

Pre-Departure Guide

PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE CAREFULLY BEFORE LEAVING YOUR HOME COUNTRY

The information has been designed to help you to prepare for living and studying in Australia. It is generally helpful to know about the changes and differences you will experience so that you can be better prepared for this important transition.

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24 HOUR EMERGENCY CONTACTS

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Fire/Police/Ambulance: 000 (emergency)
Police Communications: 131 444

NAVITAS EDUCATION - WORLD LEADERS IN UNIVERSITY PATHWAY PROGRAMS

Edith Cowan College (ECC) is the founding institution of NAVITAS, a world leader in university preparation and pathway programs. Navitas offers students a wide selection of courses and locations in conjunction with leading universities in Australia, Europe and the United States. Each year thousands of students choose a NAVITAS program as their preferred option for accessing tertiary studies and preparing for their future careers.

QUALITY TEACHING AND OUTSTANDING FACILITIES

We would like to wish you a warm welcome to Edith Cowan College (ECC). Our staff look forward to assisting you with all the important aspects of living and studying in Australia. Your future study at ECC enables us to work together in creating the best opportunities for your academic success. Quality teaching, outstanding facilities and maintaining a supportive and caring environment is central to our education policy.

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth is the capital city of Western Australia and has a population of about 1.8 million. A vibrant, cosmopolitan city, it is enhanced by the unspoiled Indian Ocean beaches, hillside hideaways, romantic Fremantle, cosmopolitan Mount Lawley and select, comfortable suburbs which fringe the Swan River.

Services and facilities in Perth are world class and its people, industries and institutions are dynamic and global in their outlook. As Australia's unique western gateway to the world, Perth is linked to every corner of the globe via extensive international air links and sophisticated telecommunications. Perth and the surrounding region boasts a strong economy with low levels of unemployment, an excellent standard of living and low crime rates compared to other cities in Australia.

Perth is well-known as friendly, safe and relaxed, yet offers all the cosmopolitan attractions of a large international city. The city boasts thousands of restaurants and cafes, cinemas, nightclubs, music and sporting venues as well as great shopping!

Climate

Summer: December - February 20°C - 35°C

Autumn: March - May 15°C - 30°C

Winter: June - August 7°C - 20°C

Spring: September - November 15°C - 25°C

Things to do in Perth

- Visit Kings Park for extensive city and river views. Kings Park is one of the largest inner-city parks in the world, and home to Australia's largest wildflower show and exhibition.
- Enjoy a coffee at one of the many outdoor cafés in Fremantle, then soak up the atmosphere at The Fremantle Markets, an authentic piece of Western Australian history.
- Some of the best shopping and entertainment streets can be found along James and William Streets in Northbridge, Rokeby Road and Hay Street in Subiaco, The Esplanade in Scarborough and Marine Parade in Fremantle. Each area has its own special atmosphere, but all offer a variety of attractions.
- Perth has some of the most pristine coastline in the world. In the metropolitan area alone, there are over 80 kilometres of sandy white beaches, with clear blue water. Ideal for swimming, surfing, sailing and fishing, Perth's waters are also home to a variety of marine life.
- Go cycling around Rottnest Island, about 25km off the coast of Perth. Take a ferry from Perth or Fremantle and enjoy the clear waters, white beaches and coral, and see the small marsupial animals that can only be found here.
- Throughout the year Perth also offers a range of cultural, sporting and

entertainment festivals such as the Perth International Arts Festival and Hopman Cup Tennis.

- Perth has a vibrant local music scene with many original and famous independent bands playing in venues all over the city.

Australian Habits and Customs

When living in a different country, you will need to get used to changes in the physical environment, the type of food available, the way people look, speak and act, as well as having to use a different language to communicate. These differences may result in you experiencing a variety of feelings and reactions. This can be described as culture shock and may contribute to feeling homesick and even make you wonder if you have made the right choice in coming to Perth. To lessen the effect of culture shock it helps to understand some of the differences you may encounter living in Australia.

What's Acceptable?

