

Sunshine Coast TAFE

Queensland Australia

...the smart choice

Congratulations on taking the decision to study at Sunshine Coast TAFE.

This pre-departure information is provided to assist you in preparing to travel to Australia and to provide you with some of the information you will need prior to leaving home and embarking on your Australian study experience.

It introduces you to the location and the study experience and provides information about what to organise before you leave.



International students at Nambour campus

You will find that there a number of references throughout this document to websites that provide detailed information about some situations you are likely to encounter in Australia and on the Sunshine Coast.



Sport and Recreation Mooloolaba triathlon contestants with their national flags

We look forward to meeting you at Orientation and invite you to contact the International Student Office at any time should you have any questions or concerns. Or just drop in to say "g'day"

Phone
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Email
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BEFORE DEPARTURE

1. Obtain your passport & visa
2. Book your flight
3. Arrange for airport pickup and Homestay (if required)
4. Check Australian quarantine & customs regulations
5. Have a dental and optical check up



TRAVEL CHECKLIST

Your Student Visa

As soon as you receive your Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) from Sunshine Coast TAFE you should apply to the Australian diplomatic post in your home country for a student visa. Students from many countries will be able to complete the visa process on-line. Further information and the necessary forms are available on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website www.immi.gov.au/students. Your placement agent (if you are using one) should be able to assist you with this process.

Once your visa has been granted you should make your travel arrangements as soon as possible. Brisbane International Airport (BNE) is the closest international airport to the Sunshine Coast. If you are arriving at another airport in Australia you may want to consider a domestic connection to Maroochydore (our local airport). You should note that flights to Australia can be very heavily booked and you should make your reservations well in advance. You should plan to arrive on the Sunshine Coast a few days before the international orientation date. This will give you time to acclimatise, find accommodation, open a bank account and settle in.

PACKING YOUR BAGS

Clothing

The Sunshine Coast has only two seasons and is a casual holiday location. Day time temperatures average 29 Celsius in the warmer months of January and February while in July and August we enjoy warm days averaging 18 Celsius but quite cool evenings.

You should therefore include items such as: Jeans /pants /shorts, sweatshirts/jumpers, swimming/beach gear, t shirts, tops/blouses and shoes including walking/sports shoes etc. We recommend lightweight clothing for summer along with sunglasses, hat and sunscreen.

Personal Items

These should include: toiletries, alarm clock, umbrella, sporting gear, sewing kit. If you wear glasses or contact lenses you should also bring a spare pair with you as well as your prescription. If you require regular medication, you should also bring these prescriptions with you.

Electrical Items

General electrical items in Australia are expensive so it is wise to bring them with you. The standard voltage is 240 volts and electrical plugs have 3 flat pins (one earth) so you may need to bring an adaptor. 110 volt appliances such as hairdryers and electric shavers cannot be used without a transformer.

Hand Luggage

- Carry your passport, student visa, ticket, money, important documents and valuables in your hand luggage.
- Pack any items that need to be declared at Customs separately.
- Have a spare copy of the front pages of your passport & visa.
- Carry some essential clothing in the event that your luggage does not arrive at the same time as you.
- All luggage should be locked and tagged with your name, address & contact phone numbers.
- If you are bringing prescription drugs with you, it is a good idea to also carry a note from your doctor explaining what the drugs are and what they are for, in case you are asked.

DO NOT CARRY ANY SHARP OBJECTS OR LIQUIDS IN YOUR CARRY-ON LUGGAGE AND CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL AIRLINE OR TRAVEL AGENCY ABOUT YOUR CABIN BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES

Quarantine & Customs Regulations

The Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service helps protect Australia from exotic pests and diseases, while the Australian Customs Service intercepts illegal goods, such as drugs and weapons. AQIS and Customs work together at airports, seaports and mail centres to detect and deter the unlawful movement of goods into Australia.

Australia is an island nation with a valuable and mainly disease-free agricultural industry. There are strict regulations about what you can bring in to the country. During your flight you will receive a customs declaration form.

