



WELCOME TO AUSTRALIA

Guide for Phase 1 Students

UQ-Ochsner Program
2020 Edition

WELCOME

Congratulations (!!!) on being accepted to medical school, and welcome to the UQ-Ochsner medical program! Traveling to Australia for school is a fantastic opportunity, but it presents its own challenges. One of the aims of the Ochsner Medical Student Association during Phase I of your medical education is to look after our unique interests as Americans in a foreign country. One of the first challenges you will encounter is the initial 10,000 mile journey to Australia and settling into a new city.

This document is designed to alleviate some commonly experienced growing pains, and to help prepare you for this fulfilling adventure. If you have any questions, feel free to post in the UQ-Ochsner Facebook group, attend an Ochsner Open House, or ask your mentor!

OMSA

The Ochsner Medical Student Association (OMSA) is the representative body for UQ-Ochsner Medical Students in Australia and the United States. OMSA's key mandate is to help all Ochsner cohort students have opportunities to succeed and excel, with a specific intent to foster and promote professionalism, integrity, intellectual honesty, and academic rigor. OMSA advocates for UQ-Ochsner students through policy and program development and representation to faculty, staff, and the community.

Disclaimer

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WHAT TO DO FIRST?

Acceptance Checklist

- Read all acceptance materials
- Check that your details are correct
- Pay your deposit
- Receive your CoE (Confirmation of Enrollment)
- Organize your health insurance – Overseas Student Health Cover (OHSC)
- Obtain your Visa
- Check <https://medicine-program.uq.edu.au/current-students/annual-program-requirements-year-1> for required UQ forms (complete them as soon as possible. Store these forms in electronic files until they are able to be uploaded to Blackboard in November/December)

Apply for Visa (High Priority)

- The Visa Application takes approximately 4 weeks so start it **ASAP**:
 - You must apply for your student visa online by creating an ImmiAccount. You will be required to submit a variety of original certified documentation. The “Document Checklist Tool” may help determine the supporting documentation you will need to submit with your application.
 - For information and to apply, go to: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500>
- Visa application fee. Payable to the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs by credit card, Paypal, or BPay.
- Passport. Ensure you provide certified copies of your passport. Check your passport is valid for the duration of your visa.
- If applying with family members:
 - o Complete an application form for each accompanying family member.
 - o Submit evidence of the relationship between yourself and your family members
 - o Ensure you can provide proof of at least 12 months of cohabitation if bringing a partner.
- A health examination is REQUIRED in order to finish processing your visa. (See below for details)

Health Examination for VISA and Immunizations (High Priority)

You may be required to have a health examination completed by a Panel Physician as part of your application for your student visa. A panel physician is a doctor who has been authorized by Australian Immigration Services to conduct visa health examinations. A non-panel physician cannot complete this examination.

You should not arrange for your health examination with a panel physician before you have officially begun to apply for your visa. Once you have submitted your online student visa application, you will be notified, via your ImmiAccount, if this health examination is required.

The list of panel physicians can be found here: <https://www.border.gov.au/Busi/Pane/Pane-1>

For Immunizations: Use the form attached under the “BBV Immunization” tab to attain the correct vaccinations: <https://medicine-program.uq.edu.au/current-students/annual-program-requirements-year-1>

- o **Important Note:** In previous years, students have had trouble obtaining the correct immunization test for Hepatitis B. Make sure that the test requested is the one listed in the immunization form (HBsAg). The health visa exam includes the Hep B, Hep C and HIV surface antigens but not the antibody test for Hep B which is required by UQ. In the previous years, students have had to make multiple visits to their doctor due to confusion in order to get the accurate test.

For more details on applying for a student visa, please refer to [Australian Government Department of Home Affairs](#) website. For questions about your visa, specific requirements, etc. [the only official sources of information are on this Australian visa website.](#)

Forms and Requirements

The following forms and requirements must be completed before the start of classes. You will also need to make sure you meet the First Aid requirement, apply for your student visa, and apply for Financial Aid, if applicable. The following forms and requirements to be completed may be found at <https://medicine-program.uq.edu.au/current-students/annual-program-requirements-year-1>

1. Student Immunisation Record
2. Applied First Aid Certificate
3. Blue Card Application
4. Confirmation of Identity
5. Student Deed Poll
6. QHealth Student Orientation Checklist

It is recommended that you complete these forms within the next few months. In December-January, you will be contacted by UQ to upload each of the aforementioned documents directly to Blackboard (UQ’s intranet site). Your forms should be completed at this point. **DO NOT WAIT** until December to complete these requirements.

Student Blue Card Application and Confirmation of Identity

In Australia, MD students working in health care settings where children may be present must have a valid Blue Card. These forms must be submitted to Blackboard no less than 28 days prior to the start of class.

The Blue Card Application – Complete “Part D, Applicant’s details (to be completed by the student)”. Section 7 must be an Australian address. You may use the Faculty of Medicine address and update your details once you have confirmed accommodation in Australia.

The Faculty of Medicine’s mailing address:

*The University of Queensland
Mayne Medical School
288 Herston Road, Herston
Brisbane, QLD 4006*

Make sure your signature does not touch or go outside the bounding box. Do not use an electronic signature (this signature will be on your physical card). If the form doesn’t meet these specifications, it will be returned to you.

Parts A, B, C, E and F will be completed by a representative of the Faculty of Medicine at orientation. Do not complete these sections.

The Confirmation of Identity fulfils the requirement for proof of identity. This form must be completed by all UQ International MD students, as it is required for all students who live more than 50km from the school. The form may be verified by a notary or lawyer. It must be dated after/same as your Blue Card Application.

First Aid Certification

If you are planning on completing your certification in the U.S., the course should cover both basic first aid and CPR/AED (i.e. an Emergency First Responder course). The American Red cross course that meets these requirements is the **Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED**. If you are currently certified with this, double check the expiration date because you will not be able to recertify with the American Red Cross if you expire while you are in Australia. We recommend recertifying before you leave so that you will definitely be covered for your entire time here.

Alternatively, UQ offers a course prior to orientation. It is a one-day course (8:00 AM - 4:30 PM) and costs around \$135 AUD. Be sure you sign up for the UQ course well in advance. The January course dates will be posted in October at: <https://uqsport.com.au/learn/short-courses/first-aid-cpr-course/> You can also complete this requirement via the Australian Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org.au/get-involved/learn/first-aid#!/places/1/distance/5/types/TrainingLocation/orderby/proximity/page/1>

Health Insurance

The University of Queensland requires all incoming international students to have Overseas Student Health Coverage (OSHC). Many providers are pre-approved by this insurance (UQ Health Services, major Brisbane hospitals, etc) and will not charge you for services (this is referred to as “bulk billing”). A list of providers is available through the OSHC website (<http://www.oshcworldcare.com.au>).

