 hours per week during the term and unlimited hours when you are on school holidays.

### Earning an income

Taxes are managed through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). The tax you pay depends on how much you earn.

### Getting a Tax File Number

You must obtain a Tax File Number (TFN) to be able to work in Australia. A TFN is your unique reference number to our tax system. When you start work, your employer will ask you to complete a Tax File Number Declaration Form. If you do not provide a TFN, your employment will be taxed at the highest personal income tax rate, which

will mean less money in your wages each week. You can apply for your TFN online at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

## Taxation Returns

If you pay too much tax, you are entitled to a refund. To get a refund you will need to lodge a tax return. You can lodge online using myTax (free), by mailing a paper tax return, or by paying a registered tax agent to complete and lodge the return for you. If you lodge with myTax, your refund will normally be issued within 14 days.

## Laws and safety in Australia

### Obeying the law

One of the reasons we have such a wonderful lifestyle in Australia is due to our representative democracy, the separation of powers, and our respect for the rule of law. We have a lot of laws in Australia and as a result, society runs smoothly.

In being granted a visa to study in Australia, your parents signed a document (Australian Values Statement Temporary) agreeing to respect Australian values and obey the laws of Australia for the duration of your stay. Failure to comply with the laws of this land (including State and Territory laws) could result in a fine or the cancellation of your visa and possible deportation back home. If you are convicted of a serious crime, it could result in imprisonment. Nobody wants this to happen!

You can find a comprehensive outline of Australian law and the legal system at: [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au)

## Internet safety and security

### Internet access on arrival

Internet cafés are located across Canberra, or you may book a computer at a Canberra or your school library. You will also be able to access the internet from your homestay after you have purchased a pre paid wireless USB. You will not be permitted to share the internet with your homestay.

The internet has now become an essential business, social, entertainment and educational resource across the world. The increasing level of economic transactions on the internet is making it the focus of criminal activities. It is important that internet users protect themselves from falling prey to these activities.

The following tips list some simple precautions you can take to minimise the chances of becoming a victim of online criminals.

1. Install anti-virus and other security software, such as anti-spyware and anti-spam software. Use and update this software regularly.
2. Regularly download and install the latest security patches for your computer software, including your web-browser. Use automatic software security updates where possible.
3. Use a firewall and make sure it is turned on. Firewalls help prevent unauthorised access to, and communications from, your computer.
4. Delete suspect emails immediately. Don't open these emails.
5. Don't click on links in suspect emails. Visiting websites through clicking on links in suspect emails may result in malware (malicious software), such as a 'trojan', being downloaded to your computer. This is a commonly used and effective means of compromising your computer.
6. Only open an attachment to an email where the sender and the contents of the attachment are known to you.
7. Don't download files or applications from suspect websites. The file or application could be malware. Sometimes the malware may even be falsely represented as e-security software designed to protect you.
8. Use long and random passwords for any application that provides access to your personal identity information, including logging onto your computer. Don't use dictionary words as a password. Ideally, the password should be eight or more characters in length. Change passwords regularly and do not share your password with your friends.

## Personal safety

- When you are out and about it is important to be alert and aware of your personal safety.
- If you are going out at night remember: Think ahead - consider how you are going to get home - pre-booking a taxi or arranging transport with a friend or your homestay is good practice.
- Never hitch-hike.
- Make sure that you stay with your friends and that your homestay knows where you are at all times.
- Make sure you have enough money to get home or to get a taxi.
- Keep away from trouble - if you see any trouble or suspect that it might be about to start - move away from the scene if you can.

- Walk purposely and try to appear confident. Be wary of casual requests from strangers, like someone asking for a cigarette or change - they could have ulterior motives.
- Try not to carry your wallet in your back trouser pocket where it is vulnerable and in clear view.
- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you, especially if you are alone or it is dark
- Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible
- Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street or in a car - continue walking
- Be aware of your surroundings, and avoid using personal stereos or radios - you might not hear trouble approaching
- Always keep your bag in view and close to your body
- Be discrete with your cash or mobile phones.

## Public transport safety

- Travelling on public transport should be a safe and comfortable experience. In Canberra, our public transport is buses and light trains only - there are no subway or trams
- Avoid isolated bus/light train stops
- Stand away from the curb until the bus arrives
- At night, wait in well lit areas and near other people

- Check timetables to avoid long waits.
- Sit as close to the bus driver as possible
- Stay alert and be aware of the people around you
- If someone bothers you, change seats and tell the driver
- If you see any suspicious activity, inform the driver

## Taxis

Travelling by taxi is a safe method of public transport but is expensive in Canberra. To increase your confidence when travelling by taxi, consider the following suggestions:

- Phone for a taxi in advance as you cannot hail one on the street in Canberra.
- Sit wherever you feel most comfortable. This may mean travelling in the back seat of the taxi if you prefer.
- Specify to the driver the route you wish to take to reach your destination. Speak up if the driver takes a different route to the one you have specified or are familiar with.



## ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

### Starting school

School days in Canberra start between 8.20am and 9.00am and finish between 3.00pm and 4.00pm. Your start and finish times will depend on the kind of school you go to (primary, high school or college), and is often a little different for each individual school. Most students bring a packed lunch to school, or if you prefer, there is usually a canteen (café) where you can buy your lunch.

Students are required to attend school for the whole day. If students have 'free periods', these are usually spent in the library or student common rooms. You are required to study a full-time course. Part-time courses are not offered.

Most international students find the Australian teaching style to be very different from what they are used to.

