



Welcome to Australia Guide

**James Cook University
2012 Edition**

**For international students.
By international students.**

Compiled by: Morgan Kennedy
(JCUMSA International Student Representative)



AMSA

The Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) is the peak representative body for medical students in Australia. The key mandate of AMSA is to connect, inform and represent each of Australia's 16,491 medical students at Australia's 20 medical schools. AMSA's core operations include advocacy, events and programs, and publications. AMSA advocates for medical students through policy development, advocacy campaigns and representation to governments, universities and relevant medical bodies. Additionally, AMSA organises renowned educational, social and leadership opportunities for students. These include programs aimed at improving medical student health and wellbeing and others to increase awareness of community, rural and global health issues. AMSA advocates on a range of issues that affect international students.

The International Students' Network

The International Students' Network (ISN) is the committee of AMSA that is specifically dedicated to address the needs of international students. It is comprised of an international student representative from each Australian medical school. Almost 1 in 5 medical students in Australia are international students, and AMSA strives to effectively represent every one of these students. To better advocate for these students, AMSA must have a comprehensive understanding of their issues and opinions.

The ISN goals are:

- To advocate for all international medical students studying in Australia
- To provide support for graduating international students seeking internship in Australia
- To provide support for international students wishing to return home to complete internship
- To assist graduating international students who are unable to attain an internship in Australia in finding employment alternatives
- To connect current and future international medical students and to inform them of the issues currently facing international students in Australia

Important notice about this guide

This guide has been written for international students who have moved to study medicine in Australia for international students who have recently or are about to move to study medicine. However, AMSA is unable to guarantee the accuracy of the information contained herein and we recommend that you read the full disclaimer at the end of this guide.

As you have probably gathered, there is a ton of stuff to sort out before you arrive in Australia. Don't worry, we all got through it, and so will you. Here are a few tidbits of information that we picked up along the way, and maybe wish we'd had in our back pocket before getting here.

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Welcome to JCU

Congratulations on your acceptance into Medicine!

This guide aims to give you an inside on the practical things when studying at JCU.

We hope some of the things in this booklet will make your transition into the North Queensland lifestyle and Medicine smoother.

This handbook is not official or policy. However, this guide is made by international students, for international students.

If you're ever unsure of absolutely anything- just ask!

Best of Luck,

Morgan Kennedy
4th Year Medical Student
JCUMSA International Student Representative

First Steps

Fill out and send in all required forms for the University and Australian Government. Save a PDF of these (it will come in handy in future years). Do you have your immunisations, are your VISA requirements completed?

Background on Townsville

Townsville is in far North Queensland. North Queensland is a region where the people are laid back and always ready for a good time. Townsville's population is a mixture of military personnel, university students, and miners. This population accounts for several oddities in the city, particularly expensive rent. Townsville boasts a good climate all year round; goodbye icy winters. Few fast facts: Student night is Thursday night, footy is the sport of choice, thongs are not underwear they are "flip-flops."

Packing

Climate

Summer 28+ days and some rainy – humid conditions = Tropics
Winter: 25+ days and dry (June- Mid October)

Clothing

Clothes are expensive in Townsville and the selection is not the best. Denim (jeans) is expensive. Bring your own clothes - think summer clothes. Throw in a light rain jacket for February - April. Walkways around the med school are constantly flooded; we recommend either thongs or gumboots. Buy an umbrella for winter in Townsville. Online shopping will become your new friend. Sorry Canadians, there is no Lululemon here. For those long study days and nights spent in the over air-conditioned med school study rooms, bring a pair of lulu's or sweats and a hoodie.

Clinical clothes: in the pre-clinical years (1-3), you only need a couple of outfits as you have few clinical sessions. Bring a good pair of enclosed dress shoes. As you progress 4+ your university wardrobe will need to change to compose of exclusively of clinical clothes.

Houseware and food

Bring a good set of kitchen knives (very expensive over here).

Food - BRING COFFEE or your FAVOURITE TEA – because they are very expensive over here.

Canadians: maple syrup, Timmy's coffee, Starbucks, teddy grams, cheerios, bagels (can't bring them but eat as many as you can when you're home, because they are very rare in Northern Queensland), decent peanut butter, chocolates (taste different here and there are different types), and graham crackers are mostly not found in Australia.