For healthcare providers who are not on the OSHC coverage list, you may need to pay up front and file an insurance claim to be reimbursed for your healthcare. In general, if you go to a public hospital (PAH or RBWH), all non-elective services will be covered. **OSHC does not cover many pre-existing conditions, dental, or optical.** If you require care for a pre-existing condition or dental/optical, you may wish to consider purchasing extended health coverage (options are available through OSHC).

You have the option of having UQ arrange OSHC for you, or of arranging for your own OSHC policy (for 51 months). If you choose to arrange coverage yourself, you must select one of the OSHC providers approved by the Australian Government and include evidence (insurance certificate) of coverage with your acceptance documents. Your policy must cover the length of your visa, January 1 of your matriculation year to March 31, of the year after you graduate.

Criminal History Check

Accepted Students are required to provide a Criminal History check. The background check can take up to three months to be processed and should be completed in due time. As Ochsner students, we are considered international students and are required to submit **two** criminal history checks:

- 1) Student background check using Precheck (<https://www.precheck.com/>)

- 2) FBI records check (<https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/identity-history-summary-checks>)

More details regarding the instructions on completing this task can be found at <https://medicine-program.uq.edu.au/node/5103/3#3>

BEFORE YOUR FLIGHT

Finances

Open a credit card account with no foreign transaction fees. Many use one with travel points and rewards to help pay for plane tickets! Check with your current bank to see if it has any Australian affiliates in order to open an Australian account from the US before you leave. If not, there are plenty of options of banks here in Australia. One option is to open a Citibank account in the U.S., then open one in Australia. That way you can transfer money between the U.S. and Australia. It is possible to have your loan money deposited into a US or Australian Bank, look into which option will work best for you.

When should I arrive in Brisbane?

It depends on how long it takes you to get settled in a new city. Australia is relatively similar to the United States so getting acclimated is not as hard as other international locations may be. In general, we recommend giving yourself two weeks before orientation day. Use this time to connect with your future schoolmates and explore the different neighborhoods in Brisbane. Finding a place to live can take a few days. However, it is possible to accomplish all this within one week's time.

Buy Plane Ticket

You are eligible to purchase flights using studentuniverse.com, kayak.com, expedia.com, travelocity.com, studentflights.com, or statravel.com—requires registering with an International Student Identification Card to receive certain deals (approx. \$25 for the ISIC card). Some students opted to purchase a round-trip ticket while others purchased a one-way ticket. Here are a few things to keep in mind when planning your travels:

- The mid-semester exam will likely take place in Week 9, though the mid-semester break is not always halfway through the semester (sometimes it's between Weeks 8 and 9, sometimes between 10 and 11, etc.) as it is linked to when Easter is. [This means you may have an exam directly after break or your break may be scheduled for after you've sat the exam.](#)
- There is a 2-week break following the end of semester exam for Year 1. This is usually the last two weeks of June but check your academic calendar.
- Exact dates for exams are not released until 6-7 weeks before the exam period.
- All Year 1 Ochsner Students are required to complete 8 weeks of an elective requirement in Australia during the summer after Year 1 (Nov-Jan). This is called "observership".

Secure Temporary Accommodation

Arrange early accommodation with your classmates via the Facebook group and/or pre-arranged meet-ups. There is a map of Brisbane neighborhoods on page 14 to help you pick what area you'd like to stay in. There

is a wide-range of accommodations in and around Brisbane depending on your needs and budget:

- **Airbnb**
- **Current Student Apartments:** Many of the students in the year above you will be on elective during the time you are arriving. Post in the Facebook group, look out for a January student rental excel sheet, or ask your Mentor if they know of somewhere you could stay when you first arrive.
- **Hostels:** \$20-\$30 AUD per night in a shared dorm. Check out options at www.hostelworld.com
- **Hotels:** There are a range of hotels in Brisbane at many different price points and amenities.
- **UQ International House:** Residential college at UQ offering private rooms for short-term accommodations (\$55 AUD per night, discounted weekly rates)

Request Your Free Airport Transfer

Arrange a free pick-up from the airport (available after Dec 1) through UQ airport reception system:

https://www.uq.edu.au/secure/accommodation/int_stud/. They will take you wherever you plan to stay in Brisbane. Someone will meet you at the arrival gate. Only caveat is because it is a car-share ride, there might be a bit of a wait if there are other students on a different flight. Make sure you request this ahead of time (approximately a week before you fly out).

What To Pack?

Make sure you have paper and electronic copies of your:

- Passport (valid for at least 6 months)
- Confirmation of accommodation (you must provide an Australian address for where you'll be staying when you first get here when landing in Australia at border patrol)
- Offer letter
- Confirmation of Enrollment
- Reference letters (for housing applications) or phone numbers of previous landlords at the very least.

Generally speaking, things are a bit more expensive in Australia. There are a few items you may want to consider bringing with you.

Electronics

Most electronics are generally more expensive in Australia (depending on the current exchange rate). Goods and devices can be purchased at Target, and Kmart also sells electronics and all the school supplies you will need. We recommend you bring these:

- Laptop
- Cell Phone (If you purchased your phone through a network provider, it may be "locked". This means that your phone will only work with a SIM card from that provider, which is very inconvenient when living abroad. Contact your provider to "unlock" your phone or purchase a phone for full price at the Apple or Microsoft store, for example, to assure your phone is unlocked.)
- USB Drive
- External Hard Drive (At least 200 GB for the "drive" of study materials will give you when you get here- you can pick one up at Duty Free in the airport too)
- Tablet (Many students use one of these as most textbooks are available as PDFs)

- Adapters (Australia uses a different outlet so everything you want to plug in from the States must have any adapter. Devices labeled as “110-240V” will only need a plug adapter. Without this designation you will need a voltage converter. An adapter just helps the plugs on your electronics fit into foreign outlets, while a converter can change the voltage found in an outlet to match that of your devices.)

Stethoscope

It is worth investing in a decent stethoscope, as it will last you throughout your medical training. While you may not appreciate having a higher quality stethoscope your 1st year, you will on the wards in later years. [The Littmann Cardio III](#) is very popular with students and physicians—it is absolutely worth the difference in cost for a better stethoscope, although for first and second year you should be fine with a less expensive version if you prefer to wait to buy a higher end one.

ETC.

If there are any medications, toiletries, makeup, etc. that you are fond of in the US, it may be beneficial for you to pack up some extras. Most products are available in Australia, but it may cost more!

If you have extra room, you might want to consider packing these items. They are either not available, hard to find, and/or cost significantly more.

- Excedrin
- Alka-Seltzer
- If you have allergies, your preferred medicines/nasal spray
- Zinc Oxide/Titanium Dioxide based sunscreen

Depending on your personal needs...