- Equality for all citizens, no matter whether male or female, or in non-professional or in professional positions. Questions of wealth and position are not used as a measure of an individual's merit or worth.
- Punctuality - always be on time for appointments or let people know if you will be late.
- Tidiness in the community - all rubbish should be disposed of in a bin, or carried with you until you find a bin.
- Waiting your turn in a queue - it is considered impolite to push ahead of someone who is in the queue before you.
- Informality when addressing others - first names are used early in a relationship. A general rule to follow if you are meeting a person for the first time who is considerably older than yourself is to use a title such as Mister (Mr), Miss (Ms), Missus (Mrs), Doctor (Dr) until you are invited to use the person's first name. Many academics/lecturers will encourage you to use their first name. It is acceptable to ask a person what they would like you to call them.
- If you find yourself in an awkward social situation such as when food or drink is being served which you do not like or you can't consume for religious or other reasons, do not hesitate to point out politely that you cannot partake of what is being offered. Australians are aware of different customs and will not be offended.
- Saying 'please' and 'thank-you' where appropriate is highly regarded.
- Eye contact - maintaining eye contact is important during conversation with friends, lecturers in tutorials and oral presentations.

What's Not Acceptable?

Please do not be offended by the following. It is our hope that being aware of these cultural differences may help you adjust to living in Australia.

- Some behaviour is socially unacceptable and there are laws against it. For example, it is against the law to be drunk in public, to swear in public, to use indecent language, to behave in a sexually indecent way.
- Smoking is considered unhealthy and not allowed in public buildings, public transport, taxis, shopping centers, hotels/bars and restaurants – smoking is **banned** on all university campuses.
- Sniffing instead of blowing your nose. In Australia it is common to see people using handkerchiefs or tissues to blow their noses. If you feel uncomfortable doing this in public, you can go into a bathroom or toilet and blow your nose.
- Opening someone's door without knocking first. Always wait for the person to answer 'Come in'.
- Making loud noises which are unreasonably annoying to another person, even if you make the noise in your own home, especially between the hours of 10.00pm and 6.00am (eg. Loud music, parties, etc.)
- There are extremely strict laws against driving when you have consumed alcohol – there are heavy fines and even jail terms for offenders.

PREPARING FOR YOUR DEPARTURE

It is advisable to make a flight booking as soon as you have confirmed your enrolment at ECC.

Orientation for pathway programs is held in the week before the commencement of each trimester and for English Language Courses the date specified on your Offer Letter. It is compulsory for all new students to attend Orientation. You are strongly advised to arrive in Perth 2-5 days before Orientation day to allow time to settle into accommodation, become familiar with Perth, local transport, the campus and surrounding areas.

If you arrive in Perth late and miss Orientation you will be assisted by staff as much as possible but are likely to have limited timetable selection. If you find that you cannot arrive by the first day of teaching, you will miss valuable introductions to subjects and you **MUST** contact ECC to seek permission for late arrival. Should permission be granted it is on the understanding that it is your responsibility to catch up on any work you have missed. (Refer to your Letter of Offer for course start dates).

If for any reason, including late issue of a visa, you are unable to arrive in Perth before the end of the second week of trimester, you must immediately request that your offer of a place be deferred to the following trimester. Any fees that have been paid will be transferred and no financial penalties will apply. English Language Course latecomers must contact ECC to advise of any delay in their arrival.

Booking airport reception

To assist you with your arrival in Perth, ECC provides a free airport reception service (for new students) studying English followed by an ECC Pathway program. This offer is not extended to students who are on an ECU English plus Bachelor/Masters program. This service is provided through Perth Student Accommodation (PSA). If you would like to be met at the airport and taken to your accommodation, please complete the application form available on the website below as soon as you have your flight details (or 4-6 weeks prior to departure).

<http://www.perthstudentaccommodation.com/airport-reception/>

If your flight details change you must advise PSA as soon as possible to ensure you will be met at the airport.

Pre-departure checklist

Please read all the information provided to you by ECC. This is very important because it will help make the transition to life in Perth easier.

Check that you have arranged the following:

- Arranged to arrive in Perth before Orientation day (date and time indicated on your Letter of Offer).
- Applied for a Student Visa before entering Australia.
- Accommodation & Airport Reception.
- Have paid OSHC (health insurance) for the duration of your student visa. OSHC is **compulsory** for international students during their stay in Australia. OSHC will not cover any illness or disability that you had before arriving in Australia, nor dental or optical services.
- Have had a thorough medical, optical and dental check-up before leaving your home country.
- Have your optical & medical prescriptions (if necessary).