Items you must declare include:

- all foods, including dried or preserved
- anything made of wood
- plant products, eg. spices, herbs, flowers, seeds
- anything made from animals

An officer will ask to see your declaration form. If you have nothing to declare you will be directed to the green route. However, even if you have nothing to declare you may be selected for a random baggage check. This is routine and should not concern you.

All travellers entering Australia, who do not declare quarantine risk items, face an on-the-spot fine. This could happen as a result of failing to declare something as small as a piece of fruit!

If you have goods to declare you will be directed to the red route. Here you will be asked questions and may be required to open your luggage. The goods you have declared will be examined to determine if they pose a risk. For more information consult: www.aqis.gov.au or www.customs.gov.au

ON ARRIVAL

If you have not arranged an airport pickup / transfer service, you should contact the airport information desk in the arrivals terminal. There are many options available to you: coach, train etc, but by far the easiest is an airport shuttle service. For more information and pre-booking, search the internet for Sunshine Coast shuttle services from Brisbane International Airport. Shuttle services also service the local Maroochydore Airport, if you are arriving on the Sunshine Coast on a domestic flight.

Sunshine Coast TAFE

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Caloundra – the southern gateway to the Sunshine Coast

Being met at Brisbane International Airport

If you prefer, you can book our airport pickup service provided by a local company, Connect Relocate. They will book you a seat on a shuttle service and you will be met by a representative and then driven to your Sunshine Coast accommodation. Look for this representative to your left as you leave customs and enter the arrivals hall. Do not leave the airport until you have located the representative. For more information see www.connectrelocate.com.au.

Temporary Accommodation – Backpackers

Backpacker accommodation is a good temporary option while you look for more permanent accommodation. The weekly rate for backpacker accommodation is generally cheaper than paying each day. You will probably require at least 2-3 weeks of temporary accommodation while you organise more permanent accommodation (see page 8). A quick internet search will provide information about several backpacker hostels located on the Sunshine Coast.

IN AUSTRALIA

Preparing your Finances

Most students need between AUD \$12-16,000 (excluding tuition fee) each year to cover living expenses whilst studying in Australia. Do not depend on part time work to pay your expenses. Part-time work may sometimes be difficult to find on the Sunshine Coast as many jobs are short term or seasonal.

Be prepared that your expenses for the first month or so may be quite high. In addition to your ongoing weekly costs, you will need sufficient funds to cover the cost of establishing yourself. These expenses may include “bond money” for rental accommodation, fees for connecting electricity and phone/internet, money for household items, stationery & books etc.

Foreign Currency Exchange

You can exchange money or travellers cheques at Brisbane Airport. However, banks generally offer better rates

Banking

To open a bank account within the first week of arrival you only need to show your passport. After this time you will need additional documents such as student number, credit cards, birth certificate, overseas drivers licence etc. International students should be exempt from account keeping charges. Check with your proposed bank to ensure that this is the case.

Banking hours are usually Monday -Thursday 9:30am - 4:00pm and Fridays 9:30am - 5:00pm. All banks are closed on Sundays and Public Holidays. Some bank branches may be open on Saturdays. Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) can be accessed 24 hours a day. EFTPOS facilities are widely available.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

If you are studying in Australia on a student visa, OSHC is compulsory. It helps pay for medical and hospital care you may need while in Australia. OSHC will pay for most prescription drugs and emergency medical and ambulance treatment but does not cover optical or dental treatment. Our preferred OSHC provider is Medibank Private. For more information go to www.medibank.com.au.