In Canberra, there is a focus on practical learning that encourages creative, independent thoughts and debates. Your teachers aim to provide you with a thorough understanding of a topic, rather than just teaching you what to remember for an exam. You will be expected to develop your own thoughts and share them with your fellow students during classes. You may be asked to complete a group assignment with other students in your class to demonstrate your understanding of the topic and you will also be required to complete oral presentations.



## Assessments

All students in Canberra undergo regular assessments. Parents receive reports at the end of each semester (mid-year and end of school year).

The marking schemes will vary depending on the kind of school you attend (primary, high school or college). You will be awarded letter grades for each subject – A, B, C, D or E. During the semester, some of your work may be marked with teacher's comments e.g. Excellent, very good, satisfactory, or you may be awarded a percentage, e.g. 85%. Assessments vary with each subject and school. It is usually comprised of a mix of exams, assignments, essays, presentations and regular homework. Students may also be assessed on their contribution to class discussions, enthusiasm, dedication and behaviour.

Your reports will be sent to your parents (via your agent, if applicable) in your home country. If your parents change address, they should notify the International Education Unit so they can receive your reports.

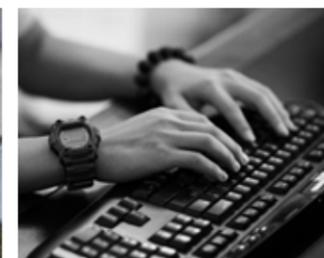
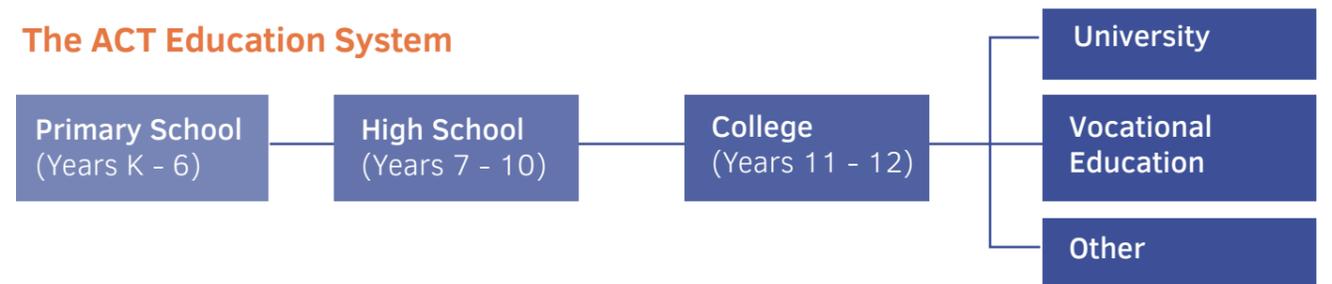
Students are required to meet academic progress requirements. This is a condition of your student visa.

The ACT has a unique secondary education system. In Year 12, students studying to receive an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score will sit a special paper called the Advanced Skills Test (AST). This test is used to rank the ACT colleges, and to rank you within your school.

The ATAR you receive is a percentile rank. This score is used by Australian universities and vocational education institutions as a guide to accepting students. This process will be explained to you by your school when you reach Year 12.



### The ACT Education System



## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when you take someone else's work and submit it for assessment as your own. This includes copying blocks of text or whole sentences from a reference and neglecting or forgetting to cite or 'credit' the original source. Plagiarism is a very serious offence in Australia. If you plagiarise, you may incur harsh penalties such as automatically failing that assignment, or the whole subject. This will put your student visa in jeopardy.

**If you wish to use somebody else's idea or work you must reference it and explain how it relates to and supports your own work. You must never submit another student's work as your own.**

**You will learn how to reference correctly when you begin your new school.**

## Learning English

Learning English is a large part of all international students' education. Even if you have studied English for a while, you will be enrolled in a bridging course. Bridging programs are run at your school and by immersing yourself with local students; your English will improve very quickly. The purpose of bridging is to give you the time to adjust to the different learning and teaching styles in Canberra as well as to improve your English and is compulsory for all international students.

If you have only studied English for a short time, you will be enrolled in an Introductory English Centre (IEC). IECs are for students, who have recently arrived in Australia and need special assistance in learning English as a second language. The aim of attending an IEC is that by the time your program is completed you will be confident in your English language ability.

IEC classes are taught by teachers, who specialise in teaching English as a second language. Your class will be small (12 students) to facilitate group learning, but also offer you the individual attention you deserve.

Students normally attend an IEC for three terms. Upon completion of the program, you will be transferred to your school.

## Student identification

Your passport is extremely valuable. Keep it in a safe place and make sure you have a photocopy of the first page and your visa in case it gets lost.

If you are in a high school or a college, your school will issue you with a student ID card which you can use to borrow books and photocopy documents at the school library. Your student ID card is also a concession card – especially useful when you use public transport.

Sometimes students need to get an International Student Identity Card. This is sometimes convenient to prove your age and name but is not as bulky or as valuable as your passport. You can apply to obtain one through organisations such as STA travel or even in your home country before you leave.

## Returning to home for the school holidays

You may return to your home country during the school holidays. You may not leave until one day after classes finish and you must return at least one day before your classes recommence. Returning from holidays late will have a negative impact on your studies and will not be approved by the International Education Unit (IEU) or your school. Any days of school that you miss will therefore be counted as absences and may result in you breaching your student visa attendance requirements. You will be required to complete a travel form for any overnight travel out of Canberra.

## Support services

Sometimes international students may have difficulty with their personal life, school life or homestay. Your International Private Student (IPS) Coordinator is very experienced in helping international students. Your IPS Coordinator is your first point of contact. You should trust them with your concerns in the early stages, before they become big issues. If your IPS Coordinator cannot help you, they will contact an officer of the IEU to assist.

