

International student handbook

Your future — Our focus

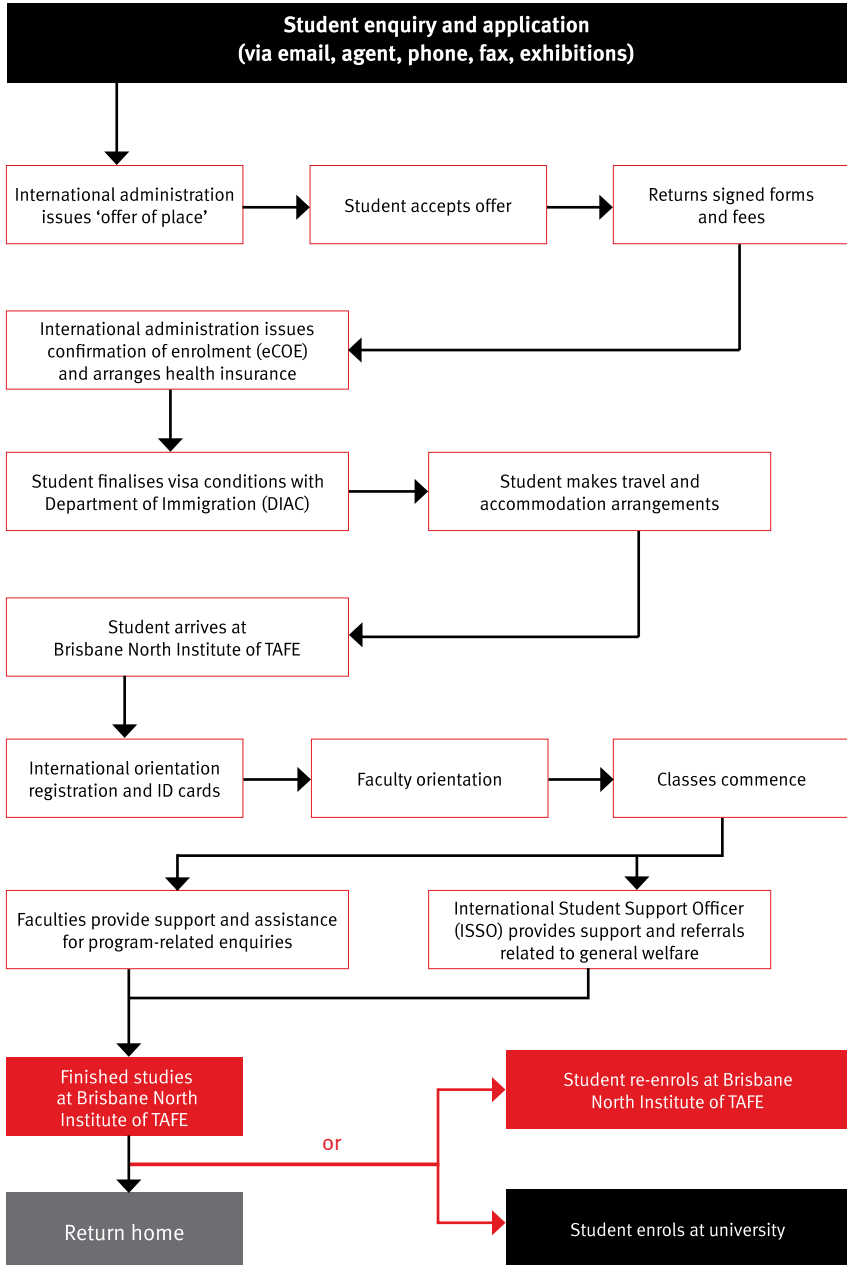


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International student application process



These handy checklists will help you organise your trip and ensure you complete all things necessary to make your stay in Australia a happy one.

Before you leave home:

- arrange student visa
- arrange travel
- arrange accommodation
- arrange transport from Brisbane Airport to your accommodation
- pack your bags for the trip.

Make sure you put your documents (passport, letter of offer, confirmation of enrolment, certified copies of your qualifications and other important papers) and print a copy of this handbook in a bag to carry with you on the flight as hand held luggage.

