



Adelaide Abroad

Pre-departure Guide



A world of possibilities!

You are about to embark on what we hope will be the adventure of your lifetime. Good planning and managing expectations are important in these final stages of your exchange preparation.

The pre-departure Information Session, combined with the material in this guide, will give you a clear overview of the issues to consider leading up to your departure on exchange.

You should also use the materials provided by your host university, and their website to finalise your preparations.

Good preparation is the key to a successful exchange.

We wish you safe travels and a fantastic time!
Bon Voyage

Adelaide Abroad Team
International Office

Words of the wise...

"It is often said that what you put in is what you get out, and studying abroad is no exception! My advice; join clubs, try random new things, eat any food at least once, keep a journal, go camping, make amazing friends, both international and local students, and have an awesome time! By the end of your exchange you will have a second home and new eyes to appreciate afresh your first home."

Belinda Sunstrom, Bachelor of Arts/International Studies, Hokkaido University, Japan.

"You've created for yourself an opportunity to explore a new place, to meet new people, to become a local over the other side of the world. Take every opportunity, and challenge yourself. An exchange is what you make of it."

Jade Cooper. Bachelor of International Studies/Law & Dip.Lang (Japanese), Kansai University, Japan

"Going on exchange was part of my Commerce degree, but it also completely changed my perspective on the world. I now have friends I can visit across the globe and am in a better position to conduct business in Asia!"

Katherine Liew, Bachelor of Commerce (International Business), Singapore Management University, Singapore

"When you go abroad, whether you realise it in yourself or not, you will develop respect and appreciation for the different perspectives that that country holds on your chosen field of study. Seize the opportunity because it will give you an enormous edge over your peers back home".

Courtney Edwards, Bachelor of International Studies/Law, University of British Columbia, Canada

"Try everything. When you return home, your best stories will involve trekking off into the Gobi or eating fried seahorses - experiences that take you a little out of your comfort zone. To maximise your enjoyment, share your experiences with newfound friends."

Daniel Pallaras, Bachelor of Laws/Commerce, Tsinghua University, China

"Study abroad is a CV winner with a massive touch of life experience. Living, studying and even working in Italy opened my eyes to a new perspective of the world. From fashion to personal interests, politics to academia the differences were stark and the similarities reassuring, an experience which no amount of study can teach."

James Krumrey-Quinn, Bachelor of Law/Com(Corp. Fin.) & Dip.Lang(Ital), LUISS, Ital

PASSPORT and VISAS

Please ensure that you register with smartraveller:
<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

Make sure the passport/s you intend to use are current and will not expire while you are on exchange, nor shortly after. They should remain valid for at least six months after your travels.

Check your travel responsibilities if you have dual citizenship, particularly if you intend to travel with more than one passport.
<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/dualnat.html>

Exchange students usually require a student visa or authorisation for entry to your host country. Do not assume that you can convert to other categories of visa eg: tourist status into student status. Check consulates and embassies for visa application procedures before you leave Australia.

Make sure you are aware of work limitations on your student visa, if these apply.

If you intend to travel beyond your host country, it is advisable that you find out about visa requirements for the other countries before you leave Australia. There may be restrictions or time delays if you apply for visas in a country other than your home country.

International students must report to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) with a status letter at least 28 days before leaving Australia to go on exchange. This letter should be requested from the Adelaide Abroad team if you have already done so.

Permanent residents must check if their residency status will be affected if they leave Australia. They may need a Resident Return Visa (RRV).

If in doubt about any aspect of the process and your status, please discuss your situation with the International Student Centre.

FLIGHTS and ARRIVAL

You may receive instructions from your host university to arrive on a certain day, and you should attempt to fit in with this as far as possible. Otherwise, you should plan to arrive a couple of days before the orientation period at the start of the semester, in order to settle in.

N.B. Your host university will process your application and send the documents necessary for your visa application with this timetable in mind. If you plan to leave Australia earlier than this, they need to know well in advance. There are, however, no

guarantees that your paperwork will arrive in time for you to organise a visa early.

