

Law with Study Abroad in English:



A Comprehensive Student Guide

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ABOUT ME

Hi! My name is Elizabete and I am currently on my year abroad at Monash University in Melbourne. In this guide, I give you my top tips and tricks about what it is like to go on exchange at Monash University as a law student.

This guide should be used as an *addition* (**not** a substitute) to the information provided to you by the Warwick Law School, the Study Abroad Team and, of course, the Monash University website.

VISA

Be prepared to fill out what feels like endless documents to get your student visa granted. Be very organised about this as they are very important in getting you on that plane to Australia! Perhaps make a Word document with a checklist of all the documents you need to complete along with their deadlines so that you do not rush the process and cause unnecessary stress for yourself.

Medical Check

When filling out your documentation for a student visa, you will be required to recall every country you have visited in the past 10 years. Although this is a tedious task, it is important for Australian immigration in screening whether you might be a risk to Australia's unique biodiversity. Personally, I was not granted my visa until I had booked an appointment with a doctor to check if I was healthy and cleared, because I had previously visited Thailand - a country where diseases are more prevalent than in Europe.

The immigration portal where you apply for your visa identifies medical practices which specialise in these types of medical checks. I had to travel to Knightsbridge in London and had to pay for the medical check (which was a hefty £450!) myself, so be prepared to have to do this as well if you have visited Asia recently.

What to pack

Melbourne is known throughout Australia for having 4 seasons in one day, meaning it could be pouring rain one minute and get super warm 10 minutes later! When you arrive at Monash in July, it will be cold as it will be the middle of Australian winter. The Australian summer is roughly around late November-late February where temperatures can reach upwards of 40 degrees. Therefore, make sure you pack clothes for all seasons – Australia isn't warm all year round!

Money

One thing my friends and I wish we were more aware of prior to coming to Australia relates to living expenses. Despite Melbourne consistently being voted 'the world's most liveable city', it is quite expensive! My top advice here is to prepare for

higher living expenses than in Coventry/Leamington Spa and perhaps start saving up as soon as you know that your heart is set on Monash University in Melbourne. It is always better to start saving up sooner rather than later, especially when you start thinking about travelling around Australia or from Australia during your year abroad!

Open mind-set

If I can suggest any way to prepare for your year abroad, it is to have an open mind-set. Approach it with enthusiasm and curiosity! It is completely normal to feel nervous to move to another country, especially if you have never been there before, leaving behind your family, friends and your comfort zone. However, do not let the nerves get in the way of what could potentially be one of the best years of your life! It is such a cliché, but your year abroad will teach you so much – academically, culturally and about life in general. Do not be afraid of starting out completely fresh in a new environment.

Units (aka modules)

Choosing your units so far in advance can seem like an elusive task. Ask your study abroad co-ordinator for the list of units available to you and go through them all thoroughly to see what you are interested in. During your year abroad, you will only be required to take electives, i.e. units which are non-core to your law degree.

Example

Core units: Contract law, Property law, Criminal law, etc. *These are mandatory modules that you take during your time at Warwick University.*

Non-core units: Medicine and the law, Animal law, International law, etc. *These are modules that you take voluntarily to further your knowledge in a specific legal area.*

Since your year abroad is about learning all about a different legal system, choose units which genuinely interest or intrigue you! Personally, I had no previous knowledge regarding animal law but after having studied it in my first semester at Monash, it not only made me more aware of the legal issues facing animals worldwide but also inspired me to try out vegetarianism!

You are required to take 6 units during your time at Monash (3 units per semester is what most opt for, with 2 of those being law), however there is flexibility for you to enrol in a unit from a different faculty. The vast majority of exchange students I met enrolled in numerous units from the Arts faculty to further their knowledge in a different area of study. I highly recommend enrolling in **ATS1259 'Exploring Contemporary Australia'** as it teaches you a lot about the country you will be living in for a year – Australia.