On arrival in Australia:

- Settle into your accommodation.
- Contact Brisbane North Institute of TAFE.
- Enrol your children at school (if applicable).
- Attend Brisbane North Institute of TAFE international orientation.
- Get your student identification (ID) card at orientation.
- Pick up your health insurance card from the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE International Office at Ithaca Campus or contact them to send it out to you.
- Open a bank account (within six weeks of arrival).
- Attend your Brisbane North Institute of TAFE faculty orientation.
- Start classes (after your faculty orientation).
- Apply for a tax file number if you intend to find part-time work.



Introduction to Australia

Facts and figures

- » Australia is the world's sixth largest country, measuring 4000 kilometres from east to west and 3200 kilometres from north to south.
- » Population exceeds 20 million.
- » Australia is broken into six states (Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia) and two territories (the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory).

Government

Australia has three levels of government: the Federal Government (Commonwealth) looks after matters concerning the whole of Australia (immigration, foreign affairs, taxation).

The eight state and territory governments look after the affairs of each state or territory (for example health, industry regulations and development).

Numerous local councils look after the day-to-day running of smaller local areas within the states.

Climate

Because of the size of the country, the climate varies depending on location.

Brisbane has a subtropical climate with warm or hot weather for most of the year. Brisbane's climate is very sunny and can be humid, especially in the three hottest months of December to February. Most rainfall is in summer and the winter is dry with blue skies.

Cultural diversity

Australia is a multicultural society with people from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Nearly a quarter of Australia's population was born overseas. Almost one in every five Australians comes from a non-English speaking background and more than 200 different languages are spoken. The official language is English.



Introduction to Brisbane

Brisbane is the capital city of Queensland. It is located in the south-eastern corner of the state on the coastal strip between the Pacific Ocean and the Great Dividing Range.

Brisbane's sub-tropical climate is perfect for an outdoor lifestyle, with daytime temperatures ranging from an average of 30 degrees Celsius in summer to 14 degrees Celsius in winter.

The city has open parklands and public spaces, world-class sporting facilities, cafés and the Brisbane River at its centre.

Less than half an hour from the city centre is Moreton Bay and its islands. In its calm waters, you can enjoy a variety of water sports. If you prefer the surf, the famous beaches and resorts of the Sunshine and Gold Coasts are just over an hour's drive from the city.

For more information about Brisbane visit www.ourbrisbane.com.

Dates to remember

Queensland public holidays 2011

New Year's	3 January
Australia Day	26 January
Good Friday	22 April
Easter Saturday	23 April
Easter Monday	25 April
Anzac Day	26 April
Labour Day	2 May
Queen's Birthday	13 June
Royal Queensland Show (Brisbane Area Only)	17 August
Christmas	26 December
Boxing Day	27 December



Arranging visas

Each student's visa situation is unique and requires individual attention by industry professionals. You can find out more information about visas and conditions by contacting any of the agencies below.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

The Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) can assist with your visa and entry requirement queries. DIAC is commonly called Immigration.

Visit www.immi.gov.au for more information.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has information on foreign embassies and consulates in Australia. It's a good idea to know these details before you leave home. Your consulate can help you with legal advice on your rights and advise you on health concerns and travel warnings.

Visit www.dfat.gov.au/missions or phone: +61 2 6261 1111 (outside of Australia) or 02 6261 1111 (within Australia).

Migration agents

Most countries have migration agents to help with visa arrangements and also advise on permanent migration to another country.

You do not need to use a migration agent to apply for any visa. However, if you do, you should use a registered migration agent.

Educational agents

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE has agents contracted to assist you with your transition from home to studying in Brisbane. Many agents have exhibitions or websites to raise their profile in the local community. Ask around your local community to find an agent near you.



Visa conditions

Each of the many different visa types and subclasses has its own rules and conditions. Make sure you know the conditions of your visa. It would also be helpful to know your country classification level.

DIAC makes and enforces the rules for students living and studying in Brisbane. If you break the rules, you are breaking Australian law and may be imprisoned or sent home and be unable to come back to Australia.

Permanent residency/ migration

If you are living in Australia when you make the application, it is called a permanent residence application. If you are living outside Australia when you make the application, it is called a migration application.

If you require further information on permanent residency or migration matters, you should contact DIAC.

Visit www.immi.gov.au.



Arranging travel

Costs of travelling to Brisbane to begin your study is not included in the price you have paid for your program. You will need to contact a travel agent or airline to arrange your travel.

You should plan to arrive in Brisbane at least two weeks before the international orientation (listed on your orientation letter) to get yourself settled before your studies begin.