You cannot arrive after Week 2 of trimester as this may lead to the Cancellation of your Visa by the Department of Immigration.

Important documents

Double check that you have brought the following documents with you as they will be required throughout various stages of your stay in Australia:

- A valid passport and student visa.
- Certified Copies or originals of relevant academic transcripts, i.e. school/college/university subjects and results, IELTS/English Results.
- Your Letter of Offer and Confirmation of Enrolment(s)
- Any medical certificates/history/reports.
- Contact numbers for any family/friends
- Proof of fee payment.

Emotional preparation

Living and studying in a foreign country means more than leaving family and friends, familiar foods, climate, customs and language: it presents many new exciting and tough challenges. You will experience increased personal independence and responsibility and will be exposed to differing values, lifestyles and ways of thinking. Most importantly, your time in Perth will enable you to create many new and valuable friendships.

New international students often experience an initial period of adjustment. This is a perfectly normal experience. As you become more familiar with the surroundings you will feel more at ease with yourself and with others, the excitement of making new friends and exploring the Australian way of life will start to grow. The key to managing new experiences is to be as prepared as much as possible and to expect the 'unfamiliar'.

Should you feel that you need someone to speak to or need some emotional support, please speak with the Student Counsellor, or any other member of staff who will be able to offer you support and advice.

Hand luggage - carry the following with you on the plane.

- **The Pre-Departure Guides.**
- A copy of your confirmation of Airport Reception and/or Accommodation letter (from PSA if you have organised accommodation/airport pickup prior to leaving your home country). This letter details where you should meet the PSA representative at Perth Airport, and also **the 24-hour telephone number** of the representative (in case you fail to meet with him/her).
- Your Letter of Offer and Confirmation of Enrolment(s)
- Some cash in Australian dollars (approximately A\$1000) plus approximately A\$2,000 in traveller's cheques or a bank draft (for initial expenses associated with accommodation, telephone and electricity connection).
- Warm winter clothing such as a sweater or jacket if you are arriving in winter (June trimester).

Useful items to bring to Australia

Clothing – November to March are the warmest months in Perth, with temperatures ranging from 17°C to a maximum of 42°C (average around 30°C). The winter months of June, July and August are generally quite cool with a temperature range from 5°C to 22°C. Dress codes in Australia are generally casual, with most students wearing casual clothes, such as jeans, shirts, t-shirts, etc. There are very few times when a student would be required to wear formal attire, and on such occasions your host should advise you.

Women's clothing in Australia may at times appear to be immodest to some students. However, it is acceptable, particularly in student circles, for women to wear shorts and brief tops. This style of dressing is simply another way in which the Australian culture may differ from your own. It is not indicative of the moral standards of the wearer.

Summer Clothing – T-shirts, jeans & shorts, cotton dresses, hat, swimwear, sandals.

Winter Clothing – Jumpers/pullovers, sweatshirts, heavy jacket & socks, winter shoes & raincoat - if you really feel the cold also bring gloves & scarves. Also, bring one or two good outfits for formal occasions.

Personal Items – Basic toiletries like toothbrush toothpaste, soap, towel, etc. A spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and a current optical prescription.

Optional Items – You may also consider bringing with you the following useful items:

- Rice cooker.
- Radio/Camera/CD player & music from home.
- English-English Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

Electrical equipment

Australia has a 3 pin electrical plug. Electricity is delivered at 240 volt AC 50 cycles. Some students choose to bring electrical appliances such as rice cookers, stereo equipment, and hair dryers with them. To operate the electrical equipment that you bring you will need to:

- Buy an electrical converter (this is an expensive option as you will need one of these for each piece of equipment).
- Or change your plugs to Australian 3-pin plugs. This can be done in your country or on arrival in Australia. These 3 pin plugs are available at hardware stores for about \$6.00 and come with instructions.

YOUR ARRIVAL IN PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

If you have requested Airport Reception through PSA, look for a person carrying a ECC sign AFTER you go through the Customs Checkpoint.