It is always best to discuss an issue early before it becomes a problem. If you are having trouble with your classes or you think you need extra help at school, speak to your IPS Coordinator.

If you have any sort of problems with your homestay, you should speak to your IPS Coordinator or the homestay officer at the IEU. The IEU takes the welfare of international students very seriously and will be very concerned if you are not being properly cared for at your homestay.

All students, not just international students, should raise any concerns they have about their education with their teachers. Teachers in all Canberra Government Schools are all highly qualified and experienced in helping students with academic difficulties as well as any other concerns.

Working together, your school and the IEU will ensure that you have a comfortable homestay and an exciting and challenging school education.



## Transportation

### Public transport – Transport Canberra

Canberra's public transport system is run by a government business called TransportCanberra. These buses run 7 days a week at designated times, most hours of the day. The buses run to all areas of Canberra, providing a cost-effective way of getting around. Students in Canberra receive a "student concession" for travel on Transport Canberra buses. A Standard card type can be purchased online by completing the HYPERLINK "<https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/landing.htm?formCode=1045>". A Student or Tertiary card type can be purchased online by completing

HYPERLINK "<https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/landing.htm?formCode=1043>".

Some students live within walking distance of their school. However, if it is too far to walk, there will be school buses available. These buses will take you directly to your school. Ask your school for information about school bus routes offered by your school, or check the Transport Canberra website: [www.transport.act.gov.au/getting-around/bus-services](http://www.transport.act.gov.au/getting-around/bus-services). The website also contains details about ticket prices and all the bus routes offered by ACTION.



**“The buses in Canberra are great! The bus that travels to my school comes regularly, and the bus driver is always friendly”**

International Student,  
Belconnen High School

## Driving in Australia

The minimum age at which you may obtain a learner driver licence in the ACT is 15 years and 9 months. You must also successfully complete a Road Ready Learner Licence Course, including a computerised knowledge test on the ACT road rules. The Road Ready Course is provided by most ACT schools free of charge as part of their Year 10 curriculum. It is also conducted by a Road Ready Centre at various locations. The course is available during the day, in the evenings and at weekends. Go to [www.roadready.act.gov.au](http://www.roadready.act.gov.au) for more information.

When you go to an **Access Canberra Servive Centre** to get your licence, you must:

- Successfully complete an eye test;
- Provide a passed ACT Road Rules Knowledge Test certificate; and
- Supply full **proof of identity and residency**
- Pay the prescribed fee.

Whilst driving on your Learner Licence in the ACT you must:

- Display "L" plates at the front and rear of the vehicle;
- Ensure that a person holding a full Australian Driver Licence occupies the seat next to you;
- Have a blood or breath alcohol concentration of zero when driving or riding;
- Not tow a trailer exceeding 750kg GVM; and
- Not exceed posted speed limits.

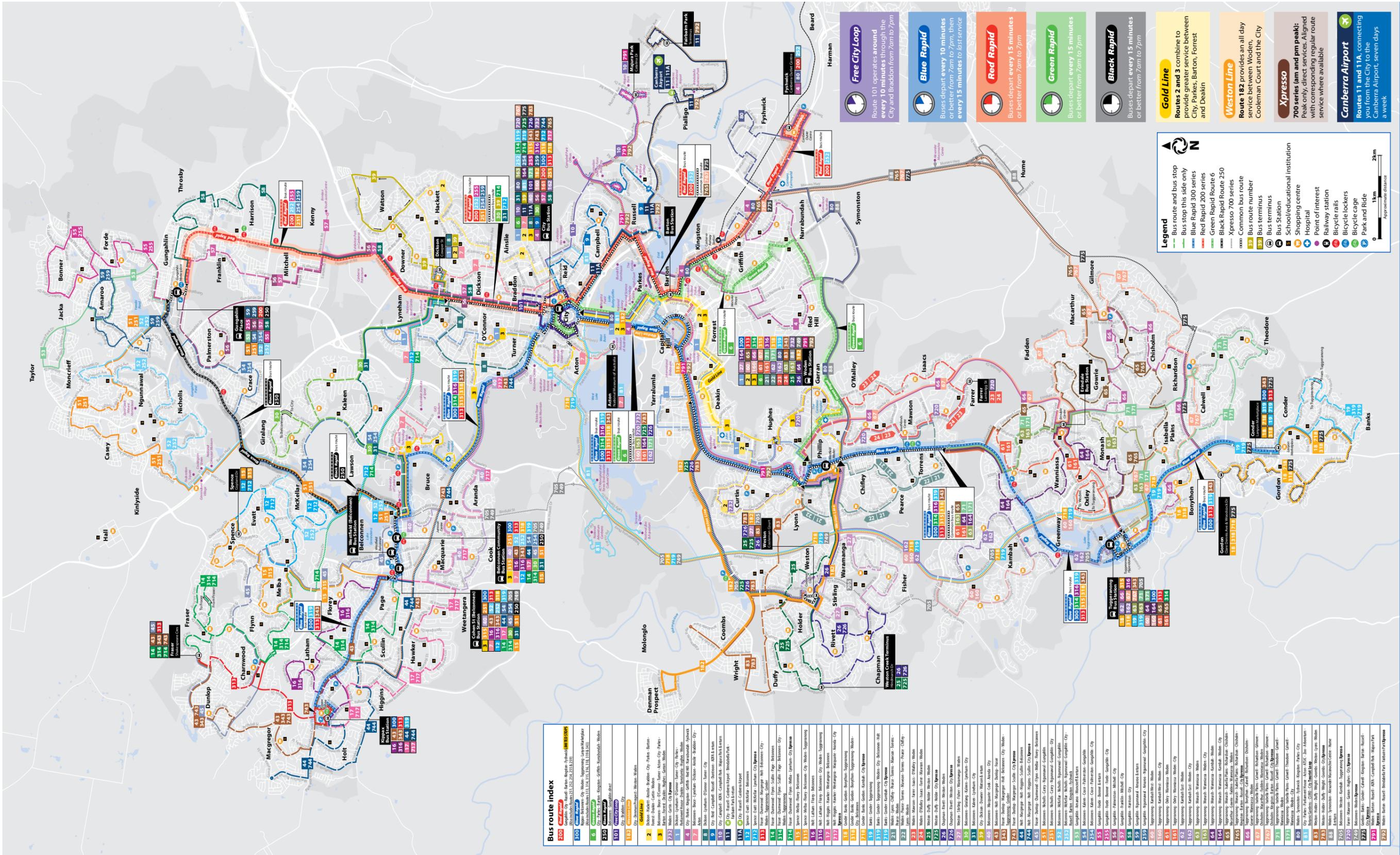
You must be at least 17 years old and have held a Learner Licence for at least six months before you can obtain a Provisional Licence.

