



La Trobe Abroad Pre-Departure Guide

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1 Before you go

Travel preparations

There is nothing more exciting than preparing for an overseas trip and to help, La Trobe Abroad (LTA) have created this guide to assist as part of your planning process.

Passport validity

It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid and for at least 6 months after land back in Australia. If it is not valid long enough, you may not be allowed to board your flight.

Keep in mind, some student visas will need to be added to your current passport before you go. So, if your passport is due to expire, start the process asap for a new one to be issued before you apply for a visa.

Also ensure your passport is in great condition. Any damage to your passport, including water, might cause issues when arriving in a foreign country.

Obtain visa/s

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa for any country you are entering, including any countries you wish to travel to before, during or after your program. Most countries require you to have a student visa to study in country and these can take several weeks, or even months for the US and Japan to obtain. You may also have to visit a consulate or embassy in a major city to apply for the visa in person.

Best to start your research early by checking the consulate or embassy of your host country for visa regulations. Find your host country representative at: protocol.dfat.gov.au/Public/ConsulatesInAustralia.

Before you leave, ensure you are aware of your visa conditions.

Booking flights

It is your responsibility to book your plane ticket and other travel arrangements. If you need help, contact a travel agent. For visa reasons, your ticket may need to show an onward journey or return trip. When searching for fares, we recommend booking a ticket that is changeable and/or refundable to give you flexibility. Also, when booking your ticket, check that the name on your ticket matches your name exactly as it appears on your passport. If you have a hyphenated surname, there may be a space in your surname or it may all be one word, this is ok.

Fun fact: The hyphen is used in flight booking systems to indicate a new passenger name, hence why a ticket won't show in a hyphenated surname.





Important documents

In case of emergency, it is critical that you leave a copy of your important documents with family or trusted friend and on ISIS before you go. You can access documents on ISIS at any time during your exchange. It is also highly recommended that you scan in your documents, save to the cloud and email them to yourself. In the event you are without your belongings, you can always access email to print out a copy of your ID and other important documents.

Important documents you should keep electronic copies of and hard copies to bring with you are:

- ☐ Travel documentation such as plane ticket
- ☐ Passport (including copy of the personal details and relevant visa stamp pages)
- ☐ Prescriptions (be sure to check customs regulations and availability of any

medications you require on your travels. You may require a doctor's letter)

- ☐ List of LTU approved subjects
- ☐ Extra passport photos
- ☐ Letter of Offer and Acceptance from your host institution
- ☐ Insurance policy and relevant contact numbers
- ☐ Credit cards, debit cards or foreign currency cards
- ☐ Emergency and Contact phone numbers (LTA, host institution, family/friends)

Research your destination

The more you know about your destination, the quicker you will adapt. You will have already checked out your host university's website, now extend your research to look at local and regional websites.

Further recommended research:

- ☐ Contact our LTA Ambassadors and students currently here on exchange from your host University and country.
- ☐ Cost of living. Check out Expatistan or Numbeo.
- ☐ Voltage differences and power points. Chances are you will need a power adaptor! A good idea is to buy one power adaptor and take an Australia power board.
- ☐ Social and cultural expectations. You are representing La Trobe so take note of and respect local social and cultural expectations.

Ensure you have appropriate attire where required, particularly when entering a place of worship.

- ☐ Local laws. Do you know the legal drinking age in your host country?
- ☐ Climate, weather, geography and history.
- ☐ Public holidays. Get involved and celebrate!
- ☐ Check addresses, public transport timetables and operating hours of places you wish to visit.
- ☐ Support services for both physical and mental health in addition to what your host university offers.
- ☐ Community groups and services that you can get involved with.

Accommodation

Know what your move in date is. If you arrive early you will need to arrange your own accommodation.

If you are going to live on campus, ensure you have confirmation before you leave Australia and that they know your arrival details.

If you are going to live off campus, try to organise this before you leave Australia or at least organise a few nights' accommodation for when you arrive while you search for long-term accommodation.

Top Tip: Noise cancelling headphones may be useful when living in shared accommodation.

Student discounts

Who doesn't love a discount?! To receive student discounts worldwide, purchase an International Student Identity Card. You can even use it in Australia before or after you go. Find out more: www.isic.org/.

Getting around

To access a map without wifi, download the Maps.me app. You will need to download country and region maps before you go or while you have internet access but as the app uses GPS, you won't need internet for it to work!

"I have made my way around many countries with this app so I highly recommend it!!!" - Mel



Packing

Even though you are going abroad for several months and will experience more than one season, you do not need as much as you think. Travel light so you can move quickly and with greater ease through busy areas such as train stations and airports.

Pack clothes that you can layer when the temperatures drop, pack one good jacket if you are going to a cold climate and pack good walking shoes.

Check to see what your accommodation provides and make a list of what you need. Once you arrive, familiarise yourself with the local shops and second-hand stores so you can pick up what you need or forgot.

