

SMSV Orientation 2015

Dummies' guide to Studying in Australia 2015

Prepared by SMSV Orientation committee 2015

The Monash medicine freshies guide – Tailored to Singaporeans!

Introduction

Congratulations on being accepted in Monash Medicine Academic Year 2015!

Monash Medicine shares many similarities to traditional medical schools. It employs conventional teaching methods, such as lectures, tutorials and practicals to cover essential curricula and still relies on end of semester written exams and marked assignments handed out through the year to gauge the progress of its students.

However, unlike the medical schools in Singapore or the UK, there is an added emphasis on professional development at Monash. Besides studying medicinal science, students will also appreciate topics such as law and ethics, public health, the ESSENCE model and clinical skills. This knowledge may not necessarily be needed when diagnosing a patient but is still relevant to our development as healthcare professionals.

Anyhow, this guide is here to help you adjust to living in Melbourne, and also to give you helpful study tips in your first year here ☺

Part one: Essentials

1. Student VISA

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO COMPLETE YOUR STUDENT VISA BEFORE ENTERING AUSTRALIA! Do go on the Australian embassy's website for more information. **Also make sure you have updated your passport.**

What you have to do for your Visa (complete all steps):

1. Apply online and pay the nominal fee
2. Register and do your health check-up at the approved medical centres listed on the Australian immigration website
3. Receive your blood test results for Hepatitis C and HIV screening. **Bring this along to show the doctor at Monash University in Australia.**

For men: You have to submit your **exit permit** to SAF before leaving the country. Visit the NS portal or call (1800-eNS-NS-NS). You'll have to fill up an online form as well, and your exit permit should last 5 years.

2. Vaccinations

Here is a list of vaccinations that we strongly recommend.

Vaccination	Cost in AUD	Remarks
MMR (Measles/mumps/rubella)	N/A	Documented prior immunisation (childhood vaccination)
Varicella	\$66	Documented prior immunisation, or positive blood test results indicating you have the antibodies
Hepatitis B	3x \$29	Documented vaccination and blood test indicating you have the antibodies
Tuberculosis screening, aka Quaniferon test	\$55	Documented screening
dTpa	\$75	1 dose as an infant and 1 adult dose
Annual influenza shot	\$19	Documented shot (must be done in 2015)
Meningococcal C (menactra)	\$60	Not part of the list of vaccinations in 2014, but recommended by seniors (may appear in 2015!)
Hepatitis A	2x \$70	Not part of the list of vaccinations in 2014, but recommended by seniors (may appear in 2015!)

Do compare the prices between Singapore and Australia. Tests such as the Quantiferon screening for tuberculosis is **much cheaper in Australia**, while hepatitis A is much cheaper in Singapore. The official price list (including brand of vaccine) is on the Monash Medicine Singaporeans (Starting 2015) Facebook page (search "vaccinations").

Additionally, we recommend going to **Tan Tock Seng Hospital's Traveller's Clinic**. It's a one-stop place to get all your vaccinations (cheaper than polyclinics as well).

“So, I’ve done the vaccinations. What’s next?”

Make sure that you have the following to present to the doctor at Monash University:

1. Documentation of your vaccinations (In the form of certificates and/or WHO vaccination yellow booklet)
2. List of childhood immunisations done, countersigned by a nurse/GP – This can be obtained from Tan Tock Seng’s traveller’s clinic.
3. For men: Army vaccination list (Retrieve it from your camp MO)

Apart from these items, remember to bring along your **authority to enrol** as well as your **eCOE**.

Part two: Om nom nom

1. Food and eating out

Eating out is pretty expensive in Australia – meals on average cost \$8. However, on the bright side, most portions are also big, so at times you will be able to divide a single meal into lunch and dinner.

On campus: There is a large variety of food available on campus, ranging from mixed rice to western food, sushi and pizza. Mixed rice/sushi tends to get slightly cheaper after around 6pm.

Off campus eating: There are a variety of places to eat outside campus.

Clayton shopping district

Nearest to campus. Has really good Indian and Japanese BBQ food. It’s also the place guys go to cut their hair. There are many saloons available and recommendations will vary.

Glen Waverley

Feels like the Holland village of Singapore. There’s a Hong Kong restaurant that serves Chinese food (think Cha siew, roast duck etc.), really good fish and chips and a great Japanese restaurant.

Springvale

Sort of like a small Vietnam enclave in Melbourne. There are a lot of Asian grocers at cheap prices, and really good Vietnamese and Asian food in general.

2. Groceries

There are three major supermarkets in Melbourne.

Coles – Very much like Fairprice/NTUC in Singapore. They’re the most common supermarkets around Clayton and hence very popular. Shopping at coles also gives you a fuel voucher that helps you to save 4 cents per litre when topping up petrol at shell.