You should make your flight booking as soon as possible after hearing of your acceptance from the host university. Flights fill quickly at certain times of the year (particularly around Christmas and New Year). Students who wish to start making their flight arrangements prior to official confirmation of their acceptance should do so only if this does not involve making any financial commitment until after confirmation is received.

INSURANCE

Health Insurance

Due to the high cost of health care in most countries of the world, it is **essential** that some form of health insurance covers you while you are away.

Before you purchase health insurance in Australia, check if there are requirements outlined in your host university's acceptance package stating that you must purchase their compulsory health insurance. Some foreign governments and universities will not accept alternative health insurance plans other than those they specify. Investigate this thoroughly before purchasing.

If you wish to apply for a waiver of the overseas health insurance, because you already have health insurance from an Australian provider, make sure that the Australian insurance is recognised by the host university.

If you purchase health insurance in Australia to cover you whilst overseas, ensure you are clear about your coverage. Does it include medical repatriation, access to medical specialists, etc.? Be clear about claim procedures - do you pay up-front, what percentage, are there co-payments, etc.?

If you already have private health insurance in Australia and your host university insists that you

purchase their policy, ask your Australian insurer if they can suspend your cover for six months/one year without penalty.

If you purchase health insurance from your host university, check that it will cover you for travel during vacation periods and/or outside the host country.

Reciprocal health care arrangements exist between Australia and some other countries including Finland, Italy, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. These give you access to the health care systems of these countries in respect of medical conditions which arise during your stay. It is important that you advise medical staff in the country you are visiting that you wish to be treated under the Reciprocal Health Care Agreement with Australia.

Reciprocal health care agreements do not replace the need for private insurance. Also, you may still be required to purchase health insurance from your host university as some reciprocal arrangements may not cover you as a student residing in-country or they may only provide the most basic of medical care.

Keep in mind that reciprocal health care agreements do not cover your travel between Australia and your host country. You will need travel insurance for this.

More information is available about Services for Travellers at <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/migrants/travelling/index.jsp>. For more information, you can call Medicare during office hours within Australia on tel: 132 011 or from overseas on tel: +61 2 6124 6333.

Email: medicare@medicareaustralia.gov.au.

University of Adelaide Travel Insurance

The University of Adelaide covers, free of charge, all students and staff travelling overseas on 'University business'. This includes students participating in exchange programmes. There are, however, conditions of which you should be aware.

- The period of overseas travel cannot exceed 180 days – this means that students studying overseas for two semesters are not covered. You can purchase the extra insurance cover.
- Cover will only be provided while you are studying at the host university. Non-study travel will be

covered for a maximum of four weeks. Should you be planning to travel before and after your exchange, you may need to purchase additional insurance.

Please note that health insurance and travel insurance is not the same thing.

Enquiries may be directed to Tom Pontt, Finance and Insurance Officer.

thomas.pontt@adelaide.edu.au

Combined Travel/Health Insurance Schemes

If you ineligible or decide not to use the University of Adelaide Travel Insurance you are strongly advised to purchase travel insurance (this is usually packaged as a travel/health insurance scheme) that will last at least until your arrival at your host university. This will usually cover you for loss of luggage, cancellation of flights and any medical situations that may arise during your journey, among other complications.

Determine clearly if the policy meets your anticipated travel needs and covers all destinations. Note that you may **not** be able to purchase travel insurance once you have left Australia. Make sure you purchase enough travel insurance to cover your exchange period and a little extra for travel and extension of stay.

For more information on purchasing the right travel insurance, please refer to the Australian Securities Investments Commission at <http://www.asic.gov.au/fido/fido.nsf/byheadline/Travel+insurance%3A+what+you%27re+covered+for?openDocument>

Further information from the Insurance Council of Australia is available at 83035804

http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/travel_insurance_consumer_guide.pdf

http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/travel_insurance.html

HEALTH and SAFETY ISSUES

Inoculations

For information on prevalent diseases and inoculations, you should consult your doctor or travel clinic. Alternatively, the University's Student Health Service (University Health, Ground Floor, Horace Lamb Building, North Tce. Campus) can offer advice on suitable immunisations and preventative measures.