Keep in mind the rules for what can go in checked luggage and carryon, your airline's website will provide guidance. Definitely double check your baggage allowance! You will probably come back with more than what you go with so allow for that when packing as the excess baggage fees can be extreme.

In your carry-on pack travel documents, essential medication, a change of clothes and a small amount of toiletries. Pack it so you can stay one night without your checked bag. Also, leave your valuables at home, you don't want to worry about them while you are enjoying your experience.

Top Tip: Pack your Vegemite in your checked luggage. Some countries class it as a liquid so if it is in your carry on and over 100g it may be confiscated.

\$ Money matters

Never carry more money than you can afford to lose. Carry a balance of cash, credit/debit cards and travel money cards. Remember, cards can be cancelled and replaced, but only a small amount of cash may be covered by travel insurance. At the same time, always have enough cash in local currency for a taxi or at least an emergency phone call. Research your host country as some countries are still very cash based and not all places may accept your preferred credit card. Get advice from your bank here on managing your money overseas, options include:

Credit cards

This includes direct debit cards with the Visa or Mastercard option. Don't assume that your favourite card option will be accepted everywhere, some countries favour one over another. Also be aware of any card fees when you use it overseas. It is recommended to have access to one Visa card and one Mastercard to give you options (can include travel money card). Access to two or more accounts will provide peace of mind in case one card is lost, stolen or cloned.

It's a good idea to inform your bank where you will be and what dates. This will help avoid a freeze on your account when there is an unusual transaction from a foreign country.

Travel money cards

The new way to carry foreign currency.

Load a travel card with your preferred currency before you leave, locking in the current exchange rate, and cards can generally hold several currencies. When you withdraw from a foreign country it will come out of your nominated preferred currency. This will save you having the currency converted at time of withdrawal. Note that there will be fees so shop around for the best deal.

Cash

The most convenient, but large amounts are a safety risk. It is suggested that you always have a small amount of cash for emergencies and have some Aussie currency for when you land back in Australia. It will also come in handy to show your new classmates how practical and colourful our currency is.

It is easy to forget how much money you are spending when it is a foreign currency. With the excitement of being away and socialising with new friends, you may overspend in your first few weeks. It might be an idea to work out a rough budget, so you know you'll have enough for your entire stay. Remember, you may need sufficient local currency for your initial expenses, including transport, bond, rent, food and other necessities.

When creating your budget, take into account any grant or scholarship you hope to receive, the OS-Help Loan and continued Centrelink payments. For a full list of available funding visit: latrobe.edu.au/students/opportunities/exchange/program-funding-and-costs

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Spread your cards and cash amongst your luggage in case any item is lost or stolen during transit.

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Health, safety & government



Vaccinations & medications

Visit your local GP or a travel doctor to discuss what vaccinations you will need for your destinations. You will also need enough medication to last the duration of your time abroad as you may not be able to refill a prescription abroad. You might require a note from your doctor to carry your medication through customs in Australia as well as overseas. Laws vary from country to country so double check if your prescription medication is legal in your host country.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition, we strongly recommend that you inform the International Office at your host university in the case you should require assistance. It is also a good idea to have any relevant health records and an outline of your medical history including your doctor's name and contact information in case of emergency.

For more detailed information on taking care of your health overseas, visit: smartraveller.gov.au/

Risk assessment

If you are travelling to a destination that has a travel advice level of 3 or 4 on the [Smartraveller](https://smartraveller.gov.au/) website, you must complete a Travel Risk Assessment Checklist. Download the form from our Semester Exchange webpage under Pre-Departure Session and submit with your Outgoing Exchange Pre-Departure (OEPD) form.

Regardless of the risk rating, you need to understand the risks of the countries you are travelling to.

Smartraveller

The government website for everything relating to travel advice. Take some time to look at all the information on the site including country specific advice and the current advice level. Subscribe to updates on your destination to stay up to date on travel advice and news. Find out more: smartraveller.gov.au/

Nominate a proxy

Organising a nominated proxy will enable a person of your choice to act on your behalf while you are overseas. La Trobe University cannot discuss your personal situation with anyone other than yourself and your nominated proxy, so we highly recommend you set this up before you go. To nominate a proxy, download the Exchange Proxy Form from our Semester Exchange page under Next Steps Session then submit the completed form to ASK La Trobe. Upload the copy stamped by ASK La Trobe into ISIS. Also consider adding a proxy to other accounts external to La Trobe such as your bank, Centrelink and ATO.

Emergency contact

When selecting an emergency contact from your support network at home, consider the following:

- Will they be available in case of emergency or crisis?
- Will they be available in the event you become incapacitated and be prepared to advocate on your behalf?
- Are they prepared to travel in an emergency with a valid passport and/or any other necessary documents?