- Dryer Sheets (are not commonly sold in AUS)
- Tampons with applicators
- Post-its
- 3 Ring Binders/hole punches are hard to find

Books

Most textbooks are provided in the class rooms and in electronic format via the UQ library. All textbooks are also available to borrow from any UQ library. It is personal preference if you want a hard copy, though we recommend a decent anatomy book/atlas that you don't mind getting dirty during lab.

There are various options to purchase books:

- Medical bookstore (at St. Lucia or Herston)
- Online (www.bookdepository.co.uk / amazon.com)
- Used from us (The upper years)
- UQMS Marketplace (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/UQMSMarketplace/>)

Lab Coat and Safety Glasses

You need a basic lab coat and safety glasses for microbiology and anatomy laboratory classes, not the hospital. These are also available on campus for \$30.

What to Wear to Lab?

UQ is very strict and particular about proper laboratory attire. You must wear [closed toe shoes](#) that cover the tops of your feet in microbiology, anatomy, physiology, and histology labs. You will not be allowed entry into the labs if your shoes do not meet the criteria and they will check! In the anatomy lab, you must wear a lab coat and safety glasses at all times.

In Year 1, some clinical coaches will require you to dress in clinical attire for Clinical Coaching. Depending on your elective of choice, you will be working in clinics, hospital wards, and/or the theater (a.k.a. operating room) and will be required to dress in clinical attire or hospital scrubs. Moreover, Year 2 Clinical Coaching sessions will take place in hospitals, seeing patients and you will be required to dress in clinical attire. [Clinical attire](#) entails closed-toe shoes, slacks and collared shirt, knee-length dress or slacks and appropriate tops. No ties are necessary during first year, but for elective or 2nd year you may wear one - if you wear a tie in the hospital, you need a tie clip.

Weather

Brisbane has a subtropical climate with warm or hot weather for most of the year. The sun is intense and shines often in Brisbane. But the temperature can vary throughout the day, especially in the “winter” months. We recommend you bring layers and pack wisely and comfortably. Keep in mind that it will be cold in places like Melbourne, Tasmania, and New Zealand during the winter months so you may want to bring some winter clothes if you plan to travel during the winter months to these locations.

Summer (November – March): low of 70F overnight, high of 95-100F by afternoon. Humid (but not tropical humid), rainy season so you will get the occasional evening thunderstorm. It gets very hot from noon to 2pm. Stay hydrated and wear sunscreen.

Autumn (March – May): low of 60-65F overnight, high of 80F by afternoon. The climate gets a bit cooler with crisp days and nights. The sun still shines brightly and so make sure you don't forget that sunscreen.

Winter (June – August): low of 40-45F overnight, high of 65-70F by afternoon. The winters are mild. Think Southern California. It can get a bit chilly in the morning and night, but sunny in the afternoons. The temperature rarely falls below 35 at night, or below 55 past mid morning.

Spring (September – November): low of 50-55F overnight, high of 70-75F by afternoon. Very similar to autumn. Crisp mornings. Sunny afternoons. Cool evenings.

LANDING DOWN UNDER

To Do List

- Grab cash from an ATM
- Find a ride to your accommodation (UQ Shuttle, Airport Train, UBER, Taxi)

- Grab a Pre-Paid SIM card for your phone
- Open a bank account
- Meet up with your classmates. Chill, Explore, Enjoy.
- Check out St. Lucia Campus
- Grab your Student ID.
- Buy a GoCard for public transport. These can be purchased from major public transport stations (like at the airport or Central Station) or at any 7/11. This is the best way to pay for the bus, ferry, or train around the state of Queensland. Be sure to register your card once you get it online and apply for a Student Concession (discount).

Cash vs. Card (EFTPOS)

Withdraw some cash from an ATM at the airport or exchange your US dollars for Australian dollars if you would like. Most places accept credit cards or debit cards for payment with Visa, MasterCard logo. For your Australian cards, make sure to select savings rather than checking (it is the main account for banks). Most credit/debit cards here are use PayWave or EFTPOS, which means you just tap them on the card reader. ApplePay or the equivalent will work here and is the easiest way to use American cards.

Airport Ride

If you arranged for pick up with UQ, locate the UQ representative at the airport's Arrivals gate holding a placard with your name on it.

Other Airport Transport Options

- **Uber/Ola:** Yes, they have Uber in Brisbane! If you have the app on your phone, you can connect to the airport free Wi-Fi and summon a ride to pick you up. Cost - around \$30-\$45 AUD (there is no Lyft)
- **Taxi:** Ride to Brisbane CBD - around \$40-45 AUD.
- **Train:** Brisbane Airtrain links the airport to stations in/around Brisbane city. One way ride is \$17 AUD. <http://www.airtrain.com.au>

Cell Phone

You want to prioritize this, as you will need to have a phone to conduct your housing search. If you have an unlocked phone you can purchase a pre-paid SIM card or sign up for a monthly plan. If you do not have an unlocked phone, you can easily purchase a phone and sign-up for a 2-year plan. This website compares various cell phone plans in Australia: <http://www.whistleout.com.au/MobilePhones>.

Below is a general guideline:

Prepaid

You can bring a phone from home, or purchase a go-phone when you arrive. Prepaid SIM cards cost approximately \$30 and will get you through the housing search, but you may want to find a more long-term solution once you are settled.

Contract

This is probably a safe option if you did not bring a phone to Australia, although there are the same financial

pitfalls as cellphone contracts in the States (early termination fees, overages, etc).

- iPhones, Samsung Galaxy, etc often come free with a 2 year contract (\$45-55 per month).
- If you already have a phone, keep in mind that it may be able to be unlocked once you arrive. This will allow you to purchase a full data, calls, and texts plan for approximately \$15-40/month
- Australian cellular providers operate on a GSM standard. This means that phones from AT&T and T Mobile will function on this network. Check with your phone company for compatibility.
- The companies are all pretty reliable, so opt for the cheapest plan and save \$\$\$. Vodafone is the least expensive, but has unreliable service outside major metropolitan areas. Optus/Virgin (same network) are both generally good. Telstra has the best coverage and data speeds, but may be more expensive.
- **Required Documentation for Contracts:** It is necessary to provide various levels of identification to sign a phone contract. Proof of housing (i.e. copy of the lease, receipt from Hostel with name and address will sometimes work as a temporary measure), passport, an Australian bank account statement (stamped by the bank), and your financial aid award letter are often requirements.

Visit UQ

Go to the UQ campus (campus map located at <http://www.uq.edu.au/maps/pdf/StLuciaMap.pdf>;
iPhone/Android campus navigation guide at <http://uq.edu.au/uqnav/>).

