



M O N A S H A B R O A D

PRE-DEPARTURE ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMS

This information is for all Monash University students undertaking short term study programs overseas. These include:

- Study tours and field trips
- Study tours to the Monash study centres at Prato and London
- In-country language programs
- Internships, clinical and practical placements
- Summer schools

Students undertaking longer term study programs overseas, including exchanges and intercampus exchanges, should contact the Monash Abroad office to obtain information relevant to them.

All students undertaking international study programs, including those who are not eligible for a travel grant, must read this pre-departure advice, complete a Monash Abroad application form, including the acknowledgment form at the end, and return both pages of the form to their course coordinator before their departure from Australia.

Monash University relies on the information in this form to contact students during any emergency which may arise while they are overseas. It must be complete, accurate and up to date. In particular, dates of departure from Australia and return must be provided. If your travel dates have not yet been finalised you must provide estimated dates and let Monash Abroad know when they have been confirmed.

Travel Grants

Monash University encourages all students to include a period of overseas study in their course and provides travel grants to assist students with their airfares.

Travel grants for short term international study programs will be paid to eligible students at the following rates:

International Study Programs Up To 12 Credit Points	
Up to 4 weeks (not including travel time)	\$500
More than 4 weeks (not including travel time)	\$1,000
International Study Programs 18 or More Credit Points (over no more than 13 weeks)	\$2,500

To be eligible for a Monash Abroad travel grant for a short term international study program, students must satisfy the following criteria:

- The student has an active enrolment in a Monash undergraduate or postgraduate coursework degree program at any campus in Australia, Malaysia or South Africa.
- The student's overseas study plan has been approved by the faculty (or both faculties for a double degree) so that the student will receive academic recognition towards the Monash degree. Academic recognition may be in the form of credit earned, assessment requirement fulfilled, completion of a professional or clinical requirement or similar.
- The student has applied for a country other than the country of citizenship. (This does not apply to students who are dual citizens if they are also citizens or permanent residents of Australia.)

The following factors will also be taken into account when considering applications.

- Monash Abroad travel grants are not normally provided to students who are receiving other Monash University scholarships or financial assistance for the overseas study.
- Monash students enrolled at the off-shore campuses in Malaysia and South Africa are eligible for Monash Abroad grants for short term international study programs provided they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.
- Monash students who are enrolled for part time or off-campus learning courses are eligible for Monash Abroad grants for short term international study programs provided they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.
- Students who do two consecutive overseas programs (eg short term program at Monash Prato followed by a semester length exchange) will receive only one Monash Abroad grant at the higher of the applicable rates. If you are doing this please contact Monash Abroad to confirm the grant you will receive.
- Retrospective applications made after students have commenced their overseas study will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

Travel grants can only be paid into an Australian bank account and are normally paid about 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the international program.

Students who withdraw from an overseas program before or during the program, or who fail to complete it, must notify the course coordinator and Monash Abroad immediately and may be required to repay the travel grant. Students who fail to repay the grant may have an encumbrance placed on their Monash enrolment.

Academic Responsibilities

- You must be enrolled in a Monash unit in order to obtain credit for participation in a Monash Abroad Program. You should therefore complete your faculty enrolment procedures prior to your departure.
- You must attend all pre-departure meetings and briefings as advised by the course coordinator.
- Monash Abroad must be informed of any variation to your program. If you withdraw from the program you must inform the Monash Abroad Office and your program coordinator.

Travel Arrangements

Your course coordinator will advise you which travel arrangements will be made for you as part of the overseas study program and which you have to make yourself.

- If you make your own travel arrangements you must make sure you reach the required destination in time for the commencement of the program, as advised by your course coordinator.
- You must ensure that you have a passport which will be valid for the duration of your stay overseas. Some countries will require that you have **additional six months** validity from the date of intended departure from that country. It can take up to 4 weeks to obtain an Australian passport so apply early.
- You are responsible for obtaining any visas required. Your course coordinator or Monash Abroad may be able to provide general advice but you are responsible for ascertaining whether you need visas and for obtaining them before your departure.