Voting

Check if there is an election while you are away (local, state or federal) and ensure that you arrange for an absentee ballot with your electoral office. You may be fined if you do not vote. Learn more: aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/overseas/index.htm





Travel and health insurance

All students are covered by La Trobe University Insurance (provided by Chubb Insurance) for an international La Trobe Activity approved by La Trobe Abroad. The La Trobe insurance policy has a limit of 365 days for a La Trobe Activity. Insurance cover is provided for a maximum combined 10 days prior to the commencement of each program and the termination of each program of a La Trobe Activity.

Key Points

- “La Trobe Activity” means one or two semesters (or short program) to be undertaken by the Student at the host institution abroad as approved by La Trobe.
- Students initially approved for a yearlong exchange will be covered for the break period in between semesters.

- Students who request to extend to an additional semester or program will not be covered for the break period in between semesters and will need to purchase gap insurance cover.
- You are strongly advised to purchase your own travel insurance for any additional days that you are not covered under the La Trobe insurance policy.
- No cover applies to destinations advised as “Do not travel” by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

To obtain insurance you will complete the Travel Insurance Form as part of your Pre-Departure Session. You can read through the summary of the insurance policy for the key benefits and exclusions, plus find our more information about La Trobe’s insurance policy at: latrobe.edu.au/insurance/travel

In most cases your host country will require that you have suitable insurance cover to be eligible for a student visa. Furthermore, some host universities overseas (especially USA) will have a mandatory health insurance policy that LTU students must purchase to meet their exchange program requirements. This may mean that you will have two insurance policies, however, some host universities will allow you to take out your own health insurance and submit a waiver form. The host university would require a full copy of the policy to be submitted with the waiver form for review. Should your host university require a copy of the full insurance policy, request the current version from:

insurance@latrobe.edu.au.

Also make sure you are aware of the claims process, you may need a police report to prove you lost an item or had it stolen. Report all losses to authorities and the insurance office as soon as possible. When making a claim you will be required to submit documentation to support your claim. This may include:

- police report
- photos of the item
- Item’s serial number
- receipts
- medical report
- written confirmation of loss
- invoices
- statutory declaration

It’s a good idea to save photos of your valuable items such as a laptop, phone or tablet, and the serial numbers, with your important documentation.

While overseas, in the event of any emergency please contact the local authorities in the first instance. If you require assistance and are not in immediate danger, please contact Chubb Assistance. They are the emergency assistance provider of the insurer and are staffed by a team of highly trained experts 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. The number is reverse charge accepted: **Chubb Assistance +61 2 8907 5995**. Save this number in your phone.



La Trobe checklist

Stay enrolled at La Trobe

You are responsible for maintaining your ongoing full-time enrolment while on exchange. If you are not properly enrolled, you may not be credited when you return. You must sort this out prior to departure. You will also need to re-enrol for the semester following your exchange while still overseas. Keep checking your LTU Student email for updates.

To enrol, complete an Outbound Enrolment Confirmation Form by following the instructions on our Semester Exchange page under Pre-Departure Session.

Tuition fees

You will not pay tuition fees to your host university, instead you will continue to pay LTU tuition fees for the semester/s you are on exchange as you do now. If you have a HELP debt, the subjects you are requesting credit for will be charged to your account. You need to ensure your enrolment is correct prior to census date.

Clear outstanding LTU debts

Check your StudentOnline to ensure you have no overdue fees or outstanding debts. Any outstanding debts to the University must be paid prior to leaving the country. Debts to the university include overdue fees, library fines, payments to a University residential college,

parking fines, among others.

If you have any overdue fees or debts with LTU, you may not be able to access results, transcripts, request formal documents like a Centrelink letter, or access LMS.

Update your contact information

You must ensure the contact details provided in StudentOnline are accurate and up to date. La Trobe Abroad will contact you via your student email so make sure you check it regularly or forward it to your personal email account. Failure to do so may result in scholarships and grants not being paid.

Continuing Centrelink payments

Your enrolment must be up to date prior to requesting the Letter to Centrelink. To continue receiving Centrelink payments while you are overseas, complete the Letter to Centrelink request form and advise Centrelink the dates of your program. Apply for a letter:

latrobe.edu.au/students/admin/forms/letter-to-centrelink

Follow any instructions advised by Centrelink, failure to do so could result in your payments being stopped.

If you are not currently eligible for Centrelink benefits, check if your time abroad changes your circumstances and therefore your eligibility.





Departure – airport guide

Leaving Australia

For international travel, we recommend arriving at the airport 3 hours prior to departure (2 hours for domestic flights). Progressing through check-in, baggage check, security and immigration can take a couple of hours. International flights often start boarding 45 minutes to 1 hour prior to departure.

Some airlines will allow you to check-in online up to 24 hours prior and then you can proceed directly to the bag drop at the airport.

The day before and the day of, check your flight status on the airlines website.