Get your **student ID** card from the Prentice Building (Building Number 42). Be sure to bring a photo ID and your Conformation of Enrollment. They will take your picture for the card!

Using On-Campus Computer and Connecting to the Internet

Set up your UQ tech account at a library computer. Be sure to bring the document noting your assigned UQ login. You need to have your student ID before activating your account. Once you have activated your account, you can use the campus computers and Internet.

Free Wi-Fi is not as abundant in Brisbane as it is in the U.S. You can find limited free Internet at some restaurants/cafes. You can also find free Internet at the Queensland State Library in South Brisbane and certain public spaces, like Queen St Mall in City Center or the South Bank Parklands. There is free Wi-Fi on campus as well.

Banking

It only takes a few minutes to open an account in Australia and most student accounts are free. You may want to do this shortly after arrival because **you will need to provide proof of an Australian bank account for housing applications**. The main banks here are, ANZ, Commonwealth, NAB, WestPac and Citibank (see Finances section for more information).

- ANZ and Commonwealth both have branches on campus. There are also ATMs for WestPac and NAB.
- If you use Bank of America at home you can use WestPac ATMs without fees in Brisbane (WA and ID residents – the maximum daily withdrawal is \$300 via WestPac). Maximum withdrawal is around \$800, but you can ask to have it increased.

- Some brokerage firms do not charge withdrawal fees for any ATM (i.e. Charles Schwab)
- Debit/credit card transactions are referred to as “EFTPOS” in Australia
 - o Choose from “Cheque”, “Savings”, or “Credit”
 - If using a US or Australian Debit card at an ATM, your “Checking” account is likely the Australian “Savings” account
 - o Visa vs. Mastercard vs. Discover vs. American Express
 - If a vendor accepts Visa they usually accept MC and vice versa
 - Discover and American Express are only accepted at a limited number of places

Transferring Funds between USA and Australia

- If you have a U.S. Citibank account, the quickest and easiest way to transfer money between Australia and the U.S. is to open a Citibank account in Australia. Student accounts are free and foreign transfers between Citibank accounts are also free and can be made online. The only caveat, they only have one branch office in CBD, but you can use WestPac ATM machines to withdraw money free-of-charge.
- The Charles Schwab account is also an option; it allows you to pull out Australian Dollars from foreign ATMs with no charges. The ATMs have had some of the best exchange rates for the past year.
- XE.com offers low/no fee international transfers
- Wiring money through a Western Union type outlet is an option, but may incur additional costs
- Check with your bank at home about international transfer fees
- Exchanging at kiosks tends to be the worst exchange rate
- [Transferring money from the US to Australia can take up to two weeks through most money transfer programs.](#)

General Budget

- **Rent:** \$175-\$300/week (depends on neighborhood and roommate situation)
- **Utilities:** \$20/week (variable based on how “green” you live)
- **Internet:** \$15-\$20/week (split between whomever you live with)
- **Groceries:** \$75-\$150 per person/week
- **Phone:** \$5-\$20/week
- **Public Transport:** \$20/week
- **Entertainment:** Going out is expensive and is comparable to the more expensive major US cities. Most bars don’t charge cover, but drinks are more expensive. Movies are cheaper. Check Groupon/LivingSocial for deals to take advantage of.
- **Fitness:** \$15-\$30/week UQ offers a gym membership and there are plenty of fitness clubs to choose from (Fitness First, Snap Fitness, Anytime Fitness, Etc). Yoga, Pilates, dance studios, and boxing gyms are all around Brisbane. There is free rock climbing in Kangaroo Point so bring your gear. The closest beach (Gold Coast) is around 45 mins by car or an hour-ish by public transport. A few parks have random equipment that’s free to use.

Ways to Save Money

- Bring your own unlocked phone
- Shop at the local and outdoor markets
- Limit alcohol (so expensive....)
 - Drink wine instead, get used to “goon” (box wine)
- Use your GoCard and get the student discount on it
- Travel off peak (Peak is 7am-10am / 3:30pm-7pm) for a 15% savings per trip
- Travel within the hour of your last trip to only pay if you cross into a new zone
- Don't get cable
- You can still use your Netflix though you'll need a VPN for Hulu/HBO Go accounts or to access some shows from Netflix. Otherwise you can set up accounts with Foxtel or Stan which are Australian streaming services.
- Limit electricity use
- Ride a bike

GETTING AROUND

Brisbane's public transportation is a reliable service which most students use daily. There are buses, trains, and the CityCat – a catamaran/ferry that runs from Uni to the other side of Brisbane. Frequency of transport depends on time of day, day of the week, and which form of transit you are taking. Generally speaking, public transport becomes less frequent around 7PM, and many lines stop around midnight. Weekends and public holidays run on reduced services. Use Google Maps or the TransLink app to check out the different routes. Some popular bus routes can be seen on page 16.