Side note: bring your Thanksgiving recipes with you, gather together with all your friends from the homeland and celebrate.

Books/Novels

There are so expensive in Australia, think \$30+ extra for a paperback!

Electronics

Electronics: Australia runs on 240v and the chances are your expensive electronics (blow dryers, flat-irons, etc.) won't work here even with a converter. Still it may well be worth investing in a good transformer/converter for your laptops, as those don't seem to have troubles.

Personal Items

Stock up on your favourite stick deodorant at home as spray deodorant is more widely available and stick deodorants are pricey. Makeup is expensive; a \$6 mascara back home will set you back \$28 in this country. Shampoo and conditioner is also expensive. Expensive is the common theme. Australia does not have tampon applicators so bring some from home.

To buy in Australia

Houseware/electronics

There is no Ikea in Townsville. We recommend buying a quality iron early on (you'll need it), as well as a blow dryer, flat iron and electric clippers/shaver. We also think it's worthwhile to buy indoor drying racks (most houses don't come with dryers) and a sturdy desk and invest in a comfortable office chair.

Q: Where can I buy:

- Houseware and electronics? BIG W, Woolworths, Harvey Norman, JB-HIFI Salvation Army, second hand stores.
- Textbooks? We recommend waiting until you get the mass emails from older years selling second hand textbooks – this will save you buckets!
- Office supplies? Officeworks, BIG W, Woolworths.

Accommodation

On-campus: check out the university housing website at

<https://secure.jcu.edu.au/StarRezPortal/Default.aspx?Params=L9ezxPcQnQuRGKTzF%2b4sxeNblvAA%2b26c>

Off-campus: the suburbs close to the uni are Douglas and Annandale. Check out the forum at the above link for share houses and accommodation. Also keep your emails for messages about rooms for rent from older students. Take a look at:

1. realestate.com.au
2. domain.com.au
3. bluekoala.com.au

Real Estate agents are not necessarily on your side and generally not very helpful. It will generally take 3 weeks to find a place. Expect to pay **\$200+/per week** + electricity (every 3-4 months) + water + internet. You usually sign a 6 month or 12 month lease. For your application you will require at least two reference letters.

Other essentials

Food

Woolworths and Coles are located nearby to the university in Aitkenvale (suburb) at Stocklands.

Coffee Shops

8am-4pm - sorry no late night coffee shops with Wi-Fi in town. The only option is Maccas (Macdonalds) in Aitkenvale. Coffee Domayne is worth a trek; it is located in the city at the Flinders street mall.

Documents

PDF them all, you will acquire great skill at filling out the copious amounts of forms.

Jobs

Check out how much you're allowed to work- according to your VISA. The job market is pretty tough in Townsville. If you want to work on campus get your applications in early.

Flights to Townsville

There is one direct flight from Sydney in the morning (with Virgin) and one direct flight to Sydney in the afternoon 4pm (Jetstar). Most flights will have a stopover in Brisbane. You will know this airport back-to-front by the time you finish your first 3 years.

Keeping Fit?

JCU has a gym - a year's membership is approximately \$450. There are lots of private gyms nearby and Police-Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC).

Sports: get involved in representing medicine and beating the other faculties. There is basketball, footy, touch footy and soccer (all girls and guys teams) and netball (girls only). If you live on campus, consider getting involved in FISHER Shield sports.

There's also several local basketball clubs, field hockey clubs (brothers and wests), Townsville Road Runners, Kite-boarding and Tennis Clubs.

Moving Forward

Best of luck

The AMSA ISN sincerely wishes you the best of luck on your transition to life in Australia and journey through medical school. Remember, the AMSA mission is to connect, inform and represent Australian medical students, both domestic and international.

Ways to get involved

We would love you to get involved with AMSA, The ISN or your medical student society. International students are a unique group and working together we can make the experience better for everyone.”

- Visit and sign up to AMSA (<http://amsa.org.au/>) - remember to tick the box for the ISN Contact your local AMSA Rep and get involved in AMSA and your local medical students' society
- Visit the ISN page on the AMSA website, watch the video and take the survey
- Stay tuned for more opportunities from AMSA and the ISN

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