Going through security can be overwhelming your first time. Be prepared to remove your shoes, jacket, belt and empty your pockets as you pass through the scanner. You will also need to remove your clear bag of liquids and electronics from your carry-on luggage. Always follow the instructions of staff.

Arriving in a foreign country

If you have to exit the plane during a stopover, ensure to take all your belongings as you may step back onto a different aircraft. Complete your arrival card on the plane and keep it handy with your passport. Take note of the baggage claim that may be announced on the plane before you disembark. Make your way to the baggage claim area by following the signs. Find

the baggage carousel allocated to your flight. If any of your bags do not arrive, inform airline staff that will be located in that area. You will then proceed through immigration and customs. You may be required to complete a fingerprint scan and eye scan. Once you have exited the airport, make your way to your accommodation via your pre-arranged transfer or public transport.

Customs

When going through customs either on your way to your host or on your way back to Australia, it is important to remember what you can and can't bring in. Look up the customs website for any country you will be visiting during your program to see what is allowed. Also read through what is allowed when you come home, especially Duty Free allowances.

Important:

- **Never carry goods for someone else. You don't want to become a news story.**
- **If in doubt, declare. Even your Vegemite...**

Returning to Australia

On the Australian Border Force website, you will find useful information on Duty Free shopping and how to use Smartgates at the airport. Find out more: abf.gov.au/



2 When you arrive



First things first, contact home!

Let your family and friends know you have arrived safely. It might be a phone call, social media post, text message or email. It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of your new environment, so please don't forget to let home know you are ok.

Check in with the Host International Office

Check in with the staff at your host university, they be your go to for any help throughout your program. Introduce yourself, find out about orientation so you can attend all the events and find out any other information you need to know.

Make sure to check whether you need to submit a request to have your host transcript released after your exchange semester. Some universities will require this to be formally requested and will not release your transcript automatically.

Your Study Plan

Upon arrival at your host university you may find that the subjects La Trobe has approved for you to take may not be available due to timetable clashes, the subject is no longer offered, or the class is full. If it becomes necessary for you to make changes to your study plan, select another pre-approved subject to take the place of the subject no longer available.

If you choose a subject that has not been pre-approved, you **MUST** obtain approval from your College at La Trobe. Failure to do so could mean that unapproved subjects are not credited to your La Trobe degree on your return.

To obtain additional subject approvals from your College, submit a query to ASK La Trobe at <http://latrobe-current.custhelp.com/app/ask>. Ensure you include the following information:

- Name of host university
- SOMSAS Study Plan listing the host subjects and LTU equivalents (subject code and name or 'elective')
- Attach the description of the host university subject/s

Once you receive the outcome for your subject approval request, ensure you upload a copy to your ISIS record and email La Trobe Abroad. Failure to do so may result in you not being granted credits upon return to La Trobe.

IMPORTANT: Contact ASK La Trobe as soon as possible to obtain additional subject approvals.

On Arrival Form. Essential to receive grants & scholarships!!

Now you have arrived and started getting to know your host university staff members, ask them to sign and stamp your 'On Arrival' form. Then email it back to La Trobe Abroad so that we can ensure that you have arrived safely, and we can pay your mobility grant or scholarship. Ensure that you include the

address for your host country, NOT your Australian address, ask the host staff for an appropriate address if you do not know yours.

LTA must receive this form **within 30 days** from the start of your host university program. Grant / Scholarship requests outside of this period may not be accepted.

The Grant / Scholarship is a gift from La Trobe University to support you whilst you are on your studies overseas. Students who request payment of any grants upon their return will NOT be paid, as they have forgone their eligibility.

IMPORTANT: Grants / Scholarships will NOT be dispatched where there are incomplete or missing documents. For more information, please refer to your LTU Offer Letter regarding the documents required and submission processes for each form.

Introduce yourself to your lecturers

You will need to learn how the academic system works at your host university, so it's a good idea to chat with your lecturers to let them know you're from overseas. Ask them about assessments, exams and anything else that may help you with your studies.

They might also ask you to engage with their students and give your insights on what student life is like in Australia.

Keep checking your student emails!!!!

It is very important that you keep checking your La Trobe student emails as well as your student email at your host. LTA will send out updates throughout your program, from just checking in to what you need to do before returning home. If it helps, forward your student emails to your personal email but when you email us, it's best to do this from your LTU email account.



Culture Shock



Be aware of culture shock

It is not unusual to feel tired, anxious or apprehensive when you're new in a place. Talk to your new friends, call home or email us if you want to connect with people and chat. There are plenty of people there to help you over the hump and get you heading towards having the time of your life. To understand more about culture shock, watch this video:

https://youtu.be/g-ef-xhC_bU

What is culture shock?

When you leave your home culture, you separate yourself from the people and circumstances that have defined your role in society. The impact of this change, Culture Shock, can be disorienting and can manifest itself in a number of ways.

