

Hi guys,

My name is Pattan tausif – I’m a former International Student at Fed who has also spent a year employed in International Student Support. I’ve got lots of experience on what life is like for International students so I wanted to share my advice with you, starting with some basic things you need to know about Aussies!

According to me there are 5 big shocks for International Students:

1. Informalities

In most Asian countries we often tend to call the lecturer with a bit of added respect (sir, madam, Mr. Surname), in Australia it is much more common to call your lecturer by their first name.

“Hi Steve,” doesn’t sound like the most formal way to start an email but your tutors will be expecting it so if they introduce themselves as Steve, that’s what you should call them.

In many cultures, calling your superior by their first name can be seen as a lack of respect, but Aussies will find it totally normal. Aussie culture is pretty laid back so don’t stress about being extra casual.

2. Shortening words

Aussies (there’s one example!) have shortened versions of words you didn’t even realise could be shorter. Leow cites ceebs (pronounced seebs) as one example. “Ceebs” is short for CBB, which is short for “can’t be bothered”. It doesn’t end there. McD’s is referred to as “Maccas”, Woolworths is “Woolies” and if it’s the afternoon and lunch is a sandwich, then you’re having a “sanga” in the “arvo”. For a great run-down on Aussie slang, check out this YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch/yDb_WsAt_Z0

If you are trying to navigate the language barrier, all these acronyms and contractions can make things even more confusing for you. ‘Straya is a funny ol’ place but no wuckkers - you’ll get there in time...



3. Sports!

If there's one thing Australians love, it is sports. The Australian Football League (AFL – remember that word shortening thing?) and the National Rugby League (NRL) are worshipped – it's serious business so don't mess about on game day.

The streets will be filled with eager die-hard fans donned in the latest merchandise. It will be a fun experience to get dressed up with them and get involved in the excitement.

4. Eating early

Normally have dinner late? Forget about it. Most restaurants shut before 9pm in Oz leaving you stranded and foodless if you'd hoped to grab a bite to eat in the late evening. Unless you are living near Chinatown where you may have some luck finding places to eat open later or don't mind chips cheese and gravy, a home-cooked meal (or pot noodle) may have to suffice.

5. Coffee, coffee, coffee

If you don't drink coffee, now is the time to start. Australia has a serious coffee culture – look around any campus and you will find the majority of students cradling coffee cups.

As coffee capital of the world, you'll no doubt be bombarded with the stuff so embrace it!

Australia is a fabulous location for international students so get stuck in, learn to love the people and the country's quirks and enjoy your time there. It shouldn't take too long to get used to 'Strayan life!