(Separate arrangements apply for students from Sweden and Norway – for more information please see your education agent or the International Student Office)

Schools

The Sunshine Coast is well serviced with primary and secondary schools, both public (government) and private. If you have school-aged dependants accompanying you to Australia you are required to pay full fee for their education, whichever type of school they attend. Information about public (government) school locations and fees etc are available from Education Queensland International, www.education.qld.gov.au/marketing/eqi

Religion

In Australia freedom of religion is a fundamental right. All religious faiths are tolerated and you will find that there are facilities for most religious observances on the Sunshine Coast or in Brisbane

Getting Around

Transport available on the Sunshine Coast includes local buses, trains, taxis and coaches. In the immediate coastal area the local bus service and taxis are most convenient. Trains and coaches connect the Sunshine Coast to all other regional /urban areas. Public transport information is available from www.translink.com.au. Students with a valid driver's licence will find the Sunshine Coast an easy place to navigate. A very helpful site for obtaining maps, routes etc is www.whereis.com.au

Driving

If you intend to drive in Australia, you must bring your current driver's licence with an English translation if required. Ensure that your licence will remain current for the period of your intended stay in Australia. As long as it is current you can drive on it here. You do not need to have an International Licence.

Many students choose to buy a car for the period of their studies. A suitable vehicle can be purchased through the local paper or registered motor vehicle dealers from around AUD

\$3,000 –\$5,000. This can be re-sold on departure. Many cars pass from one student to another!

Food and Shopping

Australia prides itself on having a multicultural community and there is a wide variety of food and restaurants available. Meals vary in price from AUD \$10 to AUD \$30. Supermarkets are open 7 days a week with a closing time of 9pm weekdays, earlier on weekends.

Other stores, such as clothing stores are generally open 7 days a week from 9.00am – 5.00pm on Monday to Saturday and 10:30am – 4:00pm on Sunday.

Telephone

The cost of a local call is 40 cents from a public phone and 15-22 cents from home phones, for unlimited time. Public phones accept coins or prepaid phone cards. Phone cards can be purchased in post offices, newsagents, gift shops or online and can be used for local, interstate and international calls. Long distance, interstate and international calls are charged at various rates per minute. For international calls, dial 0011, then country code, area code and phone number. For local and interstate telephone directory enquiries, phone 12455. For overseas operator enquiries, phone 1225. The telephone interpreter service is a free service, operating 24 hours a day, offering assistance in communication in over 100 languages, phone 131450.

Postal Services

Postal services in Australia are provided by Australia Post. The cost of sending a standard letter within Australia is 55 cents. Other services offered at the post office include payment of some utility bills, fax service and stationery sales. Office hours are from 9:00am-5:00pm.

Weather

Queensland is commonly known as the 'Sunshine State' and the Sunshine Coast region enjoys very comfortable temperatures. During summer, this region has highs of 28-30 degrees Celsius and lows of about 20 degrees. The summer months from December to February experience the highest rainfall and thunderstorms are common. Water temperature during summer is approximately 25 degrees Celsius.

Winter weather during June to August is generally regarded as very pleasant with low rainfall, lots of sunshine with mild daytime temperatures and cool nights. Daytime temperatures range from 18 - 20 degrees Celsius and night time temperatures can be as low as 9 degrees. Water temperature during winter is approximately 19 degrees.



Lifeguard tower Mooloolaba Beach

Time Zones

Australia has 3 time zones: Eastern - Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria & Tasmania, Central - South Australia and Northern Territory, which is ½ hour behind Eastern Standard Time (EST) and Western - Western Australia, which is 2 hours behind EST.

All states *except* Queensland change to daylight saving time (by moving their clocks forward one hour) from October to March. During the daylight saving period Queensland time is one hour behind the other Eastern states, ½ hour behind South Australia, 1 hour ahead of WA.

Australia is 2-6 hours ahead of most of Asia, 7-10 hours ahead of Europe and 12-18 hours ahead of North and South America.

ACCOMMODATION

Deciding where to live is one of the most important decisions that you will make. A number of options can be considered:-

- Sharing a house or unit
- Renting your own unit / apartment / house
- Homestay / Full Board

Share Accommodation

This type of accommodation is often advertised as “room for rent” or “unit / house to share” or “share house vacancy”. Students often advertise share house vacancies on the student notice boards. Advertisements can also be found in the Classifieds section of local newspaper, the Sunshine Coast Daily www.thedaily.com.au. The largest accommodation section is found in the Saturday edition.