Further information on travel well-being can be found at <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/travelwell.html>

Some universities require proof that you have received immunisations against diseases such as polio, tetanus and rubella, and also require a chest x-ray (for tuberculosis). You will sometimes not be allowed to move into your housing without this proof. The relevant universities will provide information as part of their application procedure.

The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website is a useful source of information on countries and regions generally: <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/>

It is important that you read the information relevant to your host country as well as any other countries you intend to visit.

Prescriptions

If you regularly need to take medication, make sure you take an adequate supply with you, and a copy of the prescription in case you need to obtain supplies while you are away. If the medication you take with you is not an over-the-counter drug, make sure that you carry it with you in your hand luggage, in its original packaging, accompanied by a letter from your

doctor authorising your use of the drug. Include both the chemical and commercial names of any medication.

Further health related information at: <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/migrants/travelling/index.jsp>.

General well being

You may find that you suffer from some minor health problems soon after your arrival at your destination. Travellers arriving in a new place are usually more vulnerable to upset stomachs, colds and fatigue as their bodies acclimatise to new surroundings (and germs!).

If symptoms persist, however, see a doctor.

Overall Safety

It is essential that you take the advice of your host university's international student advisers about local safety issues. This will include advice about venues or places that are dangerous or unsafe as well as local tips on social customs and other issues that could lead to problems. Do not hesitate to contact an adviser if you are in any doubt about a situation. No matter what the social customs of a destination it is NEVER acceptable for you to feel threatened or unsafe and you should always seek appropriate assistance. It is also important to be "street-wise". A very common reaction to arriving in a new place is to feel protected and safe – but be aware that every town and city in the world has some level of crime and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

ACCOMMODATION

If university accommodation is available, make sure you know important details such as the cost and location of the accommodation, whether you are sharing a room with one or more students, such as in a dormitory, and whether you can check in on the day that you arrive. Your host university will send you information about how to apply for such accommodation. As there is often great demand for student housing at overseas universities, please make

sure that you return the necessary forms by the due date to secure a place.

Although we recommend that students, particularly those studying for a single semester, live in University accommodation, organising your own housing on arrival is another option. Most host universities have an Accommodation Service or can provide listings of off-campus accommodation to help you find

something suitable. Local newspapers and the internet may also provide the same information.

If you have chosen to organise accommodation on arrival, make sure to book a few nights of temporary accommodation in a youth hostel or some other form of accommodation for when you arrive, before you

leave Australia. Travel guides or the internet often provide listings of budget accommodation.

Once you have finalised your permanent accommodation, and if at any stage you change your accommodation, please inform the Adelaide Abroad Office of your permanent address.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Commonwealth Supported Students

As you will remain a full-time student of the University of Adelaide while you are away, you will continue to be charged student contribution for this time. The invoice for your student contribution is generated at the time of enrolment.

If you wish to pay upfront, please warn family or friends who are looking after your affairs that this invoice will need to be paid by the Census date, otherwise your fees will be deferred to the Australian Taxation Office (providing your TFN has been quoted).

International Students

If you are an international student you will need to remain enrolled at the University of Adelaide when studying at the host institution. This means that you will continue to pay your international student fees while you are away.

Student Service Fees

Please note: Some of our partner institutions do require exchange students to pay a Student Service Fee. Details should be in your welcome pack.

OS-HELP

Students studying overseas may be eligible for OS-HELP assistance.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.goingtouni.gov.au/Main/Quickfind/StudyOverseas/OSHELP.htm>

Student Loans Fund

Students can borrow up to \$500 unsecured and up to \$2,000 with guarantor from the University's Student Loans Fund.

There is no interest nor is there any fee BUT the loans must be paid back before graduation.

Applications are available from the Education and Welfare Officers at the Student Care Office (Ground Floor of the Lady Symon Building).