Documents

As well as a copy of this handbook and your travel tickets, you should bring originals or certified copies of all your essential documents, including:

- » A valid passport with a valid student visa.
- » Birth certificate.
- » Medical records for yourself and any family members travelling with you.
- » Educational qualifications.
- » Work references and/or trade qualifications (if applicable).
- » Children's school reports (if bringing children with you).

Remember to pack your passport and tickets in your hand luggage that you will take with you on the flight for easy access. Don't pack them in your suitcases.

On your flight

Before flying it is important to consider the following:

- » The normal allowable weight for an economy class passenger on international flights is 20 kilograms, so think carefully about what to pack.
- » Wear comfortable layered clothing that is easy to change as temperatures vary on the plane. Wear practical flat shoes.
- » Keep your passport with your student visa and a pen in your cabin bag along with your other essential documents.
- » The airline staff will give you an Incoming Passenger Card during your flight. If you are unsure of an answer, mark 'yes'. Complete the form on the plane.
- » If you are carrying more than AUD\$10,000 in cash, you will need to complete a cash transaction form. It is strongly recommended that you do not carry large sums of cash. Instead, arrange for wire transfers of funds or deposits into Australian bank accounts.
- » If you are getting off your flight in another country before you arrive in Australia, you will have to comply with their customs regulations. If you do not do so, you may face fines or imprisonment.

Visit www.customs.gov.au for more information.

Entry into Australia

When you arrive in Australia, you will be stopped at a Customs and Immigration checkpoint and asked to hand in your passport and forms. You may be asked questions about your stay before your passport is stamped and handed back to you (Note: it is illegal to use a camera or phone in this area of the airport).

Once you have passed through the Immigration checkpoint, you should collect your baggage and check that nothing is missing or damaged. If something is missing or you notice damage, go to the baggage counter and advise them of your problem. Staff at the baggage counter will help you to find missing baggage or lodge a claim for damage to your belongings.

You will then need to go to the Customs exit checkpoint, where an officer will check your forms and may inspect your luggage. Strict quarantine laws are in place to stop people from bringing in food and plant items that

might be dangerous to our native wildlife and way of life. If you have *any* food or plant items with you or in your luggage when you arrive in Australia, you should put this on the form you fill out on the plane. The Customs Officers at the airport will decide if the material is safe to bring into Australia. If they decide it is not safe, the materials will be confiscated and destroyed.

If you have not declared items that are of customs or quarantine concern, you may be issued with a fine or be prosecuted in court.

Visit the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) website at www.aqis.gov.au.

Once you have been cleared by customs, you will enter the arrivals lounge and have officially arrived in Australia.

Find out more about Brisbane Airport, its services and terminal maps by visiting the Brisbane Airport website at www.bne.com.au.



Arriving in Australia

Getting from Brisbane Airport to your accommodation

Brisbane International and Domestic airports are located next to each other, 16 kilometres from the Brisbane city centre.

If you are not being met at the airport by someone you know, your transport options from the airport to the city include:

- » Airport Train (Airtrain) to Brisbane city, run to and from Brisbane Airport every 30 minutes from 6.00am – 7.30pm each day. It is a 22 minute trip to Central Station in the middle of the city where you can connect to other trains on the Brisbane suburban lines. This is a great option for single travellers who do not have a lot of luggage. A one way, adult ticket costs approximately \$15 and there is no need to book.

Visit www.airtrain.com.au for cost details.

- » Shuttle buses – privately-owned shuttle buses leave Brisbane Airport every 30 minutes from 5.30am – 11.00pm. All bus services meet flight departure and arrival times. If you miss one, just wait half an hour for the next service. The cost of travel to the main city hotels is \$15 per person.

For information call Coachtrans on +617 3238 4700 (outside of Australia) or (07) 3238 4700 (within Australia).

- » Taxi – whether you are staying in the city or in the suburbs, a taxi will take you to your accommodation. The taxi rank at the International Terminal is on Arrivals level 2. At Brisbane's Domestic Terminal, taxi ranks are located at both the Qantas and Virgin Blue ends of the terminal. All Brisbane taxis have standard taxi meters so you won't

be charged an inflated fare. A fare to the Brisbane city centre from the airport is approximately \$30 plus a \$2 fee imposed on taxis leaving the airport.