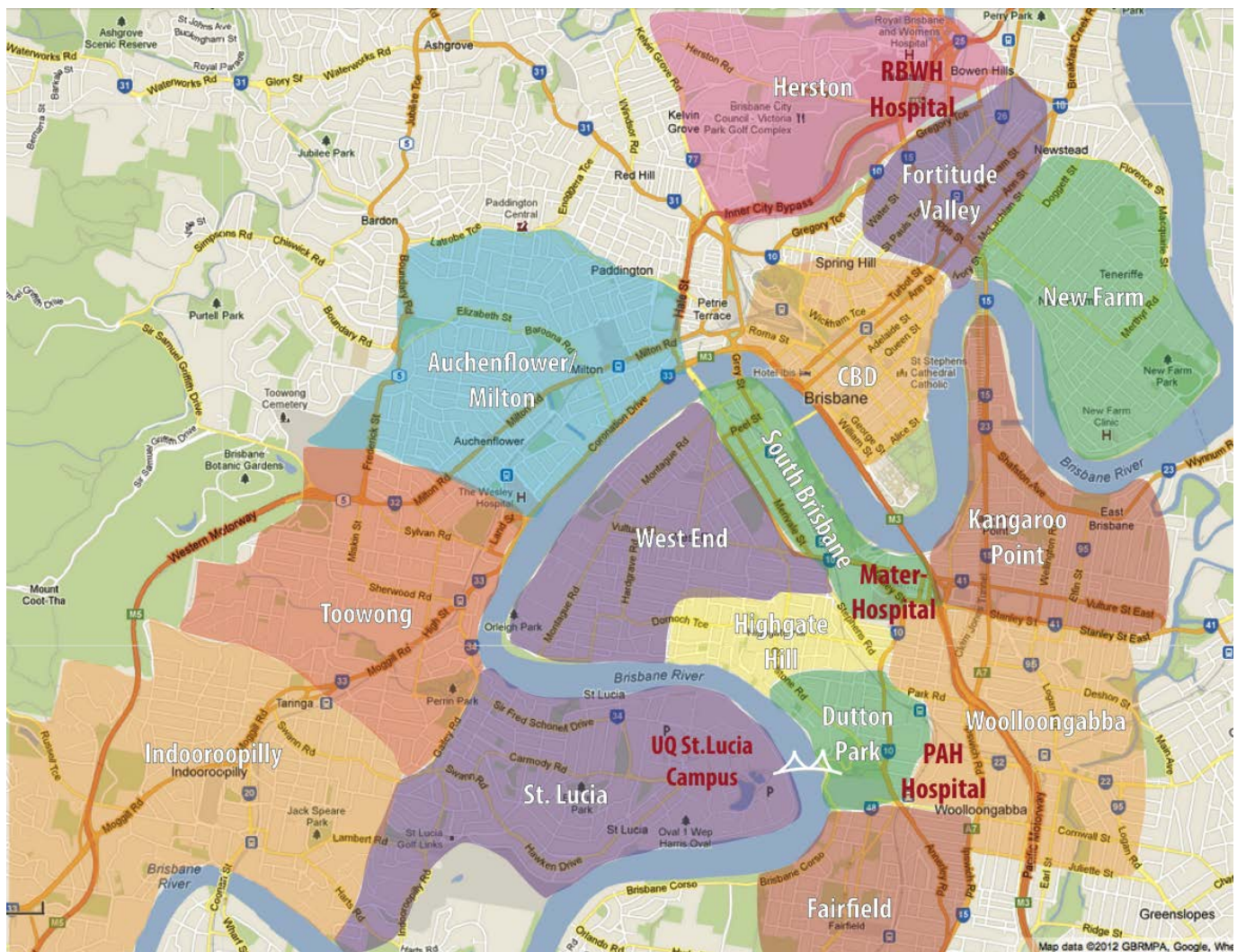
Other Modes of Transport

- Driving
 - o Your US driver's license is accepted in Australia so there is no need to get an Australian driver's license.
 - o Most Ochsners do not get cars due to the costs that come along with ownership: insurance, gas, parking, and registration.
 - o The few who have cars have found Gumtree as a good place to pick up a used one
 - o Car Sharing: GoGet Carshare (www.goget.com.au/) offers free student memberships with a refundable deposit. Pods are around CBD.
 - o Car rental: Renting is very easy here with a US Drivers and prices are around the same as in the US. There is an additional fee for those under 25.
- Bike
 - o Pack your bike or buy one here.
 - o Bikes cannot be taken on buses, but can be taken on the ferry (CityCat).
- Motorcycle
 - o Endorsements from the US will carry over

BRISBANE NEIGHBORHOODS

Deciding where to live is very much a personal preference and its best to explore each neighborhood shortly after arrival. Below are brief descriptions of some of the neighborhoods in Brisbane. For detailed description of each suburb in Brisbane, visit UQ Accommodations Suburb Guide: <https://www.uq.edu.au/student-services/apps/suburbguide/#/suburbs>

As you consider housing options, keep in mind in Year 1, most of your time will be spent in St. Lucia campus where lectures, CBL, Anatomy and Physiology practicals are held (more on these classes on page 19). In Year 2, the majority of your time will be spent at your assigned hospital where CBL and clinical coaching are held. Be sure to figure out the transportation route you will use to get to campus and the hospital during the week when considering a neighborhood. You may want to consider living in a place with access to heavily traveled routes or major connection hubs. With these considerations in mind, you will not want a commute to campus with more than 1 connection or a travel time longer than 40 minutes. It is also good to live in an area with more than 1 transportation option for getting to campus.



Most Popular Brisbane Neighborhoods

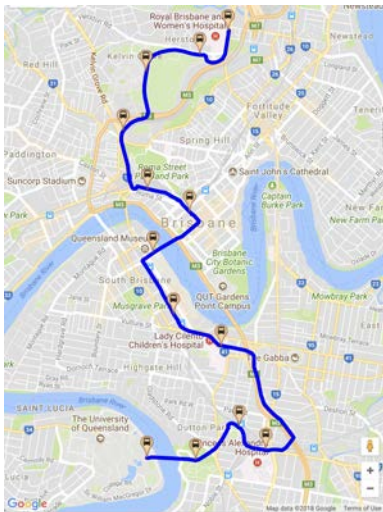
- **St. Lucia** is a suburban area. It is almost entirely residential, with no nightlife. It is rather densely populated with a mix of students and families, and has small grocery stores (which tend to be pricey) and a limited number of restaurants. Its close proximity to campus makes it desirable, thus rent here tends to be more expensive.
- **West End** is the hipster/trendy place – often a bit more gritty than other places, but popular to live because of the proximity to Boundary Street (lots of restaurants, grocery stores, bars) and the West End Saturday Market. Additionally, transportation is fairly widely available in West End for getting to Uni (via the CityCat ferry or bus lines), the various hospitals, etc.
- **Dutton Park and Highgate Hill** are right across the pedestrian/bus bridge (Eleanor Schonell Bridge aka “Green Bridge”) from campus. You could walk to school if you lived here, but it would take at least 30 minutes – riding a bike makes it a quick commute – and only 5 minutes by bus. It is entirely residential and suburban, but does have shopping centers as well. PAH clinical school and public transportation are nearby.
- **Indooroopilly** is next to St. Lucia and Toowong. It is also residential and suburban, but has a rather large mall and has a touch of nightlife.
- **Toowong** is west of St. Lucia and next to Indooroopilly. This area is a quick ride (bus or bicycle) to campus, or a 30 minute walk. It has a mall, a few small restaurants, and the Royal Exchange (“RE” - a favored watering hole for the undergrads). It has easy access to the train and buses, and a short walk to the CityCat ferry.
- **South Bank** is next to West End and is a fun, trendy, upscale area. It tends to be more expensive but popular among graduate and international students. It is a central location for most anything. You can find direct buses to CBD (5 min), UQ-St. Lucia (10 min), UQ-Herston/RBWH (20 min), and PA Hospital (10 min).
- **CBD** - Central Business District - is the heart of town. It is near the Riverside CityCat stop and where the Queen Street mall is located. It has lots of nightlife. It will be more expensive than most places. The CityCat is easiest for getting to school from here, but there are also plenty of buses. It is walking distance to “The Valley”, South Bank, the botanical garden, and other activities.
- **Fortitude Valley** – aka “The Valley” – Here you will find Chinatown and the hub of Brisbane nightlife. It may not be the best place to live, because sleep and study could be a challenge, but it is definitely a place you will visit a few times through the year.
- **Kangaroo Point** is across the river from the CBD and is located on a finger of land the Story Bridge connects to “The Valley”. It is mainly a residential area that has some nightlife and several parks. Transport to St. Lucia is via multiple buses or ferry, and expect a 45-minute commute.