Small Grants - Walter and Dorothy Duncan Trust

Students with above-average academic results participating with Adelaide Abroad and who can show financial hardship (especially where Adelaide Abroad requires them to take out loans or otherwise go into debt) may also access small grants through the Walter and Dorothy Duncan Trust.

These grants are not substantial (usually around \$500) but as non-returnable income are often useful to supplement other income sources without adding to a students' financial burden.

Applications are available from the Education and Welfare Officers at the Student Care Office (Ground Floor of the Lady Symon building).

AUSTUDY/YOUTH ALLOWANCE

If you currently receive Austudy/Youth Allowance you may be entitled to continue to receive it while on exchange. If you are receiving the 'at home' Youth Allowance rate, you may even be eligible for an increased allowance for the duration of your time overseas.

Austudy/Youth Allowance requires a letter from the University of Adelaide, which confirms that you have permission to study overseas on exchange, and that you will remain enrolled full-time at the University during your absence. To request a letter, please send an email to: adelaideabroad@adelaide.edu.au

Be aware of the regulations that govern Austudy/Youth Allowance. If you work while you are away, you may exceed the qualifying limit and could find yourself having to pay back some money.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact your local Centrelink Office.

For enquiries regarding your payments whilst overseas, contact Centrelink International Services as follows:

Internet:

<http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/overseas/temporary.htm>.

Telephone: numbers by country:

http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/contact_us/phone.htm#overseas

Email: international.services@centrelink.gov.au

ACADEMIC MATTERS

ENROLMENT

How to enrol at the University of Adelaide

All students going overseas on exchange programs **must** remain enrolled as full-time students at the University of Adelaide for the duration of their exchange.

Exchange students enrol in a course or courses called "Exchange....". Some Faculties have "Exchange" courses with varying values and you should consult your School or Faculty about which courses should be used.

If you are going to be away for two semesters over two years eg Semester 2 2010 and Semester I 2011 you will need to enrol online in your Exchange course for the second semester. You will not be able to do this before you leave Adelaide and it is **essential that this be done while you are overseas**.

STUDY PLAN APPROVAL

It is of the utmost importance that you receive formal faculty/school approval (in writing) for your proposed study **before you leave**. It is *your* responsibility to work out your program of study with your faculty/school adviser to ensure that you receive full credit towards your University of Adelaide degree for the courses that you complete overseas.

Your faculty/school requires a list of the courses that you intend to take overseas as well as a copy of the syllabus descriptions from the relevant university handbook. Use the Study Plan form available on the Adelaide Abroad website. An assessment will be made of the content and level of the courses, and you will be advised which courses are suitable to be counted towards your degree.

CHANGES TO ENROLMENT

If, on arrival at your host university, you take courses for which you have not received prior faculty/school approval, please contact your faculty/school adviser as soon as possible to check that the new course/s are acceptable. Do not just assume that 'they will be alright'. You may find yourself short on credit when you return, and this may increase the time it takes to obtain your degree.

The appropriate contact persons are as follows:

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Vicki Johnson, Administrative Officer

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 7042

Fax: (61 8) 8303 4382

Email: vicki.johnson@adelaide.edu.au

Faculty of Sciences

Sue Ng, Senior Student Services Officer

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 6485

Fax: (61 8) 8303 4386

Email: sue.ng@adelaide.edu.au

School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Clement Low, Student Advisor

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 5877

Fax: (61 8) 8303 4377

Email: clement.low@adelaide.edu.au

Faculty of Professions

(Business/Economics/Education) (Undergraduate)

Bianca Prendergast, Student Exchange Officer

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 4518

Fax: (61 8) 8303 4382

Email: bianca.prendergast@adelaide.edu.au

School of Business (Postgraduate)