In a share house or apartment/unit, each person usually has their own bedroom and shares the bathroom, kitchen and living areas. Costs depend on the number of people sharing, however the weekly rental is usually \$100 – 150 per week per person, depending on the area

in which the house is located. This accommodation may be available with either furnished or unfurnished options. Other shared expenses often include food, electricity and telephone.

If you plan to live with others it is important for you to consider and discuss issues and responsibilities such as rent, house rules, smoking/non smoking, cleaning/cooking roster, pets, shared expenses, rental bond, agreement on period of notice required for a person moving out.



Rental Accommodation

Rather than move into a household that is already established, you may prefer to obtain a property lease for a house or unit through a real estate agent. Average weekly rents range from AUD \$230 – \$400, depending on the type and location of the property. You will also be required to pay a Bond (usually the equivalent of 4 weeks rent; refunded in full when you move out, if the property is kept in good order). Other establishment expenses include electricity and phone connection. Rental properties are available furnished or unfurnished. All rental properties have a stove/oven. Finding rental accommodation is often a time consuming process, as you will need to inspect the premises, put in lease applications and understand legal documents. Leases are generally of 6 or 12 months duration.

Just visiting

There are a number of internet sites that you can browse which will give you a good indication of availability and cost, such as www.realestate.com.au or www.domain.com.au or the Classifieds section in the Sunshine Coast Daily newspaper, www.thedaily.com.au. If you prefer to organize a suitable rental property before you arrive, or need help in finding accommodation after you arrive, local Sunshine Coast company, Connect Relocate can assist you www.connectrelocate.com.au (fees apply).

Inspecting a Rental Property

When inspecting a property it is a good idea to look at three or more places before making a decision. To visit the properties you will need to make an appointment with the real estate agent or contact person. Be prepared to pay up to AUD \$50 as a key deposit (returned to you after you return the key) to inspect a property. Consider the following points; Terms of lease, Location, Security, Condition of property, Stove/Oven, Power points/Lights, Furniture, Washing Machine & Garden.

Applying for and Signing a Property Lease

You will need to fill out an application form for the property and provide references for your application. You may need to apply for several leases before you are successful. The staff of the International Student Office can act as a reference point for you.

A property lease is a binding legal document. It sets out the length of your lease and terms of your tenancy. If you leave the property before the end of the lease you may lose your bond. It is important that you understand what is written in the lease.

Homestay / Full Board

Homestay is a good choice if you need to improve your English and / or want to live in an Australian home. You will have your own furnished bedroom and share the other living spaces with your Homestay family. Weekly rates range from AUD \$180 - \$220 with some meals included. Often Homestay families do not live within walking distance of SCIT campuses so you will need to travel by public transport. Homestay for Sunshine Coast TAFE students is organised through a local company Connect Relocate (fees apply). Homestay is usually arranged well before you arrive in Australia. www.connectrelocate.com.au.

STUDYING AT SUNSHINE COAST TAFE

Visa Conditions

It is essential that you have the correct visa to enable you to study at the Institute. If you have travelled to Australia on a working holiday visa or tourist visa, you must re-apply for your student visa as soon as you have your CoE

The Institute is obliged to monitor international student progress. Students who fail to pass at least 50% of subjects each semester, must improve their performance in the following semester to avoid being reported to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) Tutorial support is available to assist those who need help to improve their performance.

Student visa conditions require that you study in a 'full time' capacity (minimum 20 hours a week). Student visa holders are permitted undertake paid work for up to 20 hours per week during semester and unlimited hours during holidays. Dependants are limited to working up to 20 hours per week for the duration of the visa.

International Student Orientation Day

Orientation is a great opportunity for you to meet with other new students, become familiar with the Institute and learn about the Sunshine Coast. You will be advised of Orientation Day details by email.

Course Orientation Day

You are also required to attend a course orientation specific to your chosen program of study. This is an opportunity for your teachers to discuss course requirements such as timetables, assessment, textbooks, equipment, etc. You will be given details about your course orientation at the International Student Orientation Day (if not before).