If you are going to drive in Australia, no matter whether you are an experienced driver and have an international drivers' licence or not, **you must know the road rules** before you attempt to drive (even 10 metres)!

Many lives are lost on Australian roads every year and international visitors are at high risk! If you come from a country where you drive on the opposite side of the road to Australia, it is sometimes helpful to have a companion drive with you to ensure you both take note of traffic conditions and signs until you are more familiar with driving on the left side of the road. A handy tip is not to think of it as the other side of the road, but to think that the "white line" (or centre dividing line on the road) is on your side as the driver, just as it is in all countries.

It is recommended that you take one or two driving lessons in Australia before you begin to drive here on your own.





### ACTION Route Map of standard weekday bus services.

Please check the Transport Canberra website for the most up to date information: [www.transport.act.gov.au/getting-around/bus-services](http://www.transport.act.gov.au/getting-around/bus-services). The website also contains details about ticket prices and all the bus routes offered by Transport Canberra.

**Legend**

- Bus route and bus stop
- Blue Rapid 300 series
- Red Rapid 200 series
- Green Rapid 700 series
- Black Rapid 250 series
- Xpresso 700 series
- Common bus route
- Bus route number
- Bus terminus
- Bus Station
- School/Educational Institution
- Shopping centre
- Hospital
- Point of interest
- Railway station
- Bicycle lockers
- Bicycle cage
- Park and Ride

Scale: 0 to 2km  
Approximate distance

**Bus route index**

200	Canberra City - Belconnen - Gungahlin - Fyshwick - Canberra Airport
201	Canberra City - Belconnen - Gungahlin - Fyshwick - Canberra Airport
202	Canberra City - Belconnen - Gungahlin - Fyshwick - Canberra Airport
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## Owning a car

### Registration

Any motor vehicle you own must be registered before you drive it on the road. You must register it in your name and provide the Canberra car registration board with your driver's licence details and your residential address in Australia.

### Insurance

You must also have car insurance if you own a car, this will protect you if you have an accident that is your fault as it will help pay for any damage you may have caused to your car or another car.

### Speed

There are very obvious reasons for having speeding and traffic rules. The risk of being involved in an accident increases with the speed a vehicle is being driven because there is less time to react, less control of the vehicle and the distance needed to stop is longer. The higher the speed a vehicle is travelling when it hits a pedestrian, the greater the chance of a fatality occurring. Speed kills.

### Mobile phones and driving

The use of **mobile phones** when driving is dangerous, against the law if it's not hands-free, and potentially fatal. This applies to sending or receiving text messages as well as calls. Operating a mobile phone while driving makes you **nine times more likely to be killed** in a collision. Police actively target the use of mobile phones by motorists. Fines are considerable and demerit points penalties do apply. You should be aware of how to legally use a mobile phone while driving.

## Drinking alcohol and driving

**If you are going to drink alcohol, don't drive. If you are going to drive, don't drink alcohol.** Anything else is a risk, not only to you, but also to other motorists and pedestrians. Alcohol is involved in about one-third of all serious motor vehicle accidents. As the level of alcohol increases in your body, you have more risk of being involved in an accident. **Driving with a blood-alcohol content above the legal limit is dangerous to others as well as yourself and severe legal penalties apply.** If you are above the prescribed blood alcohol content level, as the level of alcohol in your body increases, so does the severity of your fine and/or jail term.



## Alcohol, smoking, & drugs

### Alcohol

It is illegal to consume alcohol in Australia if you are aged 18 years and under.

### Smoking

Australian law makes it an offence to sell or supply tobacco products to a person under the age of 18 years. It is illegal for anyone under 18 years old to purchase tobacco products. There are also a number of laws regulating and restricting the advertising, promotion and packaging of tobacco products. Regulations have been introduced to restrict smoking in public areas such as shopping centres, hotels, restaurants and dining areas, and definitely no smoking at schools.

### Drugs

Drugs including cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, amphetamines and cocaine are all illegal in the ACT and if caught with any of these drugs, harsh penalties will be applied.

## Banking

The easiest way to access your money in Australia is to use your bank card or credit card. Almost all Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) in Australia accept cards with the internationally recognised 'Plus' or 'Cirrus' logos. Check the back of your bankcard to see if it has one of these signs.

Since you will be in Australia for a long period, we will assist you to set up an Australian bank account when you arrive in Canberra. If you arrive in Canberra during bank opening hours, the person who meets you at the airport will help you do this.

It is advisable to carry cash with you when you first arrive in Australia for unexpected expenses. Be sure to ask for a receipt for any cash purchase.