Culture Shock is NORMAL, even for seasoned travellers. Look for the signs so that you can manage the stages. Individual's may experience different stages, and the length of time varies per person.

Stages of Culture Shock

(Adapted from Dr. Carmen Guanipa, Culture Shock, San Diego State University)

You should not underestimate the impact culture shock may have on your experience overseas. The following is a short explanation of the different stages and may provide a marker for you when you are away.

First stage

The new arrival may feel euphoric and you may be pleased by all the new things encountered. This time is called the 'honeymoon' stage, as everything encountered is new and exciting.

Second stage

You may encounter some difficult times in daily life, for example communication difficulties. There may be feelings of discontent, impatience, anger, sadness and incompetence. During times of transition there can be strong feelings of dissatisfaction.

Third stage

This is characterised by gaining some understanding of, and adaptation to, the new culture. A new feeling of pleasure and sense of humour may be experienced. The new arrival may not feel as lost and starts to have a feeling of direction. This initiates an evaluation of the old ways (home country) versus those of the new (host country).

Fourth stage

At this point you may realise that the new culture, like the old, has both good and bad things to offer. This integration is accompanied by a more solid feeling of belonging. You will start to redefine yourself and establish goals for living.

Fifth stage

'Re-entry shock' or 'Reverse Culture Shock' occurs on return to the country of origin. You may find that things are no longer the same – your perception may have changed.

Symptoms

Know the symptoms of Culture Shock to better understand the reason behind your behaviours.

Symptoms include:

- Anger over minor inconveniences
- Irritability
- Extreme homesickness
- Withdrawal from people who are different from you
- New and intense feeling of loyalty to your own culture
- Compulsive eating or a loss of appetite
- Boredom
- Need for excessive periods of sleep
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Excessive concern over minor pains
- Depression
- Loss of ability to work effectively
- Unexplainable fits of crying
- Exaggerated cleanliness
- Feeling sick much of the time
- Difficulty concentrating

You do not need to suffer from every item on the list in order to experience culture shock. Only a few of the items may apply to you. Of course, if you have a pre-existing condition (such as headaches or an upset stomach), it's a good idea to have it checked before deciding that you're experiencing a symptom of culture shock.



How to deal with Culture Shock

There is no guaranteed cure for culture shock, however there are several things you can do to counter it. Trying several of the following suggestions will probably be more effective than trying just one and you may even prevent some symptoms:

Keep active – spend time outside of your room or apartment. Go to shopping centres, parks, libraries and sporting events and observe the culture. Watch. Listen. Learn. This process will make it easier to understand differences in habits, customs and social practices.

Make friends – get acquainted with your host country's citizens. Ask questions. Be willing to answer questions about how you do things in your country so that you and your new friends can make interesting comparisons.

Introduce yourself to other international students – other international students will be experiencing many of the same adjustment problems. Talk with them about how they're managing the changes.

Talk to the staff at your host International Office – the staff at your host institutions welcome new students each semester and understand the effects of moving to a new environment, so don't be afraid to have a chat to them.

Exercise – find some physical activity that you can enjoy. Exercise can be an effective way to reduce worry and depression. There are usually clubs and societies on campus or in the nearest town or city that you can join.

Join student clubs or groups – there are often many student clubs or groups on campus. Your adjustment to local culture will be easier if you participate in campus activities, plus it's a great way to make friends.

Consider staying with a host family – they can help, assisting with your adjustment and listening to any problems you may encounter.

Be patient & Stay POSITIVE – culture shock is something that most international travellers experience in some way. Remind yourself that the problem is not permanent. Simply realise what is happening to you and give yourself time to get over it.

Talk – Continue to communicate with those around you and be sure to contact us back here at LTA should you need some advice or information.

Understand – Know it will be different overseas and be open to accept a new cultural experience.

If you are feeling anxious, please discuss this with the international office of your host intuition. Some of our exchange partners do

not have sophisticated counselling services. If you feel alienated and upset, and these services are not available, please email us and we will do our best to assist you!

Cultural norms

Social norms for consuming alcohol, socialising and dating vary greatly among cultures. It can be a challenge to decipher the subtle cues in your host culture (especially when it comes to sexual cues). The best approach is to treat everything with an open mind and to not dismiss something simply because it is unfamiliar. To learn more about your host countries culture, chat with students at your host university.



Health & safety

General safety

Travelling to some cities overseas can be dangerous, but the risks in most places are not significantly different to those in Australia. It is important that you look at the Smartraveller website to learn about any risks associated with your proposed destination.

Basic 'Travel Smarts' apply. Be vigilant when in crowded places and be sceptical of anyone that approaches you wanting to sell something or asking for something. Avoid looking like a tourist if you can and don't announce that you're travelling alone, display confidence in the way you conduct yourself.