Woolworths – The cold storage counterpart. It has almost the same logo and has the same motto – *The Fresh Food people*. Anyway, I find that it’s a bit more expensive than Coles, though if you want the *best* deal, you have to shop around and at both Coles and Woolworths.

Aldi – Sheng Shiong? Maybe. Aldi is a different concept. They carry special Aldi-only brands, hence they tend to be cheaper. However, they do not stock everything so you are limited to what is available at Aldi then, and will probably need to drop by

Coles/Woolworths. A big annoyance is that Aldi does not provide plastic bags. Also, there are very few outlets, with the nearest one at Brandon Park shopping centre.

Asian grocers – The cheapest of the lot. Also, find your Asian fixes here (Think instant noodles, sauces, 100 plus, green tea, mooncakes etc.). I think of them as complements to Coles/Woolworths/Aldi.

Where are these supermarkets?

The Glen (Glen Waverley) – Woolworths, Coles & Asian grocers
Pinewood – Coles
Clayton – Coles and Asian grocers
Brandon Park – Coles and Aldi
Chadstone – Coles, Woolworths, Aldi, Asian grocers

Don't have a car and need groceries?

If you are unable to get a lift from a friend to the grocers, fear not!

Monash Residential Services provides a free shuttle bus to Brandon Park Shopping Centre on Saturday mornings until 12 noon. Aldi and Coles are located there, so your weekly grocery shopping fix is covered.

Part three: Academics

1. Overview

The curriculum layout throughout all 5 years of medical studies is broken down into 4 overarching themes or pillars:

1. Theme 1: Personal and Professional Development
2. Theme 2: Population, Society, Health and Illness
3. Theme 3: Foundations of Medicine
4. Theme 4: Clinical skills

Theme 1 expands on our behaviour, lifestyle choices and professional attitude as doctors. Specifically, it emphasizes on mindfulness and the ESSENCE model, a way of life that focuses obtaining the most wellbeing in today's fast pace society.

Theme 2 is focused on public health, with an emphasis on sociological problems in semester 1 and epidemiology (statistics) in semester 2. Theme 3 refers to medical science and theme 4 focuses on the clinical skills required as a doctor.

A varying subset of these 4 themes will have greater emphasis during each exam although all 4 themes will most definitely appear in all exams. Therefore, despite the tendency among Students to bank on theme 3, it is unwise and almost suicidal to leave out the other themes when preparing for exams!

2. Textbooks

In semester 1, It's still summer sunshine and as such, you don't really need a textbook. However, in semester two you'll need some books. So here's our recommended booklist.

Area of medicine	Textbook	Remarks
Anatomy	Moore Anatomy	Most popular anatomy book. Exam questions tend to come from this textbook!

	Gray's Anatomy	It's easier to read than Moore, but most of us just use Moore anyway.
	Anatomeia	This book is only helpful in semester 1 :/
Pharmacology	Katzung's basic & clinical pharmacology	Monash's pharmacology department does a good job with their own notes/ePharmacology and as such, a pharm book isn't really necessary.
	Rang & Dale's pharmacology	
	Pharmacology at a glance	
Physiology	Guyton & Hall	Physiology is also another area where the notes are comprehensive, although having a physiology reference book can really help with the understanding at times.
	Costanzo Physiology	
	Naish medical sciences	
Clinical skills	Talley & O'connor Clinical Examination	A useful guide for practical exams at the end of the year (OSCEs). Recommended!

How about the books not listed above?

The other books aren't really important, and you'll probably only need 1 or 2 pages from the books. Thus, it's more economical to borrow the books from the library, or use the eBook versions of them. (eBooks can be obtained from any senior ☺)

For each area of medicine, you only need 1 textbook, not all 3!

If you decide on purchasing books, it's strongly recommended to **buy your books in Singapore**. We have the (cheaper) international versions, where it's about half price as compared to similar books in Australia. Also do look out on the Facebook group to see if there are any seniors selling their textbooks.

3. Stationery

Stationery in Australia is INSANELY expensive – Do stock yourself up with stationery such as pens, pencils and foolscap!

4. VESPA

Free. Group. Tuition. VESPA is where us second years, in groups of 5-7, will provide you tips, notes, advice etc. on how to study and ace your exams. It's a huge way of assisting you guys into the Monash way of learning and testing ☺ Do note that VESPA is provided only to those who have signed up for SMSV during the orientation.

Part four: Transport

1. Car

You may have thought about purchasing a car in first year. Well, it's a lot more convenient, but at year 1, not necessary. Most of your learning is done on campus with few attachments to hospitals and clinics. Anyway, if you are thinking of a car, a new one costs around \$20,000, while a good used car ranges from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

2. Taxi

Taxis are really expensive in Australia, almost twice as expensive! Commuting by cab is costly, and late night taxi trips must be paid for in advance as an upfront deposit. Similar to Singapore, there are late night surcharges and charges for using toll roads.