Assessment

Each unit has a different assessment method so ensure that the assessment method suits your preferences. Unlike at Warwick University, there are many units which do not require an examination but, instead, opt for essay or presentation assessment methods. You can find out the assessment method through unit guides.

Structure

You will typically have 3 hours' worth of lectures per law unit (2 x 1.5h per week). Elective law units have no tutorials so it is important that you attend lectures as they are rarely recorded and are the only way of ensuring you cover all the required content.

Arts units (e.g. ATS1259) will typically have an hour-long tutorial per week though!

Necessities

Once you arrive, your main priority will be to buy necessities such as toiletries, food, dishes/cutlery, etc. A lot of these can be purchased on campus (e.g. Monash Merchant or within Campus Centre) however there are nearby shopping malls where prices are a bit lower (Pinewood Shopping Centre or Brandon Park). Once you have started to settle in, I would advise venturing outside of campus for necessities as there is more choice!

The logo for Optus, consisting of the word "OPTUS" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.**SIM Card**

Most of the exchange students from Warwick University opted for Optus as their phone provider as it is quite reliable and has signal throughout most of Australia. There are many Optus branches found within Melbourne, however the fact that campus has a branch makes it very easy for you to set up your new phone number!

PS. I was advised against choosing Vodafone Australia as the reception is quite bad when travelling outside of Melbourne or major cities!

Bank account

Bring some Australian currency to get you started off with living in Melbourne. Make sure your cards are activated abroad so that your cards don't get blocked as it will take some time for you to settle in and open an Australian bank account. Research in advance which bank you want to open an Australian account with. Campus centre has two bank branches: **Commonwealth Bank** and **Westpac**. Most people, myself included, go for Commonwealth Bank as it is Australia's biggest bank but this is a personal choice.

MRS

If you are living on campus, you will most likely be living in the Residential Village in the Clayton campus. The Residential Village includes: Farrer Hall, Roberts Hall, Richardson Hall, Howitt Hall, Deakin Hall, Normanby House, South East Flats. Monash Residential Services (herein, 'MRS') is located very close to all halls and they are your first point of contact for anything on-campus accommodation related. The MRS admin building is where your parcels get sent to you, however if you want to send anything out, you must go to your nearest Australian Post branch (there is one in central campus). MRS offer significant discounts on gym memberships so it is definitely worth enquiring into this if you are interested.

Food

Most people living in halls do their grocery shopping at Coles, usually at Pinewood Shopping Centre or Brandon Park. They are a close bus journey away, but it helps making friends with Australian students who have cars and are willing to give you a lift! The Monash Merchant is significantly smaller than Coles grocery stores and is more expensive, however the location is very good. Halls Café is located next to the MRS administration building if you are feeling a bit too lazy to cook for yourself.

Orientation week

Orientation week (aka 'O-week') is a compulsory 1-2 week period where a number of events are organised for you to get to know the people you will be living with in halls. It is worth fully immersing yourself into this experience as it can be very fun. The O-week members will arrange trips for you to grocery stores, malls, the city, Australian rules football games, etc. Also, there is a lot of free food, so take advantage of this opportunity! The law department also organises introductory lectures and events for you to get to know the Monash Law Faculty.

Off-campus

I strongly recommend living on-campus for your first semester (which is the second semester of the Monash academic year). Not only do you get eased into living in a foreign environment, you get to meet lots of people and make new friends more easily. However, a lot of students want to venture outside of Clayton campus for their second semester on exchange and live in the city. This can be a great way to get to know more of Melbourne and be closer to the main attractions. However, there are a few things that you, as a law exchange student, need to keep in mind:

- Your year abroad counts for a 1/ 3 of your degree at Warwick University. Unlike most (non-law) exchange students from Warwick, your grades at Monash are very important and are not simply a pass/fail grading system. Therefore, keep in mind that you will need to study more and harder than a lot of your peers.
- It is worth thinking about whether you would study as hard if you lived off-campus. The Melbourne Central Business District (CBD) is an hour away from campus via public transport so you need to factor the time it takes to commute from the centre to Monash University. While it is completely understandable to want to live in the city, you might be less motivated to make it to your lectures, especially if they start at 8 am.
- Looking for off-campus accommodation is a tedious task. Most people start looking for housing on a Facebook group called “Fairy Floss Real Estate”, where people advertise share houses and the rent they are asking for. It is common for this process to take months as it is very competitive to find a room within a student house. It is common for people looking for a room within a share house to be interviewed by the other housemates to see if they are compatible.
- As a point of reference: Out of 6 Warwick law students, half have moved into off-campus accommodation in the second semester. Personally, I decided to stay on-campus because I know that I

would start getting lazy and be tempted to skip lectures. However, this is a personal choice and there is no right or wrong way to do it. It's up to you to balance the pros and cons!

Melbourne is the second most-populous city in Australia (after Sydney) with a population of ≈ 4.7 mil people.

It is consistently ranked the **world's most liveable city** due to its high rankings in education, entertainment, health care and tourism.

Melbourne has *everything*: it has **beautiful scenery**, lovely **beaches** (Brighton Beach and St Kilda are favourites!), international **cuisine**, major **sporting events**, good **shopping**, a bustling **night life**! There truly is something for everyone.

A few interesting facts about Melbourne:

- It was originally called Batmania
- Melbourne used to be the capital of Australia between 1901-1927, before the capital shifted to Canberra
- It has the highest number of restaurants and cafes per number of people than any other city in the world – no wonder it's home to some of the best (and 'Instagrammable') brunch cafes!
- Aussie Rules Football (AFL) was invented in Melbourne





Australia

Make the most of your time in Australia and try to travel to as many places as you can. Contrary to popular belief, Australia is a very **big** country (for example, it takes about 3-4 hours to fly to Perth from Melbourne) so there is lots to see! Unfortunately, Australia can also be a very expensive place to travel so this is where getting a job and/or saving comes in handy to be able to afford the expenses. Some places that are not to be missed are: Sydney, Whitsunday Islands, Cairns (to see the Great Barrier Reef), Brisbane and Byron Bay.

NB. If you want to celebrate NYE in Sydney, book at least 6 months in advance as all hotels/Airbnbs/hostels sell out extremely quickly and get very expensive!

Asia and Oceania

I highly recommend travelling Asia during the 'summer' break (November-February) as you get to check a lot of countries of your bucket list, it's cheaper than travelling Australia, and you get to experience different cultures, people and food! I would have loved to travel the entirety of South East Asia (and a lot of my friends managed to do this in 2-3 months) however I prioritised a few Asian countries that I wanted to get to know in-depth: Vietnam, Bali and Sri Lanka. Having spent a significant amount of time in each one, I can highly recommend all of them! New Zealand is a country that is also not to be missed. A lot of adrenaline junkies love to travel there to go skydiving and bungee jumping.

“Take every opportunity to travel that comes your way, especially if offered to you by Aussie students, as they know all the secret spots tourist guides just won't show you! And try Vegemite, at least once.” – Ellen Rodda, *Classical Civilisation with Study Abroad at Warwick University*

“Make sure you put yourself out there and make friends with not only the domestic students but the international ones as well! You're definitely going to make friends for life (which will break your heart when you have to leave but will make your year).” – Ayesha Kithulegoda, *International Management at Warwick University*

“Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone! Make friends with Aussie students as well as other exchange students. Studying abroad at Monash University is a great way to improve your global connections so make sure to socialise and interact with people outside of Warwick.” – Mia Crawford, *International Development at King's College London*

“Document everything you can (whether that be in the form of writing a journal, blog posts, or simply just taking heaps of photos) so you can look back on the incredible year that you've had!” – Radhika Anand, *Law with Study Abroad in English at Warwick University*

“Travelling to another country is great but the opportunity to live and learn there is quite a life-changing experience. Keep yourself open-minded and ready for adventures!” – Quynhanh Le, *Law with Study Abroad in English at Warwick University*