- **New Farm** is next to “The Valley” and right across from Kangaroo Point. This is a mixed suburban neighborhood, with shops, nightlife, bars/bistros, and plenty of good restaurants. The commute to campus is via 2+ buses or CityCat, and will take 45 minutes. New Farm is very convenient to the RBWH clinical school for second year.
- **Herston/Bowen Hills** is next to the RBWH clinical school and extremely convenient for second year if you are assigned there. During peak traffic, commuting from Herston/Bowen Hills to the St. Lucia campus takes 45 minutes. Easy access to “The Valley”, public transportation and the CBD.

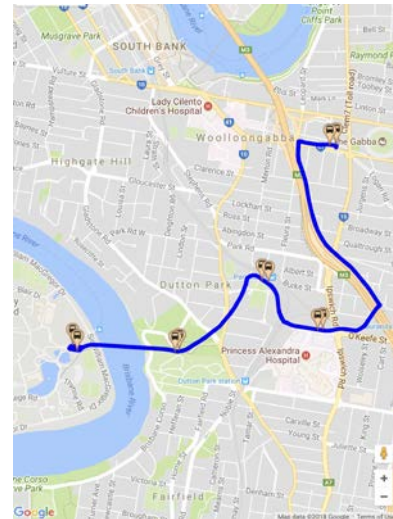
Most Popular UQ Public Transportation

Here are a few maps of the most common public transportation routes students use to get to campus. Consider living close to a bus stop on one of these routes!

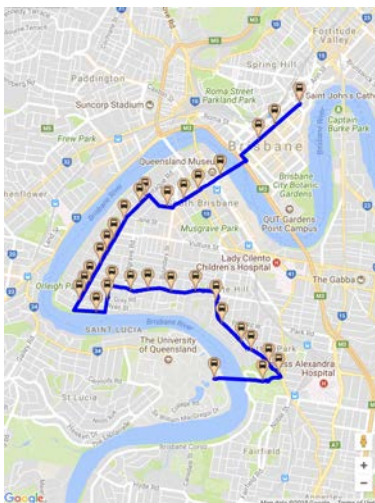
Route 66



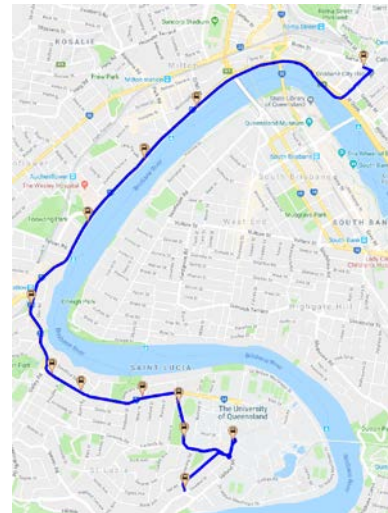
Route 29



Route 192



Route 412



HOUSING

Furnished vs. Unfurnished Apartments

Furnished apartments are more convenient, but will limit your housing options. Unfurnished accommodation is often cheaper; however, the logistics of buying all of your furniture can be challenging, but it's doable. There is an Ikea outside of Brisbane and online furniture stores (www.superamart.com.au) offer delivery for a reasonable fee. Used furniture is available on Gumtree (the Aussie version of Craigslist) and the Facebook UQ marketplace page.

Housing Search Engines

- <http://www.realestate.com.au/rent>
- <http://www.gumtree.com.au>
- <https://uqrentals.com.au>

What to expect in Housing in Brisbane?

Housing in Brisbane are built to stay cool in the warm, sunny climate most of the year. The following are not standard in homes in Queensland, though newer apartments may have them:

- Washing Machines/Dryers
- Microwaves, Dishwashers, Refrigerators
- Central A/C
- Central Heat
- Furniture
- Ceiling Fans

Tips

- Most leasing offices will rent out a washing machine and fridge for a small weekly cost for unfurnished apartments. Otherwise you will have to buy your own and sell it before leaving. Dryers are only provided if the apartment's balcony is small and there is not enough space for hang-drying.
- "Trust, but verify" as you conduct your housing search (i.e. make sure you see things like the refrigerator and oven in both the apartment during inspection and the lease during signing.)
- Be sure to read through the entire lease before signing
- Housing discrimination laws are very different here; be prepared to be turned down from many properties for being a student.
- Keep in mind that it is possible to find housing without going through a realtor.
- Customer service standards are different in Australia
 - o Aussies are much more laid back, and responses can be slow
 - o Be proactive, follow up with emails and phone calls well in advance of deadlines
- Queensland rental law regarding "Rent Arrears" states that if your rent is ever late by 14 days you can be evicted and given only 7 days to vacate.
- 2 or 3 bedroom apartments are the easiest to find. If you're looking for something else, it's possible but give yourself more time.

Documentation for Signing a Lease

Assemble a packet of information before leaving the States:

- Electronic and physical copy of IDs (Drivers, Passport, Bank Cards, Australian Bank Account Statement (Signed))
- At least 2 reference letters of phone numbers of references (You can use us OMSA members if needed, just let us know!)
- Proof of income (financial aid letter) or evidence that you have the funds to pay rent for the entire lease.

After Signing Your Lease

- Setup your Internet and make an appointment ASAP. To compare various Internet providers and plans, visit: <http://www.whistleout.com.au/Broadband/>.
- This process can be painstaking and could take up to 1 month so get on it as soon as possible!
- Get your insurance card mailed to your new address
 - o https://www.oshcallianzassistance.com.au/member_student/login.aspx?os150.aspx
 - o Your policy # = “[student ID #]UQ” (ex: 12345678UQ)
- Update your UQ information (sinet.uq.edu.au) with your new address.
- Update your GoCard with your new address so it matches whatever you’ve put on file for UQ. This will ensure that you maintain your student discount.
- Update the Blue Card Services with your new address so your Blue Card is mailed to the correct place

ACADEMICS

For details regarding the curriculum, visit: <https://medicine-program.uq.edu.au/phases>

All first year UQ MD students will have most classes at the St. Lucia campus. To learn about the campus, check out: <http://www.uq.edu.au/about/st-lucia>

During first year, one of your courses (Clinical Coaching) will take place at one of the three UQ affiliated public hospitals: Princess Alexandra Hospital (PA), Royal Brisbane Hospital (RBH), or Mater Hospital. PA and Mater Hospital are closer to St. Lucia campus, while RBH is adjacent to the Herston Campus, where the School of Medicine buildings are located.