It is dangerous to carry large amounts of cash into Australia. For information on carrying cash into the country, see <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/ente>.

Once you have opened a bank account, you or your parents can transfer money into it by telegraphic transfer from a bank in your home country. Your parents can discuss with the International Education Unit an appropriate amount of spending money to give you.

Visa is the most readily accepted credit card, and Mastercard is also very popular. American Express is also accepted in Australia, but some places, e.g. McDonalds, do not accept American Express cards.

You can exchange money easily at the airport or at the bank. Exchange rates change daily.

**DANGER: Drink Spiking!** Whether you are drinking alcohol or not, keep your drink close to you and watch it at all times. Drink spiking (putting extra alcohol or other drugs into a person's drink without their knowledge) is an unfortunate risk to people who are out trying to have a good time. Drink spiking can happen to anyone: male or female, young or old, whether they are drinking alcohol or not. Never accept an open container of drink if you did not see it being poured and if you suspect you or your friends have had a drink spiked, call 000 (zero zero zero) immediately to report it and get help.

Source: Australian Drug Foundation

## SIM Card / Telephone Card

Many international students like to purchase a mobile (cell) phone or SIM card when they arrive in Australia. We would like to suggest you bring your own mobile device from home country and activate international mobile roaming before you leave home country. This is to help you make contacts with your parents or the International Education Unit (IEU) during your travel if you encounter unforeseen problems with your flights. The mobile phone network in Australia is different to some countries so you may find that your old phone doesn't work.

Each school has the rules about mobile phones. You will not be allowed to use your phone in class and you may be asked not to make or receive calls during school hours.

Most Australians use mobile phones connected to the global system for mobile (GSM) communication network. Although most countries use a GSM network, you might find that the 'band' is different. Many modern phones are equipped with a dual or tri-band feature which will allow you to use them in most countries around the world. If you have one of these phones, an Australian SIM card will allow you to make calls in Australia.

If you're calling home regularly, it's a good idea to buy a phone card. There are normally AU\$10, \$20, \$30, \$50 cards that will allow you to call your home country cheaply using a public or home phone. These are available at most news agencies and some specialised grocery stores.

Phone bills in Australia are itemised, so if your homestay family agrees, it is easy to pay for your international calls. You are responsible for the cost of any phone calls that you make. Please talk to your homestay family about how to keep a record of these and how to pay for your calls.

When calling overseas you need to dial the international prefix, e.g. 0011 + country code + area code + telephone number.

Sometimes you may need to drop the first zero of the area code or a mobile number when dialling internationally. For example, if your parents want to call your mobile phone in Australia they will need to use the prefix +61 and drop the 0 off the beginning of the number. You can find this information in the White Pages telephone directory, which is distributed free to every household.

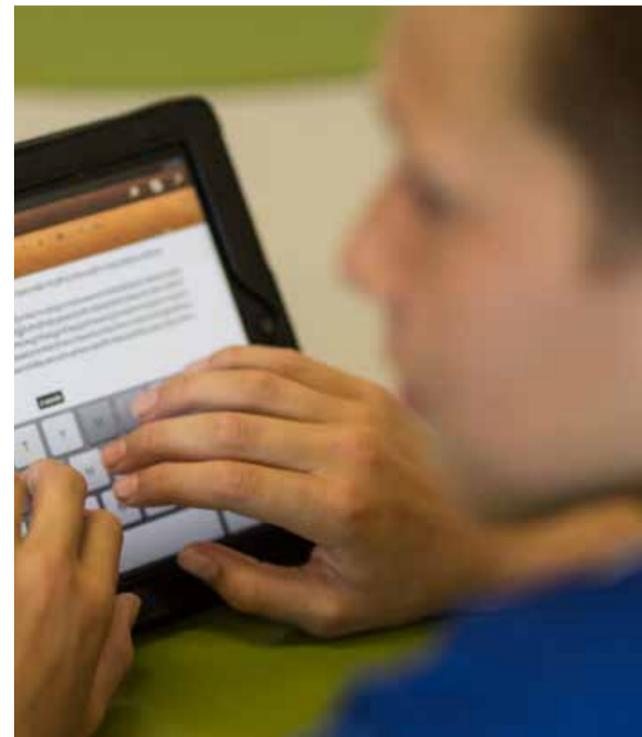
## Internet

More than ninety four percent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018) of homes in Canberra are connected to the internet. Some homes still use a dial-up connection while broadband is more popular. Your homestay family is NOT allowed to let you share their internet service. You will be required to purchase your own mobile data for you to access internet at homestay. The IEU does not allow homestay to share their wifi with you. Your homestay family will assist you to do this.

The pre-paid data plan can be purchased on the day or after you arrive in Australia, or you may purchase on line before you come to Australia. If you arrive on a weekday, the IEU staff will assist you in purchasing one.

When your initial credit runs out, you will be responsible for topping it up, so that you can continue to use the internet.

Your school will have a broadband connection and possibly a wireless network. Free internet access is also readily available at public libraries – you will need to book a time.



## Internet safety & security

The internet has now become an essential business, social, entertainment and educational resource for most Australians. The increasing level of economic transactions on the internet is making it the focus of criminal activities. It is important that internet users protect themselves from falling prey to these activities. The following tips list some simple precautions you can take to minimise the chances of becoming a victim of online criminals.

1. Install anti-virus and other security software, such as anti-spyware and anti-spam software. Use and update this software regularly.
2. Regularly download and install the latest security patches for your computer software, including your web-browser. Use automatic software security updates where possible.
3. Use a firewall and make sure it is turned on. Firewalls help prevent unauthorised access to, and communications from, your computer.
4. Delete suspect emails immediately. Don't open these emails.
5. Don't click on links in suspect emails. Visiting websites through clicking on links in suspect emails may result in malware (malicious software), such as a 'trojan', being downloaded to your computer. This is a

commonly used and effective means of compromising your computer.