Travel Insurance

- It is a condition of your participation in a Monash Abroad program, including short term international study programs, that you arrange adequate comprehensive insurance for the period of your program.
- Your insurance should cover medical and hospital expenses, cancellation fees, repatriation costs and baggage loss or damage.
- The Monash University policy is not sufficient because it covers only medical and hospital expenses for accidents (not illness) up to a maximum of \$A50,000.
- Suitable policies can be purchased from any travel agent. Some credit cards and health insurance funds provide travel insurance but you should check carefully that the level of cover is adequate for all your needs.
- Monash Abroad can provide general advice about travel insurance.

Contact Details

- Your course coordinator and Monash Abroad must be kept informed of your current address in Australia, both prior to and during the period of the program.
- You must also provide the name, telephone numbers and email for a family member in Australia who can be contacted if an emergency arises while you are overseas.
- You must inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know, about your participation in the Monash Aboard program and tell them how they can contact you overseas.
- You must check your Monash email regularly while overseas, at least twice per week and daily if any kind of emergency arises overseas or at home in Australia.

Visas

In order to enter some foreign countries, you may be required to apply for a visa from an embassy or consulate of that foreign country before you depart. Visas are official permits that authorise entry to a specific country for a stated purpose and time. Be sure to check this with the relevant embassy or consulate in Australia well in advance.

International Students

International students can participate in Monash University international programs but the conditions of your student visa require you to notify DIMIA if you are going to be absent from Australia for more than 28 days.

Monash Abroad will supply a letter for DIMIA on request. You will need to take the letter and your passport, to any DIMIA office. We suggest you call ahead in case you need to make an appointment and take your ticket and information about your overseas course.

You should go to the DIMIA office as far in advance of your departure as possible and preferably at least 28 days before you depart Australia.

DIMIA will record the details in their computer system so that you do not encounter difficulties when you re-enter Australia but you should carry with you the original of the letter we have provided so that you can show it to the Customs officer on your return to Australia if required.

Health

Before your departure, contact the University Health Service on campus for advice about what immunizations are recommended in the foreign countries you plan to visit. You should make an appointment for a consultation at least three months before your departure from Australia.

If you have specific medical needs, you should check with your doctor or the University Health Service whether the treatment or medication you need is available in the host country. Travel insurance will not cover pre-existing medical conditions. If you are travelling to rural, underdeveloped areas, you should be aware of personal health risks such as susceptibility to infection or medications that should be avoided. It is also advisable to have a dental check-up before your departure and bring extra eyeglasses, contact lenses and a copy of your prescription. We also recommend that you pack a first aid kit. Suggested items are bandages, disinfectant, oral thermometer, painkillers, sunscreen, insect repellent, water purification tablets and/or medications for diarrhoea, allergy and nasal congestion.

If you have a medical problem such as diabetes, take with you a health record that includes your doctor's name and address and a summary of your medical history. Also bring an adequate supply of medications and a list of the medications' generic names in case you need a prescription filled. It is strongly recommended that you inform the course coordinator of any existing health programs. ***In an emergency situation it is crucial that this information is available.***

Other Personal Responsibilities

- While you are studying abroad you are a representative of Monash University, your behaviour, accomplishments and performance will reflect not only on you, but on Monash as well. What you do may positively or negatively affect future Monash Abroad programs.
- You must read carefully all the materials issued by your course coordinator, especially those that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions in host countries.

- You need to be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff accompanying you.
- You will be expected to behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- With the help of your course coordinator, you need to make time to become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.

Safety & Security

We all wish for and expect our students to return safely and in good health from their experiences abroad. While no level of preparation can prevent all problems, taking proper precautions will help avert a number of potentially troubling and dangerous situations.