More information on each of the hospitals can be found here:

Princess Alexandra Clinical Hospital: <https://medicine.uq.edu.au/pa-southside-clinical-school-0>

Royal Brisbane Clinical Hospital: <https://medicine.uq.edu.au/royal-brisbane-clinical-school-0>

Mater Clinical Hospital: <https://medicine.uq.edu.au/mater-clinical-school-0>

To access the online Clinical School Preference System, go to:

<http://communicate.health.uq.edu.au/em/forms/subscribe.php?db=544172&s=213776&a=36123&k=2906b3e>

Complete your preference by providing your name, student ID number, and email address. Then select your Clinical School Preference for Year 1. Please note, this is only a preference. Which hospital you are zoned at will depend on which Case Based Learning (CBL) Group you sign up for. More information about that can be found below.

Typical Class Schedule

- A few weeks before classes start, you will be given access to a set of 50 “mudmaps”, or course timetables. During Sign-On, you will sign up for whichever timetable you like the best. Have a few backups as Sign-On happens fast and you may not get your top choice. More details will be provided for the sign-on process in mid-January.
- Case-Based Learning (CBL) is twice a week and consists of a simulated case which you work through with your CBL group (typically 10-11 students). The cases revolve around the lectures presented throughout the week and is designed to introduce clinical reasoning and topics for study. Tutors, who are qualified doctors, are present to oversee the discussion, but CBL discussions are primarily directed by students. [CBL is on a set schedule and will be on the same days/times every week in Year 1.](#)
- Practicals (“pracs”) are what we would typically refer to as ‘lab’. You will have a prac for histology, microbiology, anatomy, physiology and pathology. The prac schedule changes weekly, so you might not have the same pracs week to week, nor will you necessarily have them at the same time every week.
- Clinical coaching takes place at your assigned hospital. A qualified doctor teaches these sessions and you are with the same students in your CBL group. This is your opportunity to learn history taking skills, clinical examination techniques, and practice clinical reasoning skills (It is awesome!).
- Lectures take place in blocks and the topics change weekly. Lectures run on the same schedule each week. You will have lectures for Clinical Science, Ethics, and Health, Society, and Research (HSR).

- Ethics lectures are in a 2-hour block once a week. A large part of the ethics course is learning ethical and legal obligations of Australian physicians. Though universal themes in medical ethics exist and some of the precedent and case law used in Australia is from the US, be wary when applying some of the learned rules back in the States.
- USMLE tutorial is once a week and lasts for 2 hours. It is designed to acclimate you to the types of questions and level of material which will be on the exam. This is student run and will not appear on your UQ timetable.
- Set time aside during your breaks between classes for studying. A good time management system will allow you to have free time on weekends.
- There is a required observership that takes place in the summer between years 1 and 2 (Nov-Jan). This is a great opportunity to shadow a physician, practice some of what you've already learned, and get to know the Australian healthcare system. As an Ochsner student, you will be required to complete 8 weeks of observership anywhere in Australia. UQ will help you set up one of the 4 week blocks and the other must be set up on your own. OMSA has a database of contacts so you should be all set with finding someone to work with!
- This is a screenshot of an example week (self-directed study not listed), some weeks are lighter and some are heavier as not every tutorial or discussion will meet every week:

7am				
8am	HSR Lecture 8am, Advanced Engineering	Clinical Science Lecture 8am, Schonell Theatre(22	Clinical Science Lecture 8am, Advanced Engineering	Ethics 8 – 9:50am Advanced Engineering (49) 200
9am	HSR Lecture 9am, Advanced Engineering		Clinical Science Lecture 9am, Advanced Engineering	Clinical Science Lecture 9am, Advanced Engineering
10am	Clinical Science Lecture 10am, Advanced Engineering	CBL 10am – 12:20pm Building 69(69) 513		CBL 10am – 12:20pm Building 69(69) 513
11am	Clinical Science Lecture 11am, Advanced Engineering		Clinical Coaching 11:30am – 1:20pm UQ Health Sciences (0901) 420	
12pm				
1pm	Anatomy Tutorial 12:30 – 2:20pm Otto Hirschfeld (81) LAB	HSR Discussion 1 – 2:50pm Michie (09) 836	Pathology Tutorial 1:30 – 3:20pm UQ Health Sciences (0901) 616	
2pm				
3pm	Histology Tutorial 3 – 4:50pm Gordon Greenwood (32) 215			
4pm				
5pm				
6pm				

USMLE Preparation (Overview)

You must take USMLE Step 1 before you start the clinical rotations in Ochsner in Year 3. You can sit the exam in Australia (Sydney or Melbourne) or in the U.S. (which is what is recommended).

- During first year, 2nd year students run the USMLE tutorial sessions. The purpose of these sessions is to provide an introduction to the exam and reinforcement for UQ content.
- UQ provides all Ochsner students with copies of First Aid for the USMLE
- In Year 2, USMLE tutorials are run by International 3rd and 4th year students who have taken the USMLE and scored well.
- We have established collections of reference books for USMLE preparation in the UQ libraries.
- In the second semester of your 2nd year, you will be enrolled in a 2 credit pass/fail USMLE Study course. These currently run as weekly group tutorials in which a 3rd or 4th year who has sat Step 1 will run through a collection of questions and the relevant principles behind them. As part of the class, you will be required to sit 3 NBME Step 1 practice exams in July, September, and November, as well as develop USMLE style questions of your own in areas that you identify as weak points. You will also receive a free 6 month subscription to the UWorld Question Bank. This course is new and subject to change in set up, though.
- **Do not stress about this at this point.** There is a lot of support in place for you!

What to Expect?

- Self-directed learning. Take initiative in your learning. Make a schedule for yourself and stay on top of the material.
- Most of the lectures are recorded and are accessible through Blackboard. Get familiar with Blackboard.
- Your weekly schedule and timetable is subject to change. Check it regularly!
- The mid-semester exam and final exams for all courses are all multiple-choice.
- You will spend most of your time with your CBL group. Get to know them, it's a great experience working with people from such different backgrounds.
- You will be overwhelmed with resources when you get here. Pick what works for you.
- You will need to supplement and integrate microbiology and biochemistry to prepare for the USMLE Step 1.
- Clinical Coaching is enjoyable and practical. In Year 1, you learn how to take patient histories and perform clinical examinations. In Year 2, you get to practice your skills on real patients in the wards with your clinical coach (e.g. a Resident, Registrar or Consultant). Take advantage of this opportunity!
- Also take advantage of the observership. This provides invaluable practical experience and clinical exposure. Make connections with the doctors. You can also opt to do research as an elective.
- There are plenty of opportunities to do research. Be proactive, but don't compromise your grades.
- You must take the USMLE Step 1 before you start third year.
- Studying can get a bit overwhelming. Take a break. Travel. Get involved. Indulge in something else besides Med. Smell the flowers. Bottom line: De-stress once in a while.
- **UQ Student Services** are a great resource in case you need them. They offer learning support and appointments with students who feel they need additional support through-out their studies. An appointment can be made by going to <https://www.uq.edu.au/student-services/appointments>

EXTRACURRICULAR

Get involved!