Kate Pollitt, Student Advisor & Program Manager

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 3853

FAX: (61 8) 8303 4521

Email: kate.pollitt@adelaide.edu.au

Faculty of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences

Lachlan Coleman, Student Services Administrative Assistant

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 5435

Fax: (61 8) 8303 6492

Email: Lachlan.coleman@adelaide.edu.au

Law School

Cheryl Chapman, Administration Officer

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 4020

Fax: (61 8) 8303 4344

Email: cheryl.chapman@adelaide.edu.au

Faculty of Health Sciences

Andrew Daddow, Student Systems Support Officer

Tel.: (61 8) 8303 6469

Fax: (61 8) 8303 3788

Email: andrew.daddow@adelaide.edu.au

Elder Conservatorium of Music

Stephen Whittington, Assistant Director (International)
Tel.: (61 8) 8303 3689
Fax: (61 8) 8303 4414
Email: stephen.whittington@adelaide.edu.au

ENROLMENT AT HOST UNIVERSITY

You must enrol in whatever constitutes a normal full-time load at the exchange university. This will then normally transfer to the University of Adelaide as a full-time load for credit purposes (i.e. 12 Adelaide units per semester).

A full-time load at the host university does not mean that you will be taking the same number of courses as you would be taking here – in fact, in some institutions you may have to take a large number of courses (8 or 9) to equal 12 units of status here. It also does not mean that you will be taking the same number of courses as other exchange students at your host university.

Overall, the workload should be the same, even if you have more contact hours. If you find that you are not coping with the workload and would like to reduce it slightly, please remember that you will need to consult both the host university and your own School or Faculty and that there will be deadlines associated with each semester for any changes to enrolment.

Students sometimes negotiate with their School or Faculty to take slightly less than a standard full-time load – this may translate to 9 Adelaide units.

FUTURE OBLIGATIONS

Let Adelaide Abroad know that you're back. Send in your photos of your time away and write us a small description of your experience on exchange. We will use these on our website, where you can share your

TRANSCRIPT

Your host university will send us an official transcript of your results at the end of your exchange program. A copy of this will be sent to your faculty/school for transfer of credit and then put onto your student file. The original copy will be sent to you.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Once we have received a transcript from your host university, we will forward a copy to your faculty/school adviser. The faculty/school will then formally award status for the appropriate amount of units towards your Adelaide degree.

The individual courses which you take overseas, and the results which you receive for them, will **NOT** appear on your University of Adelaide transcript. You will receive a grade of "NFE" (No Formal Exam) on your Adelaide transcript for the international exchange in which you are enrolled, along with a comment indicating that status has been awarded for studies elsewhere.

advice and help to enthuse others about having a wonderful experience abroad. Come and volunteer at information sessions, the exchange fair and other events held by Adelaide Abroad.

GENERAL HINTS AND TIPS

TRAVEL TIPS

Packing

Pack light! You are only usually allowed 20 kilograms on an international flight for your checked-in luggage, so use it wisely. Remember, you can buy most things overseas, especially toiletries. Excess baggage charges can be very expensive (sometimes hundreds of dollars, payable on the spot). Check with your airline to see what luggage restrictions they have. Some are more lenient than others.

Pack your most personal and valuable items in your carry-on bag to minimise loss if your baggage is misplaced

Hand luggage suggestions: passport, plane tickets, travellers' cheques, cash, credit cards, glasses/contact lenses, *medications, prescriptions, *some toiletries, camera, batteries, cables, iPod/mp3 player, pens, paper, snacks for the plane and a good book. If you can fit it in, a change of clothes in case your luggage goes missing.

* There are strict rules for taking liquids, aerosols and gels on flights into and out of Australia for carryon baggage.

(<http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport/security/aviation/LAG/index.aspx>)

Mark your bags to make them distinctive and easy to spot on airport luggage carousels.

Other things you might need:

- Two day overnight pack
- Converter/Adapter: Universal travel adapters may be needed for electronic items. They are available from travel stores and at the airport.
- Rail Passes (cheaper when bought in Australia)
- Journal
- Laptop: pack the receipt with you just in case you need proof of purchase at customs.
- Money belt (for carrying tickets passport, money etc)
- Photos of family and friends
- Travel guides (Rough Guides, Lonely Planet etc)
- Traveller's alarm clock
- Youth Hostel Membership & ISIC Card
- Spare passport photos for additional immigration documentation, student cards etc.
- Some destinations will be extremely cold in winter. Be prepared to purchase a warm, waterproof, heavy weight coat and appropriate boots in your host country.

