

# Generic Preparation Guide for Staff & Students Going on Short-Term Study Tours to Asia



## SECTION 1: LOGISTICAL & PRACTICAL PREPARATION



### ADVICE FOR STAFF

#### Program Administration & Organisation

- Ensure that students have submitted the required administrative and program enrolment documents.
- Ensure that a contact details form for each student has been collected. Give students a copy of their contact details form to keep.
- Distribute a program guide or handbook to students that contains all the essential information students need to know relating to the following:
  - Pertinent logistical, practical and administrative information.
  - Communication protocols (i.e., how everyone will keep in contact with each other during the trip – e.g., via mobile phones, Facebook, WhatsApp or other internet or telecommunication mediums).
  - Important resources and contact details for whom to contact in case of an emergency (e.g., DFAT phone numbers and important university phone numbers/emails).

- What to bring on the trip.
- What to expect on the trip.
- Health and safety advice, and advice about risks.
- Student and staff responsibilities (e.g., student behaviour expectations).
- Culture and language information about the intended destination.
- Academic and assessment information.
- Ensure students have a copy of the travel itinerary.
- Organise pre-departure activities to assist in students' preparation and invite relevant presenters to talk to the students.
- Organise social event/s to promote group bonding.
- Enable all program participants (including overseas buddies/mentors) to get to know each other via online mediums.
- Create a program website, Facebook page or discussion forum for program participants to engage with each other and as a source of information dissemination.
- Create a contact list of all the university departments, external providers and sources of support you have used to organise the program. This will assist program organisation, and will be helpful for any other staff members working on the program with you, or for future staff members.
- Create a post-trip strategy. Plan for activities and administrative tasks that need to be undertaken after the trip. These may include:
  - Program participant de-briefing activities.
  - Academic de-briefing and collection of assessments.
  - Collection of participant feedback.
  - Collection of talent-release forms (so that you have participants' permission to use photographs and video taken during the trip).
  - Distribution of 'letters of achievement' for trip participants.
  - Enlisting participants for the future (e.g., alumni participants may be asked to attend future program promotion and marketing activities, or to present at preparation seminars).

## ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

### Program Administration

- Always prepare for your trip well in advance. Allow sufficient time for administrative delays.
- Ensure that you have submitted all enrolment and administration documents required for your trip. If you are not sure what you need to submit, check with the program organisers (they may have a checklist you can use to get organised).
- Make sure you have a copy of the trip handbook, guide and handouts (if such documents have been provided).
- Make sure you have a copy of the travel itinerary.
- Take part in opportunities to engage with your fellow program participants face-to-face (e.g., at pre-departure activities) or online (e.g., via discussion forums, the program website or Facebook).
- Make sure you attend pre-departure preparation seminars or workshops, as important information will be conveyed by the trip organisers, and potentially, by special guest presenters.
- Attend pre-trip social events if such events have been organised, in order to meet with and get to know your fellow travellers.

### Passport, Travel & Visa

- Get organised well in advance, as passports and visa applications can take a while to process.
- Make sure you have the correct type of visa to enter your host country (e.g., student visa rather than a tourist visa). Some points for consideration in determining the right kind of visa include:
  - Length of the trip (e.g., short-term study tour as opposed to semester-long exchange)
  - Purpose of the trip (e.g., study tour, internship, work placement, work experience)
  - If you are being paid for any work you undertake while on your study tour program
- Always check with consulates and embassies regarding visa requirements.
- If you are intending to travel to more than one overseas destination, make sure you have the appropriate visa for each of those destinations, prior to leaving Australia.
- If you are intending to work while on your trip, check if there are any work limitations applicable to your specific visa.
- Ensure that you have a valid passport (i.e., one that does not expire within six months of your intended travel dates).