Basic rules and principles apply wherever you are:

Awareness: there are risks associated with any given environment. The key is to remain aware of the nature of the risks, their levels and any changes, and to behave accordingly.

Low profile: criminals are more likely to target obviously wealthy individuals and obvious foreigners, rather than those who give the impression of being familiar with their surroundings. A low profile and a look of confidence will reduce the risk of being targeted.

Unpredictable routine: criminals favour targets with predictable routines. Individuals who vary their day-to-day routines are less likely to be targeted.

Layers of protection: no single measure can guarantee security protection. Good personal security involves layers of protection and procedures, as well as physical measures. It is essential to adopt and maintain appropriate security measures.

IMPORTANT: *As a resident in your host country you need to be aware of their laws and abide by them. Ignorance is not an excuse!*





Keeping safe

The best advice for keeping safe in another country is **'be prepared'**. Read the Lonely Planet guide (or similar), an online newspaper from your exchange country, a magazine, something, anything, about the country you are going to or the city you will be living in.

It's not possible to explain how to keep yourself completely "safe" in another country. The nature of travel is that events or situations are unpredictable.

However, you will find that the common-sense rules that you were taught as a child apply overseas. For example, "look both ways before crossing the street", "don't hitch-hike" and "don't trust strangers". Avoid deserted streets and unfamiliar neighbourhoods at night if you are alone. Railway stations and bus stations often attract pickpockets and luggage thieves so take extra care in these places.

Find a few services that may come in handy in an emergency in the host destination such as interpreter services and counselling services.

Here are a few other points that will get you thinking:

- The legal drinking age in the USA is 21
- Many restaurants/pubs/bars/public areas are now smoke free. Ask what the rule is before you light up a cigarette.
- Drinking While Intoxicated (DWI) and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) are very serious crimes and may impact your ability to travel overseas in the future.

- Illegal possession of controlled substances (drugs) is subject to prosecution by law in nearly all countries

Alcohol and other drugs

Be prepared if you are planning to go out drinking, let someone know where you're going. 'Buddy Up' with your friends. The legal age for drinking varies from country to country so double check when you arrive. Remember that jet lag, altitude and stress can decrease your tolerance of alcohol.

Needless to say, it is a requirement of the program that you abide by the laws of your host country and policies of the host university. Ensure that you are familiar with these laws and policies before you go, particularly where they pertain to alcohol and drugs. Note, in some countries where we have partner universities, possession of narcotics is punishable by death.

TOP TIP: Ask yourself, "Would you do it at home?". If the answer is no, then maybe don't do this in a foreign country.

Lost or stolen passport

You should have a copy of your passport bio-data page in a separate place from your actual passport, including an electronic copy and a copy with a family member or friend back at home. Having a copy of your passport if it is lost or stolen will assist in obtaining a new passport as quickly as possible.

In the event that your passport is lost or stolen, contact the Australian Embassy in your host country as soon as possible for further advice. You should also contact your insurance provider, and we recommend you also refer to the Smartraveller website which includes some useful advice:

<https://smartraveller.gov.au/help/me/overseas/passport-visa/passport/lost-stolen.html>.

Driving overseas

Hiring a car overseas can provide some freedom for road trips on weekends or during breaks. Your age will depend on the ability to hire a car and/or the price. Before you go, obtain an International Driver's Licence from the RACV (Royal Automobile Association of Victoria). Your International Driver's Licence will only be valid if you have your Australian driving licence with you, so remember to take it.

You need to be careful about driving overseas, especially when tired and if you are in a country where you are driving on the other side of the road. It can take some time to get used to driving on the other side of the road. Laws can also be different, did you know that in some USA states you are not allowed to have open alcohol containers, empty or full, in the main compartment of the car?

Remember: 'If you drink, then drive, you're a bloody idiot.'

Sexuality and gender

Australian attitudes towards gender equality and LGBTQIA+ communities have come a long way over the last few decades. However, this may not be the case in the country you have travelled to. You may find yourself confronted with negative and even hostile attitudes.

If you sense that your host country may lean towards a more conservative approach to gender and sexuality, prepare yourself by doing some research BEFORE you leave. Remember, that these attitudes may be regional. This is often the case, even in Australia.

If you feel that the prevailing attitudes of that country or even the region in that country are too oppressive, it may be wise to select a more liberal city or town.

Safe sex

You are more likely to throw caution to the wind when you are away from home and therefore be more at risk. The quality of condoms is poor in some countries and heat can cause them to disintegrate, so be careful. You may want to take your own supply of quality latex condoms. If you take the contraceptive pill, know that travel can disrupt your system; diarrhoea and vomiting can reduce the effectiveness of the pill.