Keep a photocopy of your plane tickets, passport, visas, credit cards and travellers' cheques in a separate place to the originals in case of theft/loss. Also leave a copy at home with a relative or friend.

Customs:

You may take any personal goods out of Australia without having to pay duty/tax on these goods when you return (other than items that you purchased duty/tax free in Australia before your trip and which are in excess of your duty free concession).

Goods purchased duty or tax free in Australia must be taken with you and inspected at the departure point. You may also need to declare these on your return.

More information about customs matters can be located on the Australian Customs Service website at <http://www.customs.gov.au> under the section for 'Travellers'. You can also email: information@customs.gov.au or call a Customs Information Centre on 1300 363 263 from anywhere in Australia or +61 2 6275 6666 from outside Australia.

Entering countries overseas – Be sure you are informed about customs requirements and quarantine restrictions that may apply in the country you are travelling to, especially with expensive items and medication. Bring relevant documentation and receipts to assist with clearing customs, if necessary.

Finances:

A credit card is extremely useful for travelling to cover unexpected costs.

Take enough cash in local currency with you to cover at least your initial expenses – transport from the airport, meals, temporary accommodation, phone calls, tips. There are usually money-changing facilities at airports, however they typically do not give the best exchange rate.

You may wish to set up a VISA account through your bank in Australia. You can draw on this account through ATMs overseas to obtain local currency and will be charged the exchange rate on the day of the withdrawal. There are now various schemes available so check with your bank.

Please be aware that there are often substantial withdrawal fees for international transactions. Also, certain types of cards are unable to be used in different countries. We advise you to both check with your bank that the card you plan to carry with you will work, and also with a reliable travel guide or website for general information on ATMs in your host country. It is also worth considering applying for a second credit/debit card, connected to the same bank account, but with a different card number, in case something happens to your card while you are away. Many banks provide these free of charge.

If someone will be transferring money from Australia into your bank account overseas, remember that this may take some days to clear and will not be immediately accessible.

Alternatively, you may wish to take the bulk of your money in the form of travellers' cheques. As soon as you can, open a bank account and deposit your money. Get an ATM card so that you can draw on your money easily when travelling around the country. Also make sure that you keep a list of cheque numbers separate from the cheques.

Please note that typical services available in Australia may not be used frequently in your host country. Some countries will not use EFTPOS as widely as Australia does. Some may use cheques more frequently. Some may primarily rely on cash. Some automatic teller machines (ATMs) may have restricted hours of operation.

BUDGET, BUDGET, BUDGET! You must exercise some financial planning especially noting the fluctuating exchange rates. Check out the latest exchange rates using the OANDA Classic 164 Currency Converter (<http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>). You can also obtain cheat sheets at this website to assist with exchange rate conversions.

Driving a vehicle overseas:

If you intend to drive whilst overseas you can apply for an International Driving Permit (IDP) the Royal Automobile Association (RAA) before you leave. When applying for the permit you will need your current drivers licence and a passport-sized photo of yourself. Expect the permit to cost around \$25. Please be aware that these permits are only valid for 12 months. More information can be found at: <http://www.raa.com.au/page.asp?TerID=571>

Discount offers:

Check with your travel agent before departure about special deals for travelling around the country/continent to which you are going. Some places offer cheap domestic air and/or rail passes that can only be purchased in Australia, before departure.

You may like to obtain an International Student Identity Card (ISIC- <http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm>), which will give you discounts on admission to various museums etc. in countries around the world. Membership if ISIC also provides emergency evacuation and repatriation of remains in the event of serious injury or death. Applications can be obtained from STA Travel Level 4, Union House on campus.

SETTLING IN

It is important for you to attend any orientation sessions that are offered to new international students – at some institutions it is mandatory.