Keeping in contact

Before you leave home, you should provide family and friends with details of your flights to Australia and where you will be staying when you arrive. Once you have arrived in Brisbane, let those same people know you have arrived safely. For safety reasons it is important that you always let people know where you are.

You should also contact the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE International Unit on the first working day (Monday to Friday) after you arrive, to advise them of your arrival and where you can be contacted.

Arranging your finances

Currency exchange

Only Australian currency can be used in Australia. If you have not arranged to change your money into Australian currency before you leave home, you will need to change some of your money as soon as you arrive. Most Australian international airports have money changing booths where you can change money into Australian currency.

Once you have arrived in Brisbane, you can also change further funds into Australian currency at any bank or at currency exchanges in Brisbane city.

You should not carry large sums of money with you. It is best to carry only the funds you will need to get you through the first few days after your arrival and arrange to have the rest of your funds transferred to Australia.

You might also consider having some funds in travellers' cheques which can be cashed at the bank.

If you are arriving in Australia on the weekend (Saturday or Sunday), you will need to ensure you have enough money in Australian currency to pay for your expenses, as most banks are not open for money changing. The money changers at the airport are always open but are expensive and generally it is not convenient to make a special trip to the airport simply to change money.

Personal funds

You will need to make sure you have enough funds to support you when you first arrive. It is recommended that you have approximately AUD\$1500 to \$2000 available for the first two to three weeks to pay for temporary accommodation and transport. You should bring most of this money as either traveller's cheques or on an international credit card. It is not recommended that you carry large sums of cash with you.

Electronic telegraph (telegraphic transfer)

You can transfer money into Australia by electronic telegraph or telegraphic transfer. This is the fastest option and takes approximately 48 hours, but the bank will charge you a fee on every transaction.

Bank draft

One of the safer ways to transfer funds into Australia is by a bank draft which is payable to an Australian bank. It may take up to one week for your funds to be available. However, if you have an international bank draft, you may have to wait between two and six weeks for the money.

You do not need to have an Australian bank account to collect the money. You will need to complete an application form and present proof of your identity. If you do not have a bank account in Australia, you will also be charged fees for the transaction.

Australian bank account

The safest and easiest option for managing your funds is to have an Australian bank account. It can take up to one week to transfer funds from overseas. If you want to establish an account before you leave home, speak to the banks in your home country to see which ones deal with banks in Australia and can help you to establish an account.

Once you are here in Australia, you will be able to open a bank account. You will require identification such as a passport, driver's licence and evidence of your current (Brisbane) home address. The bank will be able to give you a list of the types of identification which can be used. This should be done within the first six weeks of arrival.

Credit cards

All major international credit cards can be used in Australia but you must remember that repayments to most of those cards can only be made in the country where they were issued.

It is very difficult to get a credit card once you are in Australia because of current credit and identification laws.

Arriving in Australia



Arranging accommodation

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE does not have campus accommodation so you will need to arrange your own accommodation before you arrive in Brisbane.

It is recommended that you arrange temporary accommodation for the first few months to enable you to get to know the areas that best suit your needs, location and budget before deciding on a more permanent residence. You will also find it easier to make permanent arrangements once you have established yourself in Australia and have proof of an Australian bank account and other details.

The Brisbane North Institute of TAFE Student Newsletter also lists some local accommodation availabilities.

Accommodation

Type	Information	Where to look
Temporary accommodation - share house (or rented room)	Sharing facilities with other people in same property. Rental costs do not cover electricity, gas or telephone charges. A bond or deposit equal to four weeks rent is payable at the beginning of tenancy.	www.ourbrisbane.com www.brisflatmates.com/flatmates newspapers (buy from newsagents)
Hotels, motels or backpacker	It can be expensive to live in a good quality hotel/motel for a long period of time. Backpacker accommodation is relatively inexpensive but you should consider bringing your own sleeping bag and pillow.	www.ourbrisbane.com newspapers (buy from newsagents)
With friends or family	A great way for you to get used to life in Brisbane. If you are under 18 years of age, your accommodation must be approved by Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and Immigration before a visa will be granted.	
Homestay (we recommend this arrangement as your temporary accommodation for the first two months)	Offers you the chance to live with an Australian family either for a few weeks or for the length of your stay in Brisbane. Includes meals, own room with bed and study desk. They will also help you find your way around the city and to places of interest.	Earthbeat ph: +6 17 3878 9897 info@earthbeat.net.au www.earthbeat.net.au
Rental	You generally need to supply your own furniture. Contracts must be signed stating that you will pay to live in the property for a minimum of six months. Weekly rent does not cover the cost of electricity, gas or telephone charges. Rent is generally paid two to four weeks in advance along with payment of a bond or security deposit equal to an additional four weeks' rent before you move in.	www.ourbrisbane.com www.realestate.com.au www.seqrents.com.au newspapers (buy from newsagents) Student noticeboards