The beautiful Nambour campus grounds

A New Learning Environment

The Australian academic environment may be different from the academic environment in your country. TAFE students are from a wide age range with mature age students in many courses. You will meet people from all sorts of backgrounds.

For most courses, the academic year is divided into 2 semesters each containing on average 20 teaching weeks. Most courses commence in January/February each year with some courses having a mid year intake in July. A few courses are delivered in trimesters.

Students generally attend 2-3 classes each day. Each class can last from one to three hours. Classes in some courses, particularly Hospitality & Cookery may sometimes be held in the evening. Depending upon your course / timetable you may be at college between 3 and 5 days per week, Monday to Friday.

Some courses include an off-campus vocational placement component, enabling students to gain valuable experience in a workplace.

TAFE is a competency based, skill learning system and differs from school and university. Students are deemed to be either 'competent' or 'not yet competent' and will receive either a **J** or **M** mark respectively. Teachers generally comment on a student's work only if they would like to point out areas required for improvement or of excellence. There is no numerical marking system (eg. 6 out of 10), for final results. Some courses include performance level assessment enabling students to attain Distinction, Credit etc in certain subjects.

Students are expected to participate in class. At different times you may be required to answer questions, put forward your own ideas in a general discussion, or give a presentation in class. Students are expected to be self motivated and the problem-solving approach is the usual method of teaching and learning. The relationship between students and staff is generally informal and relaxed. You should always ask for assistance if you need help.

Counselling Service

This service is available to students who need advice and would like to talk about personal concerns, study issues, relationship difficulties, family problems etc. Qualified counsellors provide confidential appointments at all campuses.

Library Services

Library services, including computer and internet access are available at all campuses. Fines apply for the late return or loss of books. Outstanding library fines can delay the issuing of qualifications / certificates.

ABOUT AUSTRALIA

Australia is the world's largest island and the smallest continent. It is about the same size as mainland USA and has a population of 19 million. It has varied and vast landscapes, from beaches to snow covered mountains, deserts to rainforests, with unique animals and a fantastic climate.

Experiencing Local Activities / Attractions

The Sunshine Coast is one of Australia's most popular tourist destinations and there is a wide array of attractions to suit almost every taste. The Coast has some of the best beaches in the world to be enjoyed throughout the year. Queensland's climate is suitable for a whole range of outdoor activities from swimming, surfing and water skiing to camping, rock climbing and bush walking. If you don't know how to swim, surf, ski or climb, it is easy to find lessons and courses so that you can learn.



You will soon discover that Australians really are very passionate about their sport, both as spectators and participants. From fishing to golf and from soccer to Australian Rules football or cricket, you will easily find an outlet to match your interests and to make new friends in the local community.

Many artists and craftspeople choose to live on the Sunshine Coast and their work is displayed in art and craft galleries throughout the region. Drama and

choral groups also welcome new members.

The Sunshine Coast has a vibrant café culture, and the weather is ideal for outdoor café dining, from breakfasts right through to late night suppers. For those who love shopping or just browsing, there are outdoor markets, trendy boutiques and picturesque hinterland towns to explore. www.maroochytourism.com www.tourismnoosa.com.au www.sunshinecoast.org

BEHAVIOUR AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Australians are generous, open and friendly and you will find a warm welcome. Australia is a harmonious multicultural society and does not have a class system. It may take you some time to adjust to the Australian way of life, so be prepared for some differences.



Greetings

Formal greetings are “good morning”, “good afternoon”. Informal greetings are “hello”, “hi”.

Normally men will shake hands, and women will shake hands with men, particularly in formal situations. Generally people in Australia address each other by their first name. “Mate” is a common term used by both men & women when addressing another person. Australians like to believe that they live in a classless society.

Queuing Up

People form queues when waiting for a bank teller, to get a train or bus, or buying tickets. It is considered impolite to push ahead of someone in a queue.

Punctuality

Punctuality is important. Australians think it rude not to keep an appointment and may not reschedule or give another invitation if you do not attend. It is expected that you notify the person if you will not be able to keep the appointment or if you will be late.