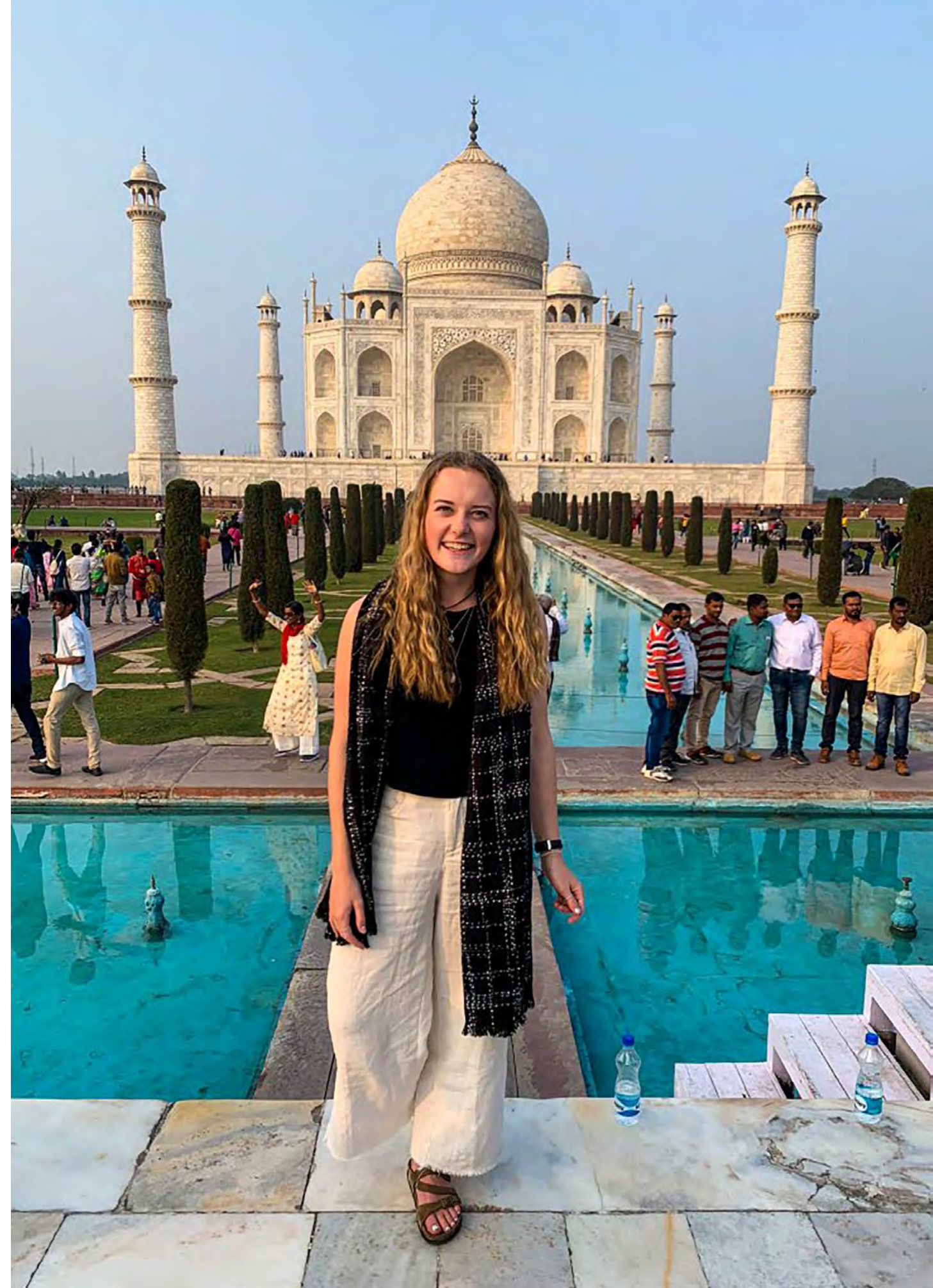
3 Returning home

Reverse culture shock

When you return home, you might find that things aren't as you left them. People have been living life while you were away and have done exciting things too. Unfortunately, after you've told your travel stories a few times your adventures might be falling on deaf ears. So, you can share your story with other La Trobe students through us! See the section on promoting exchange.

Health check up

It is advisable to visit your GP when you return for a general check up and to obtain prescription refills.





La Trobe checklist

Exchange Experience Report

To successfully fulfil the requirements of the program all students must complete our online Exchange Experience report. You must submit your experience report **within one month** of completing their exchange semester/year and before we can release your transcript to you. You can complete the report here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M5WD7FL>

We value your feedback on your experience as we use this information to better promote the partner and experience to future students. We also use this information in our decisions on partner relationships.

The report is intended to assist prospective exchange students at LTA by presenting the good, the bad and the unique. When writing your report, please think of the information and hints that would have been beneficial for you to know before you left for exchange. If you posted on socials during your exchange, you will be able to use this as a resource for your report.

Advanced standing

Upon completion of your exchange program an academic transcript will be issued by your host university, this process can take a couple of months. In many cases, your transcript is automatically forwarded from the host institution to LTA, however it is important to check this with the international office at your host university before you return to Australia.