Customs and Quarantine

Australia is relatively free from agricultural pests and harmful insects that are prevalent in other countries. In order to keep our healthy environment, strict quarantine procedures are imposed on new arrivals. You will be required to complete a Customs Declaration Form. Read this form carefully and complete it truthfully. You must declare ALL foodstuffs or items of an animal or plant nature you are carrying with you or in your luggage. This form is a legal document and any false information can lead to prosecution with fines up to A\$2000.

If you have any doubts about goods you must declare them. Most processed or dried foods will be cleared for you to bring in, but **you must declare them**. It is routine procedure for Customs Officials to search the luggage of newly arrived overseas students. If you wish to bring your own computer, television etc. be aware that Australian Customs law requires that you declare purchases which amount to more than a total value of AU\$900 per person brought into the country (excluding personal effects). If you bring a NEW computer with you, you must declare it and you may also be required to pay a refundable bond. When you arrive, just inform the customs officer that you are a student and that the computer is for your own use. Items that have been owned by students for more than 12 months may not be subject to tax, but correct receipts of purchases are required to establish value, and any attempts to present false information will incur a penalty above the normal tax requirement.

For further information about Australian Quarantine visit the website below:

<https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Ente/Brin>

<https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Ente/Brin/Quarantine-requirements>

Airport arrival instruction

If you have booked airport reception through Perth Student Accommodation (PSA) a representative will meet you when you come through customs. When you clear Customs, go through the sliding door into the International Arrivals Hall and wait at the ECC Meeting Point (near the Travelex counter) located to the front of the hall near the exit doors. It is important to wait here for at least 30 minutes so that the representative can find you.

If you arrive in Perth on a domestic flight (from another city in Australia), you will be met near the baggage carousel inside the terminal. Look for the representative carrying the ECC sign.

If you have not pre-arranged airport reception, the airport-city shuttle, called "Connect" operates between the International & Domestic Terminals to the city, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The cost of the shuttle service starts at:

International Terminal - to/from the city: Adults \$A18.00

Domestic Terminal - to/from the city" Adults \$A15.00

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR ECC STUDENTS

Banking and Currency

It is not wise to carry substantial amounts of cash on you. We suggest traveller's cheques, bank drafts or money orders. Bank drafts may take a few weeks to clear through an Australian bank unless the draft is in Australian dollars and drawn on an Australian bank. The most common credit cards used in Australia are Visa and MasterCard. Some shops and restaurants will also accept American Express and Diners Club credit cards. Credit cards are useful in emergencies.

There are four major banks in Australia, ANZ, Westpac, Commonwealth Bank and National Australia Bank. It is important to open a bank account as soon as possible after arriving in Perth. To open an account you will need your passport and the money/bank draft you want to deposit. Most banks have student packages for full-time students, which have no account keeping fees.

You will need your CoE and/or Student ID card to receive the student package.

Bring enough funds with you to cover initial expenses such as accommodation (rent, bond, utility connections, and furnishings), study materials, personal effects and food. We advise that you carry A\$1,000 in cash and at least A\$2,000 in travellers cheques or a bank draft.

Please note:

- Certain foreign currencies cannot be deposited in Australian bank accounts.
- Bank and personal cheques can take up to 10 days to clear.
- Electronic transfer to your bank account may take 3-4 working days.
- You must complete an "International Currency Transfer Report" if you are carrying currency to the value of AU\$10,000 or more into or out of Australia (carrying currency of this value is unwise and NOT recommended).
- There is a variety of banks in Perth which offer student accounts, credit cards, cheque accounts, etc. To open an account you will need a passport and your ECC Confirmation of Enrolment, or student ID card.
- Your home country bank may have a connection with a bank in Perth which will make transferring money easier and quicker. Check with your bank before leaving.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Minors

If you are under the age of 18 years, you are a 'minor' and as such a student visa can only be granted if you have met the Public Interest Criteria (4012A) of the Student Visa Regulations. This means that if you are:

1. under 18 years and
2. are not accompanied by a parent/guardian or
3. are not staying with a relative aged at least 21 or above or
4. are not staying with a person at least 21 years of age who is nominated by a parent/guardian, then appropriate arrangements must be made with respect to your accommodation, ensuring that sufficient support for your personal welfare is met during your stay in Australia or until you reach the age of 18 years.