6. Only open an attachment to an email where the sender and the contents of the attachment are known to you.
7. Don't download files or applications from suspect websites. The file or application could be malware. Sometimes the malware may even be falsely represented as e-security software designed to protect you.
8. Use long and random passwords for any application that provides access to your personal identity information, including logging onto your computer. Don't use dictionary words as a password. Ideally, the password should be eight or more characters in length. Change passwords regularly.
9. Use a limited permission account for browsing the web, creating documents, reading email, and playing games. If your operating system allows you to create a limited permission account, this can prevent malicious code from being installed onto your computer. A 'limited permission' account is an account that does not have 'Administrator' status.

(Source: Australian Communications and Media Authority)



## Employment

Some students work part time or casually when they study.

Students must remember that they are in Australia to study. Working outside of school hours can be detrimental to a student's studies.

Your student visa automatically comes with permission to work. You will also need to apply for a Tax File Number (TFN) from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) before you apply for a job. Ask your IPS Coordinator to help you obtain an application form and fill it out.

International students are permitted to work up to 20 hours per week during school term and full time



during the holidays. The International Education Unit recommends that you do not work during your first 6 months in Australia or after 10pm on a school night, as this has been shown to have a negative impact on your school work. Eight hours a week is the maximum you should be working.

## Water

Australia is a country that is prone to drought. As a result, we need to be very careful with our water in Canberra. You can still take a shower, wash your face, clothes and clean dishes, but there are restrictions on all the other ways we use water – like washing the car, or watering the garden – especially during the summer.



It is best to ask your homestay family about Canberra's water restrictions before you use water outside. Also, it is advisable to try not to take long showers or leave taps running if you're not using the water, e.g. while you brush your teeth. If you follow the current water restrictions then it is less likely that any further restrictions will be put in place. If you break the rules regarding the use of water, e.g. you water the garden on the wrong day, and somebody else notifies the authorities, you or your homestay family may be asked to pay a fine.

## Safety & emergencies

### Safety

Australia is one of the safest countries in the world, and Canberra has been repeatedly ranked as Australia's safest city – a fantastic place for you to begin your international studies.

International students often find that the Australian Federal Police (AFP) are different to the police in their home country. AFP officers are very approachable, friendly and are used to assisting international guests. Police stations have community liaison officers, who deal with migrants and international students. These officers often speak several languages and have an understanding of different religious beliefs and cultural practices.

The AFP promotes harmonious relationships within Canberra's diverse community. Those relationships are based on mutual respect, tolerance and trust.

Canberra is a safe city and it is unlikely that you will need police assistance during your studies here. However, international students should not hesitate to contact the police where necessary.

### Emergencies

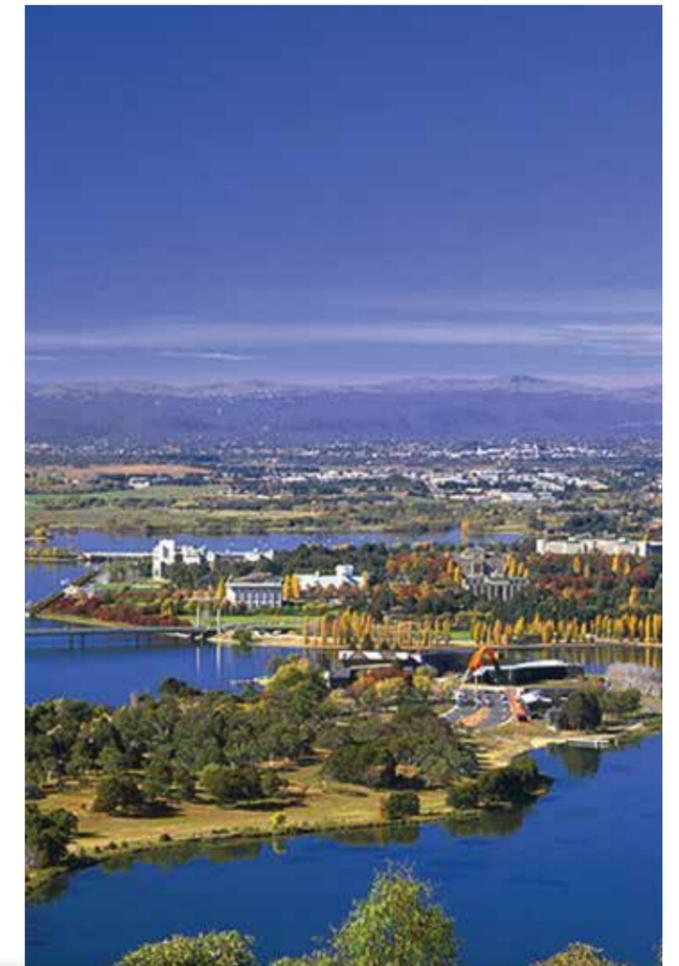
The Australian Federal Police operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

All around Australia you can dial a free emergency service which can help with police, fire and ambulance services. The number to dial is '000'. It is only to be dialled in life threatening or urgent situations.

'000' is free from mobile and landline phones. Some newer digital phones may require you to dial 112 (the international standard) instead of 000.

The police do not charge for their services. You can be charged for travel in an Ambulance during an emergency. However, your Overseas Student Health Cover covers this.