Arriving in Australia

Choosing where to live

Most students want to live within walking distance of the campus, but that's not always possible and is usually determined by availability and cost. Often it's more convenient to live relatively close to the campus but be closer to shopping centres and transport.

Properties for rent are advertised in the 'To Let' section of newspapers, through the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE student noticeboards and real estate agencies. The papers will use many abbreviations. The Tenants' Union of Queensland website (www.tuq.org.au) has a section for explanations of what these mean.

You should arrange to inspect the property before deciding to move in.

To secure a property, you will need a security bond plus a payment of several weeks' rent, which has to be paid in advance. In most cases you will also be required to provide two references. If these are difficult for you to obtain, contact Brisbane's Migrant Resource Centre on 07 871 3141 for advice and assistance.

As a tenant, you have rights and obligations – make sure you know these before you sign any document. If you need help, contact the Residential Tenancies Authority at www.rta.qld.gov.au before you sign.

As well as paying rent, you will need to arrange to have utilities connected and pay the bills for them direct to the companies.

Utilities you will have to pay for are:

- » Telephone – there are many companies to choose from, such as Telstra (www.telstra.com.au) or Optus (www.optus.com.au)
- » Gas – call 13 1253 or 13 10 46
- » Electricity – call 1800 808 526

Where can I get more help?

Residential Tenancies Authority

The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) is a government established body which helps tenants with general advice. If you have problems with your landlord or real estate agent that you cannot solve, you could lodge a dispute with the RTA who will then help to resolve the problem through a formal process.

Address: 33 Herschel Street, Brisbane
Post: GPO Box 390, Brisbane, Qld, 4001
Phone: 1300 366 311
Fax: 07 3361 3666
International calls: +61 7 3013 7400
Website: www.rta.qld.gov.au

Tenants' Union of Queensland

The Tenants' Union of Queensland is a state wide community organisation that provides services for residential tenants in Queensland and represents their interests. The union aims to improve and protect the rights of all Queensland tenants. Their pocket-sized guide '*Renting a Home—Information for Tenants in Queensland*' is available in several languages including English, Arabic, Chinese, Bosnian, Serbian, Samoan, Somali, Tagalog and Japanese. These translated booklets are also available on their website: www.tuq.org.au

Address: 28 Robertson Street,
Fortitude Valley, Qld, 4006
Phone: +617 3257 1108
or within Australia 1800 177 761
Fax: +617 3257 1135
Email: mail@tuq.org.au
Website: www.tuq.prg.au

Bringing your family

If you intend to bring your family into the country to live with you, they will have to apply for a visa as well and be covered by health insurance.

Under Australian law, people who are considered members of your family are:

- » Your spouse – a person to whom you are legally married (your husband or wife) or someone of the opposite sex with whom you have been living with for at least 12 months and with whom you have a genuine exclusive relationship (your de facto).
- » Children under 18 years of age who are not married and are dependant on you or your spouse.

You will need to provide proof of your family relationships with officially issued birth and marriage certificates to Immigration. You will also need to consider what your family will do in Brisbane. If any children will need day care or schooling, you will need to know how to arrange this.

Childcare

Finding suitable carers takes planning, patience and persistence. Many day care centres have long waiting periods before children can be accepted.

The Bub Hub (www.bubhub.com.au/serviceschildcare.shtml) provides an excellent overview of the different care arrangements available in Brisbane and explains the differences between long day care centres, family day care and occasional care. The website also has a good listing of the nanny and babysitting agencies in Brisbane, plus links to other organisations involved in the childcare industry.

Schooling

To arrange education for school age children, you will need to locate a local school and contact them directly about how to enrol your children. There are two types of schools in Australia: state schools and private schools.

State schools

A public or state school is a government funded school for students aged between five and 17 years of age. These are divided into prep school, primary school (grades 1–7 for ages 5–12) and secondary school (grades 8–12, ages 13–17).