ECC recommends that you stay in a 'Homestay' accommodation if you are under 18 years of age. If you intend staying with friends or relatives (other than your family), then you must obtain permission from your parents, and the person you are staying with must be above 21 years of age and agree to act as your guardian/local career.

The local career would be expected to assume responsibilities such as those listed below:

1. Liaise with the student on matters such as attendance, academic progress, accommodation, grievances, fees, enrolment and future study/career pathways.
2. Liaise with the student's parents on issues such as medical and health issues, social/recreation activities, accommodation, financial matters and general discipline.
3. Ensure the maintenance of the student's health and medical well-being, including responsibility for costs associated with any form of medical treatment.
4. Liaise with government departments as required. Examples include:
 - a. Obtaining a Tax File Number, completion of a return, interest on bank accounts and arrangements for part-time employment.
 - b. Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Affairs (DIAC). Issues may include visa renewals, corrections to visas, meeting visa requirements and claims, renewing membership and policy details where appropriate.
5. Advise the student generally on personal issues as required
6. Assist with everyday living activities essential for the student's maintenance, for example banking, travel and transport as required.
7. Foster awareness of culturally appropriate behaviour by providing advice, information and guidance on matters such as personal hygiene, gender relationships, time management, using recreation and leisure time, homework and study habits as required.
8. Encourage the student's academic progress.
9. Ensure the safe-keeping of the student's property as required.
10. Provide formal consent to school or social activities and arrange meetings with academic and welfare staff as required.

Parents are invited to contact the Student Counsellor on any matters relating to student welfare.

Student Orientation Week

Orientation and enrolment is held **the week before** trimester commences (the date and time is on your Letter of Offer). **Attendance is compulsory.** The Orientation covers matters relating to your study at ECC such as Enrolment, facilities, procedures and support services. Please bring your passport and Letter of Offer/Confirmation of Enrolment with you. You will have access to a student guide, course and unit information, booklists and other important information.

Unit enrolment

Enrolment will take place during the Orientation session. At ECC, enrolment and unit selection is completed through the portal. Students are required to complete your personal details, such as address, visa details, etc. before going on to select the units. There will be a choice of different days and times for classes. Student Leaders help with the practical aspect of enrolment and subject selection.

English Language Support Program

ECC has special programs in place to assist students to address their English requirements. Such students are encouraged to meet with the Academic Support staff to discuss options available to them.

Study Support and *Steps to Success* workshop

Following orientation, all Pathway students will attend a **Steps to Success** workshop. The workshop will enhance students' study skills and introduce them to the academic skills required to be successful in their studies at ECC.

The workshop is **compulsory** and will provide support and guidance to students. Attendance at this workshop demonstrates a student's willingness to improve their academic performance and is taken into consideration should a student encounter academic difficulties and be placed on conditional status. ECC also provides free support classes and study skills, available online.

Expectations of you as a student

It is important to realise that acceptable behaviour for students in Australia may differ from that in your home country. Active student participation in classroom discussion is encouraged and it is acceptable for students to question (and even challenge) the lecturer or tutor. Students are expected to manage their own learning and it is the responsibility of each student to be well informed about their student visa requirements.

There are many people and services at ECC to assist you with your studies, including a Course Coordinator and Academic Administrator.

Student visa requirements

All international students must comply with current visa conditions and regulations determined by DIAC. Conditions include:

- Study full-time while in Australia.
- Satisfy course requirements.
- Maintain a valid enrolment at ECC.
- Advise ECC Reception of any changes to their Australian address within seven days.
- Have sufficient funds to cover course fees and living expenses while in Australia.
- Not work for more than 40 hours a fortnight during trimester (work permit must be obtained before commencing employment).
- Maintain Overseas Student Health Cover while studying.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

The Australian Government requires international students to be covered by health insurance for the length of your student visa – it helps pay for medical and hospital care should you become ill during your stay in Australia. To be granted a student visa, OSHC must be paid before you come to Australia and covers you from the date you arrive to the end of your visa.

OSHC fees paid to ECC will be transferred directly to *Allianz Global Assistance*. As an Allianz Global Assistance member, students receive 24-hour a day toll free access to emergency services, including legal and medical advice and an interpreting service.

Visit <https://www.oshcallianzassistance.com.au/> for further information.

Allianz Global Assistance staff visit campus regularly to answer questions and assist with health related refunds.