If you need the police, but it is not an emergency, you can look up the phone number for your local police station in the phone book once you arrive in Australia. These phone calls are not free, however they can be very useful when police presence is needed but the situation is not an emergency.



### Steps to take to keep yourself safe:

- Always tell someone (normally your homestay family) when you are going out, where you are going, and what time to expect you home.
- Take care if you are travelling at night or on your own.
- Never leave personal belongings unattended.
- Always carry either a mobile phone, change for a pay phone or a phone card.
- Avoid giving your personal information to strangers.
- Lock your doors and windows before going out.

## Adjusting to life in Australia

While living and studying abroad may be an exciting adventure, it can also present a range of challenges. Having decided to study and live in Australia you will be undertaking adjustments in many areas of your life, including cultural, social and academic. It is also important to remember that while these changes are occurring you will be embarking upon a new semester of study (for many of you in a different language) and be away from your usual supports, networks and friends. Adjustment to a new country and culture is a process that occurs gradually and takes time. The values, beliefs, traditions and customs of your home country may vary greatly from those in Australia and adapting to the Australian way of life may take some time. This advice may help:

### Listen, observe and ask questions

Adjustment to a new culture and way of life takes time. Allow yourself time to observe those around you and patterns of both verbal and non-verbal communications. Don't be afraid to ask questions if there are things you do not understand as this will reduce the chance of confusion or misunderstandings.

### Become involved

Make an effort to meet people and become involved in groups both on campus and in the wider community. Maintain an attitude of openness to new situations and experiences. Establishing friendships and joining groups is the best way to experience and learn about Australian culture and will certainly mean you have a richer and more enjoyable time here.

### Try to maintain a sense of perspective

When confronted with difficulties remind yourself that living and studying abroad is a challenge and it is normal to feel stressed, overwhelmed and out of your depth at times. Try to recall or make a list of the reasons you initially wanted to study abroad in the first place. Also, listing positive events or changes within yourself that have occurred since you arrived may also assist with getting things in perspective.

### Maintain some of the routines and rituals you may have had in your home country

This can include small things such as continuing to drink a certain type of coffee or tea or eating specific foods. It may also include maintaining involvement in bigger events, such as celebrating a national day in your country of origin with a group of friends.

### Keep lines of communication open with those at home.

Communicating with those at home regularly about your experiences of study and life in Australia, through emails, telephones and letters, is vital. Not only does it help to keep you connected with important social supports, it also assists your friends and family to understand your experiences, which will smooth the transition when you return home.

### Sense of humour

Importantly, remember that living in a different culture means you will inevitably find yourself in a range of unusual and often confusing situations. Being able to laugh in these situations will remind you that it takes time to understand different cultures and that it is okay to make mistakes.

### Ask for help

Don't be afraid to ask for assistance or support if you need it. In addition to the Counselling Service, there are many organisations set up on campus to ensure you have a successful and enjoyable time in Australia.

### Finally, relax and enjoy the journey!

(Source: Macquarie University)



## Culture shock

Culture shock is the feeling of being out of place in an unfamiliar environment. The initial excitement of moving to a new country often subsides when different cultural expectations challenge you to attend to daily responses and behaviours previously taken for granted. The potential stress of dealing with these persistent challenges can result in feelings of hostility and frustration with your host country as well as a profound longing for home.

### Overcoming culture shock

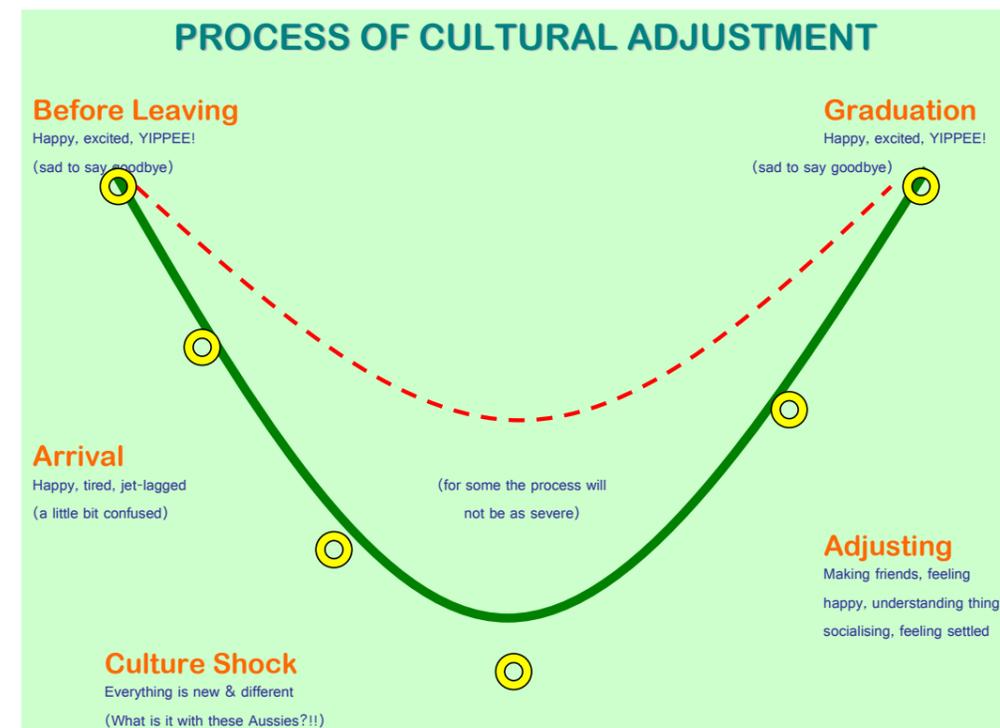
Once you realise you have culture shock, getting over it and moving on to better adjustment with the host culture will depend on you. It is you who must take some positive steps to feel better, and the sooner you take them, the better!