- Check whether your Australian mobile phone will work in the countries you will be visiting. If it will, make sure you have global roaming so that you can make and receive calls overseas.
- While participating in the Monash program stay with the group at all times. If you head off on your own during free time, make sure your course coordinator or other members of the group know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Take several copies of your passport, airlines ticket, and travel and health insurance documents before you depart and keep a note of your bank account, credit card numbers, and the phone numbers of where to call to cancel these accounts. You should also leave copies of these documents at home with a parent or guardian. In the event of a robbery or the loss of your wallet, these details will be invaluable. Report any theft/loss to the police and your travel insurer. Passport losses must be also be reported to your nearest embassy or consulate.
- Make a note of local emergency telephone numbers, eg. police, fire, ambulance, your consulate or embassy.
- When travelling, do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time. Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone. Make sure no-one puts anything in your luggage.
- Be aware of others gaining easy access to your bag/backpack, particularly when on crowded public transport. Be sure to close bags and carry them in front of you. Never carry your wallet or purse in your back pocket. Pickpockets tend to operate in large crowds, and particularly around tourist areas.
- Do not openly show any display of wealth. Do not count or show your money in public, be cautious when using automatic teller machines at night. Avoid problems by keeping away from unsafe areas. Ask for local advice about where it is safe to go at night and where it is not.
- If someone threatens you with force in an attempt to rob you, give them what they want. Be cooperative, do exactly what they tell you to do. Don't fight or resist, as you risk personal injury. Report the incident to police immediately.
- Hitchhiking is not recommended.
- Do not participate in any political activities in the countries you visit. Avoid angry groups or demonstrations. If you come across any situation that seems potentially hazardous, leave the area immediately.
- Be respectful of the dress code of your host country, you may need to alter your dress to accommodate local custom, especially in places of worship.
- Be cautious when you meet new people, do not always assume that their intentions are as they appear. Be careful about disclosing your personal details, such as address or phone numbers, or information about other students or program activities to strangers.
- As at home, road accidents pose the greatest threat to your safety while travelling. Exercise care, driving customs and pedestrian safety will vary from country to country.

Australian and Other Government Travel Advice

The Australian and many other governments issue travel advisories to help travellers decide whether it is safe to visit countries where there are security and safety concerns.

- You are advised to regularly check the travel advisories for the country you are going to which are issued for Australian citizens by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (www.smarttraveller.gov.au/).
- If DFAT issues a level 5 "do not travel" advisory for the country you are in, the University's approval for your overseas study program will be cancelled and arrangements will be made for you to depart the country immediately at your own expense. The Monash Abroad office will help you make the necessary arrangements but you should make sure your travel insurance covers the costs.

- Non-Australian citizens should consult the websites of their home country foreign affair departments to check for warnings specific to their nationals. The US State Department website should also be consulted (http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html).

Emergencies

Emergencies often arise while travelling. They can include illness, accidents, natural disasters, political instability or terrorism. It is essential that all students on a Monash sponsored overseas study programs be prepared for any emergency.

The following check-list will assist you in developing an emergency response plan for use in the event that you find yourself in a threatening or critical situation. You should develop a plan before leaving Australia.

For Immediate Action

- Register with the Australian embassy in your host county to advise them of your whereabouts and contact details. This can be done online at www.smartraveller.gov.au. Non-Australian citizens should register with the Embassy or diplomatic representative of their home county.
- Monitor developments through embassy, media and web resources.
- Keep up your local contact networks, stay in touch with your host, student friends or trusted locals, and hotel/hostel staff.
- Maintain your university contact in Australia, either with Monash Abroad or your course coordinator.
- Maintain family contacts at home, providing reassurance and advising them of your contact details and plans.
- Monitor your email regularly - remember to check your Monash and private email accounts. Monash Abroad will deliver any advice via email.
- Be cautious, be prepared.

Planning an Emergency Response

- Evaluate your options - stay put; move to safer location, or return to Australia as soon as possible.
- Make sure you know the emergency telephone number for the country you are in and program it into your mobile (if that works where you are).
- Make sure you know the location of the nearest doctor and hospital.
- Make such decisions in collaboration with your course coordinator, the on-site coordinator at your host institution, Monash Abroad and the embassy in your host country.
- Communicate your plans and movements to your family, your course coordinator and Monash Abroad.