There are 1300 state schools in Queensland attended by more than 490,000 students.

All state schools are co-educational (this means that boys and girls attend the same school together). Children may begin their education in preschool, which provides a year of non-compulsory education for children in the year of their fifth birthday.

The school year usually runs from late January to mid-December. It is divided into two semesters, with two terms in each and vacation breaks for autumn (Easter), winter, spring and summer. Fees are associated for international students to attend.

Private schools

Private schools are different from state schools as they are not free and students are charged fees to attend.

There are two main categories of private (or non-government) schools in Australia: Catholic schools and independent schools.

Catholic schools form the next largest sector after state schools, with around 21 per cent of secondary enrolments. Independent schools make up the last sector and are the most popular ones for boarders. Independent schools are non-government institutions that are generally not part of a system. It is the decision of the individual which type of school they wish to attend.

Living in Brisbane

Beginning a new life in a foreign country can be confusing but the information in this section can help you with ideas about what to expect and where to go for help.

Weather and seasons

» **Summer (December to February).**

This is the hottest time of the year and is often very humid. Afternoon storms are common in summer, as are long periods of very hot weather. At this time of the year, you need to be sure that you drink plenty of water to avoid heat exhaustion, wear 30+ sunscreen and a hat to keep you from getting sunburnt and reduce your risk of developing skin cancer. Temperatures range from an average of 22 degrees Celsius at night to 35 degrees Celsius during the day.

» **Autumn (March to May).**

The weather begins to cool down but it is often still warm during the day. Temperatures range from 16 degrees Celsius at night to 28 degrees Celsius during the day.

» **Winter (June to August).**

Winter in Brisbane is usually cool and dry. Temperatures are mild, ranging from 12 degrees Celsius at night to 24 degrees Celsius during the day.

» **Spring (September to November).**

The weather quickly grows warmer during spring. At night, temperatures range from 14 degrees Celsius to 20 degrees Celsius. Days are much warmer, averaging 26 degrees Celsius in September to 30 degrees Celsius in November.

You can check Brisbane's daily weather forecast at www.ourbrisbane.com

Time zones

Brisbane is 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+10).

Unlike much of Australia, Queensland does not have daylight saving time. This means from October to March, Brisbane is one hour behind Sydney. It is important to remember this if you are making phone calls to other parts of Australia or other countries during this time.

To see the time zones in Australia, visit www.worldtimezone.com.

Electricity

In Australia, electricity is 220–240 Volts AC. Most large hotels feature universal outlets for 240V or 100V shavers, but for any other electrical device you will probably need to use an adaptor. You can buy an adaptor from many department stores, electrical and luggage shops.

Telephones

If you come to Australia to study, it may be a good idea to have a mobile (or cell) phone, which makes it easy for you to be contacted.

Before bringing your mobile phone to Australia, check to make sure it can be used here. Some countries, such as Japan and the USA, operate their mobile phones on networks that are not available in Australia.

Another option is to buy a phone in Australia. Brisbane has a wide range of mobile phone companies, so shop around to find the right phone and price for you. Once you have a phone, it is a good idea to include an emergency contact in your phone book.

Enter ICE (In Case of Emergency) and the number of a person who should be contacted in case anything happens to you.

You might also want to buy a phone card to make international calls. These are available at newsagencies throughout Brisbane and can save you money.

Support groups

Brisbane is a multicultural city, with many clubs and organisations for people of different cultures. If you need help, or if you just want to meet people of your own or other cultures, you can try contacting:

- » The Multicultural Development Association Inc (MDA), which has multilingual staff to give you advice and help when you first arrive in Brisbane. The MDA can also refer you to other organisations if you need help.

Ph: +61 7 3337 5400 (outside Australia)
or 07 3337 5400 (within Australia)

Email: mailbox@mdabne.org.au

Office: 512 Stanley Street,
South Brisbane 4101

- » Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ), which may be able to refer you to clubs, and associations for different religions or cultures, or other services if you need help.

Ph: +617 3844 9166 (outside Australia)
or 07 3844 9166 (within Australia).

Email: administration@eccq.com.au

Office: 253 Boundary Street
West End, Queensland 4101

Getting around

You can get around Brisbane by ferry, car, bus, train or bicycle.