If you have already travelled overseas for an extended period, you will be aware that even in places where English is spoken and the culture appears superficially to be very similar to our own, there are still significant differences in the way people behave and react in certain situations. What is “normal” here in Australia is often not “normal” at all in other cultures. It does take a while to adjust to these differences, and you will experience feelings ranging from being on a great “high”, seeing everything as a huge adventure and absorbing your new surroundings and experiences with great enthusiasm, to feelings of great frustration at the fact that things are perhaps not done in the way that you are accustomed, or that you find it hard to make yourself understood in the local language.

Do not worry! Such feelings are common among people adjusting to life in a new environment or culture, and you are certainly not alone in having them. Experts have plotted the periods of highs and low on a graph and come up with what they call the “W-curve”. You should imagine that you are starting your exchange program at the top of the left stroke of the “W”. On arrival at your host university you are in high spirits and things are still new, exciting and challenging. After a period of time, however, the novelty wears off, and a sense of frustration, isolation or anxiety may set in, as you try to cope with the differences you encounter in daily life. Even such a simple thing as going to the bank can present different stresses than a trip to the bank in Australia (perhaps there are endless security checks, or a pile of forms to complete, all of which require a special stamp), and what earlier may have seemed to you to be a challenging, amusing experience, can now seem to be just incredibly irritating. You are now at the bottom of the first trough of the “W”, and some depression may set in.

Hang in there - you will get over it. After this period of “cultural irritation”, you will find yourself gradually adjusting to your surroundings and feeling a lot more comfortable in them. The trip to the bank becomes just another part of normal everyday living and you are thoroughly enjoying yourself. You are now at the middle peak of the “W”. But then you have to leave! Your semester or year abroad is coming to an end, and you have to leave all of your newly-found friends, and a place in which you have become accustomed to living. Some depression sets in (the bottom of the second trough of the “W”), but this is soon replaced by the excitement of arriving home and catching up with friends again (the top of the right stroke of the “W”).

If you feel that things are not going well, please don't hesitate to contact the International Student Centre at the host university. If you haven't been able to find out who to contact, then email us!! We will be able to put you in touch with the right person.

Of course, not everyone experiences the same extremes of highs and lows – some may not be as affected as others, but it is good to be aware that these feelings may occur, and they are normal. To assist with your adjustment, try not to adopt a critical attitude to your host culture, comparing the ways in which things are done there with the way things are done at home. Instead, expect that things will not be the same as at home, and that certain things are “normal” for that culture.

You may be surprised to know that your cultural adjustment may not end with your return to Australia. A phenomenon known as “reverse culture shock” can

occur, in which you have to re-adjust to living in your own country, and perhaps to living with your parents again after a period of independent living. Once again, this is quite normal, and hopefully it should not take too long to settle back into home life again.

http://www.culturebridge.com/articles/culture_shock.html

http://www.worldwide.edu/planning_guide/Culture_Re-entry_Shock/index.html

Here are some websites with further information about culture shock:

Pre-departure checklist

CHECK-LIST: BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Travel arrangements

- Passport valid for at least 6 months after your return date
- Student visa (if necessary)
- Flight booking
- Travel/health insurance
- Immunisations (if necessary)
- Finances: local currency/travellers cheques/credit card
- International Driver's Licence (optional)
- ISIC card (optional)
- Register at smartraveller

University of Adelaide

- Study plan approval for course of study
- Austudy/Youth Allowance letter (if required)
- Enrolment in "Exchange XXXX"
- Arrangements for payment of HECS (if necessary) or International tuition fees

Host University

- Take contact details for host university
- Return any necessary forms (e.g. arrival/accommodation forms)

OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Postcards, emails, faxes are welcome!

Adelaide Abroad

International Office
The University of Adelaide
Adelaide SA 5005

Tel: (61 8) 8303 4379

Fax: (61 8) 8303 3988

Email: adelaideabroad@adelaide.edu.au

| Paula Ritchie | Sandra Findlay | Sarah Oakey |
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