Monash University Support

- While all Monash students are responsible for their own safety overseas, the Monash Abroad office monitors international developments which may affect the safety and welfare of Monash students overseas, particularly changes in DFAT travel advice, and will advise students of any relevant information.
- Students may seek advice from the Monash Abroad office at any time before or during their overseas program, using the emergency contact details below.
- In the event of an emergency such as a terrorist incident or natural disaster in a country where Monash students are currently participating in a Monash program, or planning to do so, the Monash Abroad office will ensure that all students are contacted and will provide advice about what action students should take.
- Monash advises that at all times students should follow Australian DFAT travel advice and/or advice issued by local diplomatic representatives.
- If DFAT issues advice not to travel to any country (ie a level 5 DFAT travel advice) Monash University may cancel the participation of any student who is currently undertaking a Monash program in that country or is planning to do so. In that event the University expects you to depart the country immediately at your own expense, with the assistance of the Monash Abroad office.
- In an emergency the Monash Abroad Office can assist you in establishing embassy contact, maintaining contact with host university networks, communication with family and in coordinating travel arrangements.

Contact Details

- In an emergency Monash Abroad can be contacted on the following numbers

Australian office hours	+61 3 9905 1551
24 hours	+61 416 293 492
Email	monash.abroad@adm.monsh.edu.au

- Use the Monash website for contact details of course coordinators
- Australian Embassy details can be found at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website: www.dfat.gov.au/geo/index.html. You need to select your host country, and look under representation for the hyperlink that will take you to your local embassy site. Australian diplomatic representatives can assist with emergency passports/travel documents; medical or legal support; limited financial assistance and help during emergencies. Keep the diplomatic representative informed of any unusual or unexpected travel you may undertake.
- Non-Australian citizens should check with the website of the Foreign Affairs departments of their home country to ascertain contact details in their host country.
- Latest travel advice
 - Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade travel advice: www.smartraveller.gov.au
 - US State Department Travel Warnings: www.travel.state.gov
 - US Embassy site: www.travel.state.gov
 - UK Overseas Missions: www.fco.gov.uk
- Media
 - Australian Broadcasting Corporation: www.abc.net.au
 - Reuters: www.reuters.com/

Embassies and Consulates of Non-Australian Citizens

It is usual for most countries to offer similar services to their nationals. If you are a Non-Australian citizen you should ascertain the level of representation and assistance that may be available to you during your stay in your host country.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

This ISIC is a card for full time students abroad, that can verify your student status and may qualify you for discounts on travel, tours, accommodation and reduced or free admission to museums, theatres and cultural attractions. Applications for ISIC cards are available at STA Travel

International Youth Hostel Association passes

If you are planning to backpack, discounted accommodation is offered by International Youth Hostels in participating countries. International Youth Hostel passes are available at STA Travel.

Sexuality - Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Issues

Australian attitudes to the Gay, Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) community have progressed considerably in the last two decades. This may not be the case in your host country. Attitudes differ considerably towards same-sex and non traditional relationships even within a particular country or region.

If this is relevant you may want to take a look at the varying attitudes in your host community of the GLBT community and non-heterosexual relationships. There is a list server to connect to gay, lesbian and bisexual News through e-mail. To subscribe: SUB GCL-NEWS[your full name] TO LISTSERVER@BROWNV.M.BROWN.EDU

Women travelling alone

A woman travelling on her own may encounter more difficulties than a man by himself. Some of the best methods of avoiding hassle are to fit in and try to understand the role of the sexes in the culture in which you are travelling. Flexibility means observing how the host country's women dress and behave and follow their example. What may be appropriate or friendly behaviour in Australia may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture. Try not to take offence at whistles and other gestures of appreciation, regardless of whether they are compliments, invitations, or insults. Realise these gestures are as much a part of the culture as its food, history, and language, but if your intuition tells you a situation is

dangerous, then act as if it is. Be extra careful with giving your trust. This applies generally, but is especially important when travelling alone.

Avoid being out alone at night in unfamiliar territory -- on the street, in parks, on public transport. If for example, at night you suddenly find yourself alone in a train, move to another carriage where other people are sitting.

Relations between men and women and the position of genders within society differ significantly around the world. Not all countries value the concept of equality and these views may challenge your own perceptions of gender. Be prepared for varying opinions on gender issues.