Public transport

Brisbane offers three kinds of public transport: train, bus and ferry. For more information, visit www.translink.com.au.

Fares and zones

The city and surrounding areas are assigned zones (areas). Public transport fares are calculated on how many zones you travel in. The more zones you travel in, the more expensive your ticket will be. There are 23 zones across south-east Queensland.

For detailed information visit www.translink.com.au.

Some bus routes require pre-paid tickets only. If you can purchase tickets from the bus driver, make sure you have small change with you (\$1 and \$2 coins or notes under \$20). You must have a valid ticket when you use public transport, or you could be fined. Brisbane's public transport is integrated, so you can use the same ticket on the train, bus or ferry – as long as you are only travelling within the zone(s) shown on your ticket.



Living in Brisbane

Tickets

Five kinds of tickets are available to use on public transport:

- » Single – a one-way ticket.
- » Daily – allows unlimited travel on the day of purchase.
- » Off-peak daily – discounted unlimited travel on the day of purchase between 9am – 3.30pm and after 7pm on weekdays, or all day on weekends and public holidays.
- » Weekly – unlimited travel for one week from the date of purchase.
- » Monthly – unlimited travel for one calendar month from the date of purchase.

Go Card is an electronic travel card which is used on any Translink bus, train or ferry service in Brisbane.

Transport to Brisbane North Institute of TAFE Campuses:

Bracken Ridge:	Bus: Numbers 326, 327, 330 and 331 Train: Bald Hills Station (on Caboolture line) is within walking distance to campus (approx. 15 minutes).
Caboolture:	Bus: Number 655 from Caboolture Station Train: Caboolture line
Grovely:	Train: Ferny Grove Line – departing every half hour
Ithaca:	Bus: Numbers 377, 378 and 380
Redcliffe:	Bus: Number 315

Saving money on tickets

If you are studying full-time and for more than 12 weeks, you may be eligible for a discount (or concession) on public transport.

Show your student ID card to receive the concession when you are buying tickets. You can also save money by buying weekly or monthly tickets.

For more information about public transport fares, tickets and routes phone 13 12 30 or visit www.translink.com.au.

Taxis

A taxi will take you directly to the door of wherever you want to go. All taxis in Brisbane have a standard taxi meter, so you don't have to worry about being overcharged. Taxis can be slightly faster than public transportation, but they are usually more expensive.

Driving

Australians drive on the left-hand side of the road, similar to England. This is important to remember, whether you are driving or just trying to cross the road!

If you are planning to drive in Queensland, you must have an English translated international driver's licence or a valid Queensland driver's licence. To apply for an international licence, visit www.idlicense.com.

To apply for a Queensland driver's licence, phone Queensland Transport on 13 23 80 or visit www.transport.qld.gov.au.

You will need to learn Australian road rules before driving in Queensland.

Visit www.transport.qld.gov.au for information about road rules and traffic laws.

Make sure you drive and park safely. Penalties for breaking traffic laws (such as speeding and illegal parking) range from expensive fines to losing your driver's licence, or even going to jail.

Student parking is available on all campuses of Brisbane North Institute of TAFE.

Bicycles

Cycling can be a convenient and inexpensive way to travel around Brisbane. Brisbane has many beautiful and well maintained bicycle tracks, as well as bicycle lanes on main roads.

Before cycling in Brisbane, you may want to learn the Australian road rules.

Visit www.transport.qld.gov.au for more information.

You must be careful when cycling, especially on main roads. Australian drivers may not be as aware of cyclists as drivers are in other countries. By law, cyclists must wear a helmet at all times. At night, you must use reflectors and lights so drivers and other cyclists can see you.

Brisbane City Council has introduced CityCycle, a new form of environmentally friendly public transport in the inner city area. CityCycle will allow users to:

- pick up a bike from one of 150 bike stations
- go for a ride
- return the bike to another bike station

The bike stations will be located to link with existing bikeways, busways, buses, trains and ferries within inner-city Brisbane.

For information on this service and costs visit www.citycycle.com.au



Health

Emergencies

For emergencies such as fire, ambulance or police, phone 000.

When you dial 000, the operator will ask you what service you want (fire, ambulance or police), your name, address, telephone number, and for what you require assistance with.

If your English is not good, say “Fire/Police/Ambulance” and tell the operator what country you are from, and you will be put through to a translator.