Smoking

Smoking is becoming less socially acceptable and is against the law in many places, such as inside buildings, restaurants, near doorways, on some patrolled beaches etc. It is good manners to ask before lighting up a cigarette. Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE has designated smoking areas on each campus.

Personal Space

People, in general, prefer a personal space around them (on bus, walking in street). This is not a sign of discrimination or indication of unfriendliness.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory or expected and then is only done when you feel the service has been particularly good.

There are Australian laws against:

- Swearing, spitting or urinating in a public place;
- Drinking alcohol or being drunk and/or under the influence of drugs in a public place eg. on the street or in a public park
- Sexual harassment is not acceptable behaviour in Australia
- Bribery is not part of Australian culture
- Loud noise (eg music, machinery) is not permitted before 7:00am or after 10:00pm.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Goods & Services Tax (GST)

Australia has a Good & Services Tax (GST).
Under this tax most goods and services are subject to a 10% tax.

Weights & Measures

Australia operates on the metric system

Voltage

Electric voltage for domestic use is AC 240 volts, 50 cycle.
The standard plug is 3 pronged.

Telephone Directories

The Yellow Pages telephone directory is a guide to business contact details.

www.yellowpages.com.au

The White Pages is an alphabetical listing of residential phone numbers.

www.whitepages.com.au

The local White Pages and Yellow Pages are also readily available as telephone directory books in each Australian region / city

Public Holidays in Queensland and Sunshine Coast January – December 2011

- * New Years Day January 3 2011
- Australia Day January 26 2011
- Good Friday 22 April 2011
- Easter Saturday 23 Apr 2011
- Easter Monday 25 April 2011
- Anzac Day 25 April 2011
- Labour Day 02 May 2011
- Queen's Birthday 13 June 2011
- * Christmas Day 26 December 2011
- Boxing Day 27 December 2011
- * as these days fall on weekends the public holiday will occur on the dates shown.



Marina Mooloolaba Wharf

International Student Office

Our friendly and helpful International Student Office staff are available on the Mooloolaba and Nambour campuses most days between 9:00am – 4:00pm.

Phone 5459 3206 or email sctinternational@det.qld.gov.au

Sunshine Coast TAFEi is not permitted to provide immigration advice to students. It is advisable to consult a MARA registered migration agent / lawyer for advice about applying for permanent residency, if this is what you intend to do after course completion.

LOCATION MAP - SUNSHINE COAST



The Sunshine Coast is approximately 100 kms north of Brisbane, Queensland's capital city.

World heritage-listed Fraser Island, and Hervey Bay, famous for whale watching, are situated north of Noosa.

AGENCIES YOU MAY NEED TO CONTACT

Australian Taxation Office (ATO)

Students intending to work in Australia will require a tax file number
Street address: 280 Adelaide Street, Brisbane QLD
Postal address: GPO Box 9990 Brisbane QLD 4001 Australia
Phone: 132 861 (within Australia) Web: www.ato.gov.au

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

This authority looks after visas and immigration issues
Street address: 313 Adelaide Street, Brisbane QLD
Postal address: PO Box 9981, Brisbane QLD 4001 Australia
Phone: 131 881 (within Australia) Web: www.immi.gov.au

Education Queensland International (EQI)

For information about government schools for school-aged dependants
Street address: Level 18 Education House, 30 Mary Street, Brisbane QLD
Postal address: PO Box 15050, City East QLD 4002 Australia
Phone: +61-(0)7-3224-6958 Web: www.education.qld.gov.au/marketing/eqi

Connect Relocate

Our preferred provider for accommodation and relocation services
Phone: 0448 744 993 (within Australia) +61 448 744 993 (International)
Email: info@connectrelocate.com.au Web: www.connectrelocate.com.au

Embassies

For details on how to contact your embassy, consult the White Pages telephone directory.



Fashion graduates from Sweden

This publication is an information document for prospective students of SCIT. It is intended as a guide only and every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document was correct at the time of publication. SCIT reserves the right to alter any program, fee, admission requirement, administrative or other arrangement without prior notice.