1. Recognition: First, you should remember that culture shock is a normal part of your adjustment and that you may have some of the symptoms. Some of your reactions may not be normal for you; you may be more emotional or more sensitive, or lose your sense of humour. Recognising your culture shock symptoms will help you learn about yourself as you work your way through it.
2. Be objective: Second, try to analyse objectively the differences you are finding between your home and

your host country. Look for the reasons your host country does things differently. Remember that host customs and norms are (mostly) logical to them, just as your customs and norms at home are logical to you!

3. Set goals: Third, set some goals for yourself to redevelop your feeling of control in your life. These should be small tasks that you can accomplish each day. For example, if you do not feel like leaving your room, plan a short activity each day that will get you out. Go to a post office or store to buy something, ride a bus or go to a sports event. If you feel that language is your problem, set daily goals to learn more: study fifteen minutes a day; learn five new words a day; learn one new expression each day; watch a TV program in your new language for 30 minutes. Each goal that you achieve will give you more and more self-confidence that you can cope.
4. Share your feelings: Fourth, find local friends who are sympathetic and understanding. Talk to them about your feelings and specific situations. They can help you understand ideas from their cultural point of view.

(Source: Rotary International Youth Exchange)



## Australian culture

### Social customs

#### Greeting people

When meeting someone for the first time, it is usual to shake the person's right hand with your right hand. People who do not know each other generally do not kiss or hug when meeting. When you first meet someone, it is polite not to talk about personal matters.

Many Australians look at the eyes of the people they are talking with. They consider this a sign of respect, and an indication that they are listening. Do not stare at the person for a long time.



You can address a new acquaintance using their title and family name. You may use their first name when they ask you to or use it in the introduction. In the workplace and among friends, most Australians tend to be informal and call each other by their first names.

### Polite behaviour

'Please' and 'thank you' are words that are very helpful when dealing with other people, and buying goods or services. When asked if you would like something, like a cup of tea, it is polite to say, 'yes please', or just 'please' if you would like it, or 'no, thank you' if you do not. When you receive something, it is polite to thank the person by saying 'thank you'. Australians tend to think that people who do not say 'please' or 'thank you' are being rude. Using these words will help in building a good relationship.

Sometimes a sensitive issue may come up in conversation. Not to talk may seem rude. It is more polite

to say 'sorry, it is too hard to explain' than to ignore a question.

Australians often say, 'Excuse me' to get a person's attention and 'sorry' if we bump into them. We also say, 'Excuse me' or 'pardon me' if we burp or belch in public or a person's home.

You should always try to be on time for meetings and other visits. If you realise you are going to be late, try to contact the person to let them know. This is very important for visits to professionals as you may be charged money for being late or if you miss the appointment without notifying them before the appointment time.



Most Australians blow their noses into a handkerchief or tissue, not onto the footpath. This is also true for spitting. Many people will also say, 'Bless you' when you sneeze. This phrase has no religious intent.

### Tipping

Tipping is not generally expected or practiced in Australia. This is because throughout Australia, service industry staff are covered by minimum wage laws and therefore do not rely on tips for their income. However, it is acceptable to leave a small amount (perhaps 10%) should you feel you have received exceptional service.

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



**Giving your child an international education is a gift and an advantage they'll carry for their entire life. Your trust has been well placed in Canberra Government schools. Your child's school and the International Education Unit will maintain a relationship with you and inform you of your child's academic progress throughout their enrolment.**

### Communication with your child's school

The International Education Unit (IEU) will contact you and provide you with phone and email contact details for the IEU, your child's school and the school's International Private Student (IPS) Coordinator. You can call the IEU, or your child's IPS Coordinator to speak about your child. You can also contact the education agent that enrolled your child and ask them to speak on your behalf.

### Your child's academic progress

Schools communicate regularly with the IEU and parents about every child's academic progress. Every parent can expect their child's school report to be sent to them directly, or through their education agent.

Parents in Australia are normally invited to parent teacher interviews to discuss their child's progress at least twice a year. Schools can also arrange to do this over the phone or the internet.

### Homestay

If your son or daughter is staying in a homestay, arranged by the IEU, you will receive information about their accommodation and homestay family. Every parent, whose child is in a homestay, signs a homestay agreement. This specifies the cost and minimum expectations and house rules of the homestay.

## Information for Parents

### Quality standards and safety

Every Canberra Government School with international students adheres to a Quality Assurance Framework including stringent quality standards, which covers both your child's tuition and their welfare. This helps to ensure your child has a safe and comfortable place to live and receives excellent academic tuition and English language support.

### Your comments

Canberra Government schools aim to provide the highest quality international student program for your child. We welcome any feedback you have on how we can improve our services to students and parents. Please email the International Education Unit at: [ieu@act.gov.au](mailto:ieu@act.gov.au)



## Information for Parents

### Accommodation in Canberra

While your son or daughter is studying in Canberra, you are most welcome to visit. Your child's school can advise you of special events on the school calendar that you may wish to attend.

It is unlikely that your son/daughter's homestay family will be able to accommodate you; however, there are a number of hotels, motels and apartments available in Canberra.

As Canberra is a relatively small city, most accommodation will be no more than a 30 minute drive from your child's school.

Students should discuss their parent's arrival with their homestay, their IPS Coordinator and the International Education Unit. Information on hotels in Canberra can be found at: [www.visitcanberra.com.au](http://www.visitcanberra.com.au)





## Notes

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“Studying at an ACT Government school gave me the skills and knowledge I needed to go to university. Thank you!”

Former International Student,  
now studying at ANU





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