

Life at VU transcript

Congratulations on choosing Victoria University, VU prides itself in providing the very best in International Student Support and were here to make your transition as smooth as possible. In this presentation we will be showing you ways that you can better prepare for your stay in Melbourne and some of the services available to you.

We will also be hearing from students who currently live and study in Melbourne and listen as they offer some great first-hand experience and valuable advice.

This presentation has been made especially for you and it is worth taking the time to watch as it may answer many questions that you have. It will also help in making your time at VU and in Melbourne a wonderful experience that you will never forget. So welcome to Victoria University a new school of thought - your journey starts here.

Preparing to leave

When you're packing and getting ready to leave, make sure you have your valid passport, student visa, and any other relevant paperwork readily available.

You will be asked to show this on arrival to Australia.

It's a good idea to bring a couple of copies of your passport and visa details with you.

You can leave one with your family back home, and you can bring one with you and keep one in your baggage.

Besides that, don't forget to bring any prescriptions for your glasses, any prescriptions for medical conditions or anything about medical stuff that you need to know about.

Melbourne as they say has four seasons a day, so you need to have a range of clothing you need to bring with you because the weather varies a lot. So you don't want to pack too much because excess baggage can be very expensive and the extra stuff you want you can buy in Melbourne everywhere. You've got heaps of places.

By now you're probably really excited, but here's a few last minute tips:

- Check and confirm your flights.
- Remember to arrive at least a week before orientation.
- Have some Australian currency on hand.
- Make sure you've booked somewhere to stay, we'll be talking more about that later on.
- And if you need to be picked up from the airport on arrival just contact international student support at least 10 days before you depart.
- Bring something that you love from home and get some souvenirs you might give to your friends and stuff you know.
- Some sort of memory you want to keep and remember home with.

Customs and quarantine

There are certain items you can and can't bring into Australia.

Food, plant and animal material can introduce pests and harmful diseases into the country. And this matter is taken very seriously. They need to declare all their food, everything they are carrying including what they have bought on the plane as well. That includes fresh, preserved, cooked and uncooked. It is very important for quarantine to know what they have declared and what they are bringing over into the country. It's very important if they have traditional medicines, or even medicines, any sort of medicines, they must declare it on their incoming passenger card, again that's for quarantine.

If a student is bringing any more than \$10,000 dollars in Australian equivalent, they need to declare it on their IPC, they'll come down to customs we'll fill out some forms and it is important that they declare it, if they don't they can end up for some quite serious trouble.

Anything over \$900, every passenger gets a \$900 concession when they're coming into the country. Now they need to declare that on question number 3 of the card. Any laptops, mobile phones, anything that goes over the \$900 limit, they must declare on their incoming passenger card.

After having your passport checked, a customs or quarantine officer may ask to inspect your baggage by using x-rays, sniffer dogs or by doing a manual search.

This is common, but if you declare your goods you'll be alright. The main thing to remember is to always speak to your customs or quarantine officer if there's anything you are unsure of. They are always here to help.

So far so good.
Yes for sure.

So how did you find all that?
Very easy, I made sure I did everything on my pre departure checklist from the VU readout.

Ok, so what's next?
Well I go to the meeting point for my airport reception.
Great.
I arranged that before I left too.

Open a bank account

So, now that you're here. Setting up a bank account is important and should be one of the first things you do when you arrive. To open an account you will need to take your passport and one or two other forms of identification. A credit card or international drivers license will do.

And you'll be able to change any money that you bring with you, into Australian currency at most major banks. You can also use currency exchange offices located around the city.

This may be your first time out of home, so budgeting is very important.

It's a good idea to actually set aside a specific amount per week, and keep a record of all your expenses and that way you can budget, like, let's say about \$200 - \$250 a week and you keep something aside for your rent. Now at the same time you keep a buffer aside just in case for an emergency. That's a great way to go about it.

Your bank will have more details about any fees or charges. Most banks also offer a student account, so it's worth asking about this when you set yours up.

Finding a place to live

Victoria University does have furnished student accommodation options available in both a temporary and permanent basis. You can access information on housing from the students page on the VU website and follow the links to student housing.

This is just one of your options. You've also got home stay, shared housing, private rentals, furnished apartments or hostels.

Another option is to look at the notice boards around your local uni campus and besides which you can also look at the classified section of your local newspaper. VU also has an online house hunting friend service, if you're looking for a friend to live with, and it's a great option if you don't know anyone for the first time when you come into the country.

It's important to arrive with enough time to find permanent accommodation before your studies begin.

Public transport

One of the great aspects of Melbourne is the public transport system of trains, trams and buses. You'll be able to get to and from campus using all or any of these options.

If you need to travel between city campuses, it's as simple as catching a tram. One ticket can get you on all services, and you can get tickets from newsagents, train stations, on trams and buses or anywhere you see this Metlink logo. The only rule is to make sure you validate your ticket when you travel. It's easy. For more information on public transport, visit the Metlink web page. There's also a free evening shuttle bus service, available from some campuses to get you to and from public transport facilities.

Local facilities

When you're not studying, Melbourne is a great place to get out and explore. There is always something to do and see.

Melbourne's a great city for that, in fact Melbourne is known for its great coffee culture and cafe's, so you can go out there, read a book, catch up with some friends, meet with some people. Besides that you've got great parks, and markets around the city, go out there do a bit of shopping.

Check out the Melbourne visitors centre in Federation Square when you have some spare time. It has heaps of information on things to do and places to see.

Melbourne has heaps of shopping centres, heaps of lanes. Swanston St and Bourke St especially they've got, they are just crowded with lots of branded stuff so you shouldn't have a problem with that, there is a lot of variety available.

Along with all these events and local attractions, Melbourne is also a great city for food. With all the different markets, cafes and restaurants around town, along with the variety of international foods available, you should never feel too far from home.