3. Myki/Public Transport

Melbourne's version of EZ-link. You can purchase this at any convenience store, any tram station that has the top-up machine, or at the bus loop on campus. However, do realise that travelling by myki, though much cheaper than taking a taxi, can still be expensive – A trip across one zone costs \$6, while a trip across 2 is double the amount.

Starting 2015, there are concession passes available for international students, however, it isn't worth it unless you travel really often.

Clayton and Huntingdale station are the 2 stations closest to Monash University. However, you still need a bus ride to reach these stations. Do note that Clayton is in zone 2 while Huntingdale is in zone 1. Travelling within a zone is cheaper, thus the preference for Huntingdale.

On the topic of buses, they're extremely inaccurate, especially on weekends. There is a nice, helpful PTV app that you can download to help plan your journey. However, the app uses bus timetables to estimate your journey. As buses don't always abide by the timetable, you probably have to reach a bus stop 15-20 minutes prior to the stipulated timing to make sure you don't miss it. Well, at least you will enjoy Singapore's public transport more when you get back ☺

Part five: Accommodation

There are varying opinions on what kind of accommodation is best, so here's the rundown for you in a table:

Type	Pros	Cons
NRAS accommodation	Your own toilet and kitchen! It feels like a hotel without room service	Most expensive of the lot Bed mattress is thin and not suited for everyone
Old halls accommodation	Communal living! Share everything and make new friends!	Only slightly cheaper than NRAS; shared toilets/kitchens, old facilities & noisy neighbours
Off campus	Cheapest of the lot and you run your house the way you want to.	You settle your own bills, travelling to school is longer/more tedious

It's also important to note that if you are planning to live off-campus, you will need to purchase a parking permit in order to park on campus (upshot of \$500). The added advantage of living on campus is cheaper use of facilities (swimming pool/gyms are discounted by 50%).

Part 6: Shopping and amenities

1. Online Shopping

Shopping online is convenient, a good way to destress, and a great way to get items you need from the comfort of your chair/bed. (no Qoo10 though T.T) One click begets many wonders! However, please be careful not to overspend and burn a hole in your Australian pocket.

2. Chadstone Shopping Centre

Chaddy, as it is known, is essentially the 'ION' of Melbourne. It is touted as the 'largest shopping centre in the Southern Hemisphere', which says a lot, doesn't it? In terms of fashion, Chaddy carries both high end and street brands e.g. Chanel, Prada, Uniqlo, Zara, Kookai, etcetera and there's a good variety of style available.

In terms of food, Chaddy carries a range of fruit stalls, butchers and fish mongers, and also has Woolworths, Coles and Aldi available. There is, however, no asian grocer available here.

For things like houseware, appliances or linen, you can find them here at places like David Jones or Myers (both departmental stores like Isetan or Robinsons).

Do **look out for sales**, which happen quite regularly. VIP sales happen on Wednesday nights, and the whole of Chadstone goes on sale. Their opening hours are 9-5pm on Mon-Wed, 9-6pm on Sat-Sun, and 9-8pm on Thurs-Fri.

3. Westfield Doncaster

Westfield is a shopping centre group that you can find in several locations across Australia. It's similar to Chadstone, but much further away from our campus. Usually whatever's available at Chadstone is available at Westfield; Westfield has Hollister while Chaddy doesn't though!

4. City Shopping

Street shops along Swanston are good for shopping; you can find more street brands such as Factorie here. High end shopping is also available at Collins Street. Shopping malls (scaled down from Chadstone) include Emporium, Melbourne Central, Queen Victoria Market, etcetera. Pop-up indie markets occur every now and then, and they sell pretty cool and interesting vintage stuff if you're into that kinda thing, but they can be pretty ex.

5. DFO Shopping

Duty Free Outlets offer cheaper shopping, but don't guarantee that items are of super good quality/variety. They are, however, pretty far from campus. There are three DFO outlets including the Essendon DFO near the airport, the South Wharf DFO in South Banks, and the Moorabin DFO nearest to Clayton.

6. Amenities

David Jones, Myers (both available in the city, Chadstone, Doncaster and The Glen) are good for household stuff of better quality. There's IKEA at Clayton not far from school (some people walk/run there for the IKEA breakfast, haha!), Target in the city (QV), chadstone, The Glen, which sells lots of random things like appliances, clothes, toys, household things, etc. There's also Big W that's similar to Target, available in the city (QV). JB Hi-Fi sells electrical appliances such as computers, speakers, headphones etc., and can be found in places like Chadstone and the city. K mart is a cheap version of Target, and can be found in Chadstone/Burwood East, etc.

7. The Glen

The Glen is your average heartland shopping mall. It carries Woolworths, Coles, Target, David Jones and Myers, and shops like Cotton On, Sportsgirl, Lorna Jane, etc. There is also an asian grocer available near Woolworths.

-The end-

We wish you the very best in your studies in Melbourne!