Once you receive your transcript, you will need to complete an advanced standing application to gain credit for the subjects completed on exchange.

The process is as follows:

1. Host university sends academic transcript to LTA
2. Transcript received by LTA
3. LTA will email instructions to you on how to complete your Experience Report
4. Only once LTA receives your Experience Report we release original transcript to you via email for digital transcripts or in person collection for hard copy transcripts
5. You then complete the online 'Application for Advanced Standing' form - <https://credit.latrobe.edu.au/form/> and upload your transcript when prompted.
6. ASK La Trobe will process your application and, if all is in order, will credit your LTU degree with the subjects completed on exchange

IMPORTANT: Credits from exchange subjects will only be recorded on your LTU transcript as showing a Pass or Fail and will not be counted in your WAM.





Keep the memory alive

Promote exchange

We Want You!

Help us promote exchange by sharing your stories. There are many opportunities to do this:

- Tell other students
- Become an LTA Ambassador
- Write an article for LTA to be published through [MyLaTrobe](#)
- Provide us photos and captions from your program for us to share on our socials
- Tag your Instagram and Facebook posts with #ltaoverseas
- Take part in one of our events:
 - Info sessions
 - Exchange fair
 - Orientation
 - Pre-departure sessions
 - Open Day

LTA Ambassadors

Every semester LTA are on the hunt for returned students to become LTA Ambassadors. As an ambassador you will:

- Take over our Instagram for one week to share your experience
- Write or contribute to a [MyLaTrobe](#) article relating to your experience. It could be a solo article or a contribution to a listicle. We are open to suggestions!
- Participate in one of our events:
 - Info sessions
 - Exchange fair
 - Orientation
 - Pre-departure sessions
 - Open Day

You are also welcome to contribute more than once to any of the above!

Before you go on exchange and while you are there, keep this in the back of your mind when taking photos or think an experience is worth sharing. Take notes and it will make it easier to remember when you return.

If you are interested in becoming an LTA Ambassador, email us at studyabroad@latrobe.edu.au for more information.



✓ Checklists

Before you go

- ☐ Passport is valid
- ☐ Obtained all required visas, including for transit countries
- ☐ Booked flight
- ☐ Purchased International Student Identity Card (optional)
- ☐ Copies of important documents saved and distributed
- ☐ Completed packing list
- ☐ Familiar with destination
- ☐ Organised accommodation
- ☐ Organised Money
- ☐ Up to date with medications and vaccinations, copies of records handy
- ☐ Arranged travel and health insurance, copies of documents handy
- ☐ Checked out the Smartraveller website
- ☐ Completed risk assessment (if applicable)
- ☐ Confirmed if you need to vote while away
- ☐ Nominated a proxy for LTU
- ☐ Completed Outbound Enrolment Confirmation Form
- ☐ Sorted LTU tuition fee payment (if applicable)
- ☐ Cleared outstanding LTU debts (if applicable)
- ☐ Updated contact information in StudentOnline
- ☐ Organised Centrelink payments to continue (if applicable)
- ☐ Checked requirements for airline departure
- ☐ Prepared for customs and immigration at host country
- ☐ Got International Drivers Licence (optional)
- ☐ Researched how conservative or liberal your host destination is

When you arrive at host destination

- ☐ Contacted home
- ☐ Checked in with host international office
- ☐ Verified your host study plan
- ☐ Completed 'On Arrival Form' and emailed to LTA
- ☐ Introduced yourself to host uni academics
- ☐ Checked student emails weekly
- ☐ Know the signs and stages of culture shock
- ☐ Know how to combat culture shock
- ☐ Learned cultural norms
- ☐ Know how to stay safe
- ☐ Know laws and policies relating to alcohol and drugs
- ☐ Know what to do if your passport is lost or stolen

Returning home

- ☐ Know how to identify reverse culture shock
- ☐ Re-enrolled in subjects for your post-exchange LTU semester
- ☐ Completed Exchange Experience Report
- ☐ Applied for advanced standing
- ☐ Promoted exchange through LTA (optional)
- ☐ Became an LTA Ambassador (optional)



Emergency Contact Information

La Trobe Abroad

Level 5, Sylvia Walton Building
La Trobe University
Bundoora VIC 3086 Australia

Phone: +61 3 9479 2112 (during business hours)

Email: studyabroad@latrobe.edu.au

Emergency contact: +61 3 9479 2222 (24 hour response)

La Trobe University CRICOS Provider Code Number 00115M

Australian embassies and consulates overseas

Find your nearest in country Australian Consulate or Embassy at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-locations/missions/our-embassies-and-consulates-overseas>

Emergency consular assistance is available 24 hours a day by calling Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) in Canberra:

Phone: +61 2 6261 3305

SMS: +61 421 269 080