- If you are a dual citizen, check the DFAT website to find out how this status affects your travel and visa conditions.
- Register with Smart Traveller and take the time to browse the Smart Traveller website. There are many excellent tips for travellers.
- It may be beneficial to apply for an international student identity card in order to obtain certain travel-related discounts.
- If you are intending to drive while overseas, you may need to apply for an international driving permit.
- If you are an Australian Permanent Resident, your visa status may be affected if you leave Australia. Check with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection regarding whether you require a Resident Return Visa.
- When purchasing airline tickets, it is useful to purchase a flexible ticket so that you can change your bookings if necessary. This may cost more, but is worth considering.
- Avoid purchasing one-way tickets if possible (i.e., always demonstrate that you will be travelling onwards from your current destination).

### Packing Suggestions & Luggage Restrictions

- Be aware of what you need to bring with you. A good tip is to pack according to a checklist (program organisers may supply you with one).
- Be aware of baggage restrictions and prohibited items relating to your travel destinations and airlines.
- Bring your valuable items with you as carry-on luggage, in case your checked-in luggage is lost.
- Pack for variations in temperature (e.g., wear layers of clothing). Be aware of the weather conditions at your destination so that you are attired appropriately upon arrival.
- If you are intending to bring a large quantity of baggage out of Australia, a more cost-effective option is to send your excess baggage to your destination via an unaccompanied baggage service.
- Register any valuable items such as cameras and computers with Australian Customs prior to leaving Australia so you do not have to declare these items upon your return. Make sure you bring your receipts with you to demonstrate that the items are yours and have been previously purchased in Australia.
- Be aware of duty-free and GST conditions for items brought back into Australia.

## Accommodation & Arrival

- Apply for accommodation at your host institution, if applicable. Allow plenty of time to organise this as there can be administrative delays.
- If you are booking your own accommodation, consider aspects such as location and convenience in terms of access to transport and facilities.
- If you are intending to seek suitable accommodations upon arrival at your destination, make sure you arrive a few days earlier, before the commencement of your program.
- Try to arrive at your destination during office hours, if possible.
- Some hotels and hostels provide an airport pick-up service. Make arrangements for airport pick-up in your host country if this service is provided.
- Ensure that you have the name, address and contact numbers of your overseas accommodation providers or hosts. It is a good idea to have the details of your accommodations written in the language of the country you are travelling to, if English is not the main language.
- If your accommodation is already organised as part of the program, a good tip is to find out more about the nature of the accommodation (i.e., will you be sharing a room, what kind of facilities are there and how far away is the accommodation from other locations you will need to visit?).
- Obtain maps of your intended destination. Print out a map of the arrival terminal at the airport you will be flying to. This can assist you in navigating your way around the terminal upon arrival.
- Confirm your flights and accommodation arrangements at least 72 hours in advance.

## Managing Money

- Once you are aware of your destination and the activities you will be undertaking while on your trip, plan a travel budget accordingly.
- Be aware of the ways and methods of paying for goods and services at your host destination. In some countries, it is a good idea to carry some local currency on you to pay for things, rather than using cheques or electronic modes of payment.
- Look up the different ways you will be able to access and use your own funds while overseas (e.g., Cirrus or Maestro services linked to your bank cards, cash passports, traveller's cheques or pre-loaded debit/credit cards).
- If you are intending to use travellers' cheques, write down the numbers of the cheques and keep this list separate from your cheques, in case the cheques are lost or stolen.

- Look up currency exchange rates so you have an idea of what kind of foreign currency conversion values you can expect while on your trip.
- Make sure you have local currency in different denominations.
- As a precaution, it is a good idea to nominate a person from Australia to send you emergency money, if necessary. Look up the services that can do this for you.
- If you receive Centrelink benefits, you can still receive these benefits for up to 13 weeks of travel. Check with Centrelink if you have any questions about your payments or about reporting obligations.