Meats are up a kilo thirteen dollar. Compare the price, compare the quality. And when you have a free hour or more, why not jump aboard the free city circle tram or shuttle bus an experience the city.

Orientation

So, you would have been here for about a week. So hopefully you've had a good and enjoyed it, but now it's time to get into the swing of uni life. Out of everything you do the most important thing, is to attend the orientation at Victoria University. Because here, you'll be given all the information you need to get started in your new life as a VU student.

Information on everything from student services, safety, transport, faculty briefing right through to meeting your fellow students and signing up for social and sporting groups is available. You will be enrolled during this week so your attendance is a must. The enrolment process will be explained during your orientation session. Check out the International Student Support section at the VU website to find out when your orientation week is.

Exploring the campus

Take some time before you classes begin to look around and familiarise yourself with your campus. Locate the library, your classrooms, student services and how close the campus is located to public transport. This will help you arrive to your classes on time and just make your day a little easier.

The campus computer lab is for students to check their student email and to access internet, especially myVU. myVU is where all enrolment details is on and once you have enrolled it's very important that you check all your details online to make sure that everything is correct right before the census date.

And when you need a quiet place to work and study, the library offers a warm and friendly environment.

And when you have earned a break, check to see what Fitness Centres and sporting facilities your campus offers. Here you'll find plenty of ways to keep fit and have fun.

Speaking of fun, joining one of the many social groups or clubs that the university has to offer, can be one of the best places to start.

Get involved with the clubs and societies, there's heaps of religious clubs nationality based clubs, interest based clubs like adventure clubs and stuff like that and help to keep occupied and involved and you network with a lot of new people, you make lots of friends.

Keeping safe

Keeping safe is a top priority at Victoria University and we encourage you to also take it seriously.

Now as with any large city, there are risks, but if you stay aware of your surroundings and take a few of these basic tips you'll have nothing to worry about.

If at any stage you do feel unsafe, the police in Melbourne are always very approachable, they are here to help.

We all wear a blue uniform either a jumper or patrol jacket, we all have the insignia of our rank on our shoulders and we all have the badge, Victoria Police, for Victoria, the state we are in here.

It's always important to ask for their Police identification, most police officers even when they are in uniform carry their police identification or badge on them. It looks very similar to this.

We attend all public events whether it be a festival in the city in the street somewhere or huge games at like the MCG, football matches, cricket matches. We are there to maintain public order, so we are always walking around there. Well overall Melbourne is an extremely safe city. It's a large city, and the students will be going to the different areas of the city, but overall it's a very safe city. But there are some basic strategies I'd like them to take on board.

As soon as they arrive I'd like them to get a network of friends or people they can contact in case of an emergency.

Get to know the area, get to know where the local police station is. Get to know where the local transport is because they will be using public transport a lot. Get the local numbers of their police station, the closest police station. We call it like having a plan, so if they plan to look after themselves that way and look after everybody else.

For urgent police matters it is always good to ring 000 straight away. You can do that from a mobile phone and it's a free phone call from any phone booth as well.

Hi, my name is Danny and I'm a firefighter. Regardless of what type of accommodation you live in during your stay its Victorian Law that all accommodation is fitted with smoke alarms. This is a smoke alarm, now let's go inside and take a look at how it works. Smoke alarms are attached to the ceiling, just outside the bedroom well away from the wall. And sometimes they may be in the bedroom as well. If the smoke alarm detects smoke from a fire, it makes this noise (beep, beep). If a smoke alarm sounds, get down low and get out of the smoke, evacuate via the safest exit. If it's safe, close the door to the room where the smoke or fire is coming from. Now you need to get out and alert others on your way out. Call 000, ask for fire, wait to be connected and tell them your address. Smoke alarms give you early warning of a fire and time to escape.

Make sure you test you smoke alarms, in your home once a month. Use a broom handle to press the test button. Wait to hear (beep, beep, beep) and then release. If you don't have a smoke alarm, or your smoke alarm doesn't work, contact the student support team at Victoria University.

Religion

There are various places of worship around Melbourne and selected Victoria University campuses. There are many different religions and beliefs in Australia, and we remain an open minded culture. Respecting an individual's belief is important.

The university provides a room for us to prayer. We have catered for all the services required, so we are very proud of it and we'd like to keep that tradition therefore the university goes out of the way.

Whatever your background, they accept you as you are.

Fitting in and making friends

All people in Australia expect to be treated equal, no matter their social, their gender, marital, economical or lifestyle status.

Australians are very, very friendly and they are accepting of people from different countries, there are extremely different cultures, opinions and their beliefs.

Us Aussies, we enjoy meeting international students however we are a bit hesitant to make the first move. But once they make the first move, we become best of friends.

Academic expectations

It's good to know what is expected of you as a student.

Classes do start in the first week of semester, and it's just really important for students to get to their first lecture, and to the first tutorial. Because there's important information about the subject as well as assessment that is given out during that time.

With assessment it can vary from subject to subject, but most subjects they will have, a written assignment, they'll have a class presentation, and those two things they can either be an individual assessment or they can be a group assessment.

There is usually a test of some sort, so that can be either written or online. So if it is online, students need to be aware that they need access to a computer. And at the end of semester, they normally have a final exam.

Punctuality and attending class is very important.

All classes are conducted in English.

Your health

As a condition of your student Visa, all international students are required Overseas Student Health Cover. OSHC Worldcare is our preferred provider.

Basically it is to protect you, and you can arrange your OSHC card online when you arrive.

If you are feeling unwell, you can visit a doctor, if you need emergency medical care, you can receive 24 hour treatment via the emergency or casualty sections at any public hospital.

For emergencies dial 000 and ask for an ambulance.