There are many opportunities for student involvement at UQ and in New Orleans. Beyond OMSA, we are well represented in all of UQ's student organizations. There are also plenty of club sports to play: rugby, Aussie rules football, basketball, and more. There will be many opportunities to attend academic, social, and leadership conferences.

Research and Scholarships

There are a number of ways to do research. For details go to: <https://medicine-program.uq.edu.au/research>

Seek out paid summer and Winter Research positions through UQ Advantage
<http://www.uq.edu.au/uqadvantage/summer-research>.

If you are a published researcher, there are paid fellowships available through the American Australian Association that you can apply for: <https://americanaustralian.site-ym.com/?page=UStoAusFellowship>.

There is also an Intercalated MD-PhD or MD-MPhil in Research program offered. They are both a mixture of full-time and part-time research that is 'intercalated' with the MD degree. Both the Intercalate MD-PhD or MD-MPhil require time out of the medical program to undertake full-time research between MD Year 2 and MD Year 3 (one year for the MPhil, 2-3 for the PhD) and approval from the MD Research Director to apply to enroll in the MPhil or PhD. Furthermore, there is a MD-Masters in Public Health program as well. More information on all three of these programs can be found here: <https://medicine-program.uq.edu.au/research/research-your-medical-degree>.

Travel

You will have a many opportunities to travel. Some of the places to visit:

- Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary to meet kangaroos, Koalas, Tasmanian Devils, and more!
- Take a ferry to Stradbroke Island. Kayak with dolphins and spot the whales in the winter.
- Head to Fraser Island for some rugged beach/forest experience. Go camping, hang out with a dingo.
- Sail the Whitsundays
- Surf in Gold Coast
- Bushwalk in the ancient forests
- Scuba the Great Barrier Reef. Head to Heron Island or Turtle Island to snorkel
- Always keep an eye out for flight deals and get out there. SF, NY, Sydney, Melbourne, Tokyo, Auckland, Fiji, Bali.
- Take advantage of where you are, go see stuff you never have before, now is the time.
- Have your family and friends meet you in Asia, Australia, or Hawaii.

MARRIED STUDENTS AND CHILDREN

Visa

First, always confirm your individual situation with a certified Visa officer via the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs (<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500>) However, it may be hard to get certain questions about your status answered quickly until your application has been lodged, at which time you will be assigned a case worker whom you can contact directly regarding via email. [In some cases your SO may be able to apply for their own visa through their employment.](#)

- Be sure to list ALL dependents on your student visa at the time that you lodge the application. This includes a spouse, de facto partner, or children who could possibly be joining you, even if they do not arrive with you in Brisbane initially. Adding them at a later time could result in additional visa fees (which can be as high as the cost of the original visa!) or rejection of the application. Verify any specific enquiries BEFORE you lodge your application to avoid any miscommunication with the Department of Home Affairs.
- All dependents must have OSHC cover for the entire duration of your visa (just like your own OSHC coverage) if you plan for them to join you at any point in the program, regardless of their actual length of stay.
- You do not have to purchase OSHC via Allianz, and it would be in your benefit to shop around with the various OSHC sanctioned providers for the best overall price and coverage. Also, individual plans for each member may be cheaper than a combined “family plan” for OSHC. Confirm specifics with each provider and refer to the Department of Home Affairs website for approved OSHC providers/terms before purchasing any policies:
https://www.privatehealth.gov.au/health_insurance/overseas/overseas_student_health_cover.htm
- A Spouse/De facto partner is no longer restricted to a maximum number of work hours if they are on your student visa

Spouses Working in Australia

Things to consider:

- If planning to travel to Australia on your student visa, your spouse will be able to work 40 hrs/week
- Minimum wage is approx. \$15/hr—this varies by age and experience, however most employers will pay competitive wages
- To work, most employers will require a Tax File Number, for income tax reporting purposes, which is free and can be applied for once you arrive via their website:
<https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Tax-file-number/>
- Some employers may wish to sponsor a visa for your spouse, which will vary by employer and industry. This can usually be arranged after your spouse’s arrival and they would be taken off your visa and have their own. Again, this all must be confirmed with the Department of Home Affairs directly.

Childcare

If childcare is needed, be sure to [sign up as soon as possible as centers fill up quickly and they have long wait lists](#). The average price for childcare is \$75-\$98 AUD/day. Below are the recommended childcare centers from students:

- UQ Child Care at St. Lucia
- Early Learning Center at Princess Alexandra Hospital
- Nazareth Early Learning Center

Brisbane is very child friendly, and the city offers amazing amenities to keep children entertained. Here are a few recommendations:

- New Farm Park
- Southbank Parklands (public swimming pool and man-made beach)
- City Botanical Gardens Parks
- Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary (recommended for adults too!)
- Frew Park in Auchenflower
- Hickory Dickory Rock at the State Library in Southbank – a sing-a-long program that runs every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday mornings
- Museums (it's free!)
- Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) Children's Art Centre

There are also a number of playgroups and mom groups. To connect with other parents in the area or have any other questions, feel free to join the Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/561655453894359/>. If you would like to connect with parents in the program, contact your OMSA representative.

Packing for Child(ren)

There is no need to over pack clothing, toys, etc. There are a ton of places to purchase baby stuff for cheap, especially second hand stores for children.

ETC.

Things to leave in the USA

- DVDs: they will not work in Australian DVD players. Similarly, do not bring a DVD player, as Australian DVDs won't work in them.
- Blow dryer: It will not handle the voltage difference in Australia, even with a converter.
- Hair Straightener: Similar to blow dryers, it may or may not handle the voltage even with a converter—basic ceramic models start around \$30-\$45.
- Hair Clippers/shavers/anything with motors: they will burn out even with a voltage converter.

PC vs. Mac

- It does not matter, as long as you are comfortable with it.
- Most of the computers in labs and libraries are iMacs and will run either OSX or Windows (whichever is preferred by the user).

eReaders: Ipad vs. Tablet vs. Kindle?

- The general consensus is that iPads are better than other tablets. There are many useful apps, some of which allow students to collaborate and share study materials very easily. Textbook applications (i.e. Inkling) offer an affordable alternative to purchasing physical textbooks.
- Kindles are wonderful for reading, but not terribly useful for studying medicine.

Medicine

- Some over-the-counter medicines may be difficult to find here.
- Nurofen = Ibuprofen/Advil, and Paracetamol = Acetaminophen/Tylenol

QUESTIONS or SUGGESTIONS?

Send an Email to ochsner@uqms.org