## USEFUL LINKS

### General Information for Travellers (Australia)

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Training (DEEWR) – Study Overseas: Student Information Gateway  
[www.studyoverseas.gov.au](http://www.studyoverseas.gov.au)

### Visa and Passports

- Visa and Passport advice  
<http://dfat.gov.au/travel/visas/Pages/visas-for-australians-travelling-overseas.aspx>
- Australian Passport Office (for applications, renewals and other passport queries)  
<https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/index.aspx>
- Australian Passport Information Service (for questions relating to Australian passports)  
<https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/BrochuresWebPages/BrochureAustraliaPassportInformationService.aspx>
- Information for Australian dual citizens  
<http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/tips/dual-nationals.html>
- Resident Return Visas  
<http://www.immi.gov.au/Visas/Pages/155-157.aspx>

### Flights & Accommodation

- STA Travel  
[www.statravel.com.au](http://www.statravel.com.au)
- Youth Hostels Membership Card (provides discounts at YHA hostels in Australia and around the world)

- <https://www.yha.com.au/membership/>
- Student Flights accommodation search  
<http://www.studentflights.com.au/accommodation>
- STA travel hotel and hostel search  
<http://www.statravel.com.au/hotels.htm>
- Youth Hostels International  
<https://www.hihostels.com/>

## Baggage and Customs

- Airline luggage restrictions for flights in/out of Australia  
<http://travelsecure.infrastructure.gov.au/>
- Know Before You Go (guide for travellers regarding customs)  
<http://www.customs.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/GuideforTravellers-KBYGFinalAccessible.pdf>
- Duty free rules  
<http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page4352.asp>
- Unaccompanied Baggage services  
<http://www.worldbaggage.com.au/>  
<http://www.packsend.com.au/airline-baggage-services>  
<http://www.jetta.com.au/>
- Australian Customs regulations and services  
[www.customs.gov.au/individuals/default.asp](http://www.customs.gov.au/individuals/default.asp)

## Driving Overseas

- International drivers' licence information  
[www.mynrma.com.au/travel/international-driving-permit.htm](http://www.mynrma.com.au/travel/international-driving-permit.htm)

## Money Management

- Travel Budget templates  
<http://www.budgetworksheets.org/worksheet/vacation-travel>  
<http://www.liferemotely.com/travel-advice/budget-and-money/35-sample-travel-budget>
- Exchange rate monitor  
<http://www.oanda.com/>
- Universal Currency Converter

- <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>
- Cash passports
  - <https://www.cashpassport.com.au/>
  - <http://auspost.com.au/travel-id/cash-passport.html>
  - <https://www.travelex.com.au/prepaid-cards/multi-currency-cash-passport>
- Sending emergency money to travellers
  - [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2063458\\_send-cash-emergency.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2063458_send-cash-emergency.html)
  - <http://auspost.com.au/money-insurance/overseas-money-transfer.html>
  - <http://global.moneygram.com/>
- Centrelink
  - [http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/international-services?utm\\_id=7](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/international-services?utm_id=7)

## Useful Resources from the Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide

The complete OMBP Guide for Australian Universities can be found here:

[www.studyoverseas.gov.au/sites/studyoverseas/resources/Documents/ombpgau/OMBPG.pdf](http://www.studyoverseas.gov.au/sites/studyoverseas/resources/Documents/ombpgau/OMBPG.pdf)

Browse the OMBP Guide 'Section M', 'Section P' and 'Section Q' for:

- Exchange application forms and checklists
- Pre-departure guide examples and topics
- Advice for students
- Program handbooks
- Talent release form templates
- Example letter of student achievement

## Templates

- Student Contact Sheet and the 'Things to Bring' checklist
  - <http://interculturallearningasia.edu.au/resources/generic-preparation-guide-for-staff-students-going-on-short-term-study-tours-to-asia/>



The *Generic Preparation Guide for Staff & Students Going on Short-Term Study Tours to Asia* is brought to you by the *Ready for Take-Off: Preparing students for intercultural learning in Asia project*. To find out more about the project, you can:

- Visit the project website <http://interculturallearningasia.edu.au/>
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