Police

In Australia, police protect people and property, detect and prevent crime and preserve peace for everyone. They are not connected to the military or politics. The police can help you if you feel unsafe.

Ambulance

Ambulances provide immediate medical attention and emergency transportation to hospitals. Use them wisely as you will not be covered by health insurance and will be charged money if it is not an emergency.

Medical assistance

Emergency medical treatment is available 24 hours a day at the emergency or casualty department of a public hospital, or at some medical centres. Public and private hospitals are listed in the White Pages telephone directory under ‘Hospitals’. If you need to go to hospital, remember to bring your health insurance card and any medicines you are currently taking.

For anything other than an emergency, seek medical help from a general practitioner (GP) or local medical centre.

Fire

The fire brigade extinguishes fires, rescues people from fires in cars and buildings, and helps in situations when gas or chemicals become a danger. A fire does not need to be large for you to call the fire brigade.

Health insurance

The Australian government requires all international students to be covered by health insurance. You must have paid for health cover in order to be granted a visa into Australia.

Your health insurance cover provides you with similar insurance to that which all Australians enjoy through the Australian National Health System.

This will cover you for some of the costs of medical treatment during your stay. It provides cover for:

- » 24 hour emergency medical advice and assistance.
- » Legal advice and interpreting services.
- » Some of the fees you pay to a general practitioner or doctor.
- » Some of the fees you pay to a public hospital.
- » Some of the costs of prescription medicines, x-rays and pathology services.
- » Some of the costs of emergency ambulance services.

This health cover must remain valid during your whole stay. You can arrange to pay for this health cover through Brisbane North Institute of TAFE or make your own arrangements prior to leaving home.

Note: health insurance does not cover dental, physiotherapy, optometry, podiatry, chiropractic or private hospital services.

How to get a health insurance card

Before you come to Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, you are required to have health insurance. When you apply for your program you will be asked if you require health insurance. If you indicate 'yes' then you need to pay this with your enrolment fees. The International Unit will organise this for you with our health insurance company, Medibank Private, and the card will be waiting for you when you arrive at the Institute.

Don't forget to advise us in your initial application if you require family health cover. You will also need to provide the name, date of birth and relationship of the dependant/s (spouse or child) that are to be included on your cover.

Using your health insurance card

If you need to visit a doctor or health care professional, show your health insurance card at the end of the visit.

Medical centres can charge you the full fee required that includes the doctor's fee and the government fee. Some medical centres have the ability to process the government charges with the use of your health insurance card so that you will be charged the doctor's fee only.

Where the medical centre requires full fee payment, make sure you keep your receipt and/or proof of payment and claim the money back through your health insurance.



How to make a health insurance claim

To claim money back from your health insurance, you will need to visit your health insurance retail centre and fill out a claim form. Present the claim form with proof of payment or receipt to a customer service office at the centre and they will process your refund for you.

For Medibank Private visit
www.medibank.com.au.

Medical needs

If you are sick and it is not an emergency, you should visit a doctor (known as a GP or general practitioner) or family medical centre. GPs can take care of your non-emergency medical needs or refer you to a specialist doctor or hospital for further treatment. GPs and medical centres are listed in the Yellow Pages telephone directory under 'Medical Practitioners'.

What happens if you become sick?

- » Choose a doctor. You can look for a doctor in the Yellow Pages or on page 2 of this booklet.
- » Phone the doctor or medical centre and make an appointment. If you can't attend your appointment, phone to cancel your appointment.
- » Go to your appointment. Your doctor will ask questions about your health and may give you a prescription for medicine. Some medicines are paid for by health insurance, but not all. Ask the customer service officer at the health insurance centre which medicines are covered.

- » Get a medical certificate. If you are away from your classes, you will need to prove you were sick. A medical certificate from your doctor will show that you were unable to attend class. There is no extra charge for this certificate.
- » Pay your bill. At the end of each appointment, show your health insurance card and pay the bill.

Interpreters

If you need an interpreter during your medical visit, your doctor may be able to provide one on the telephone from the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). Phone 131 450 (costs may apply) for more information on this service.

Migrant services

Many hospitals and large health centres employ health professionals called multicultural health workers who specialise in working with migrant communities.

Their services include counselling, advice and referrals. Phone your local hospital or community health centre to see if there is a multicultural health worker for your language group.

Community health care

Community health centres provide health services at a low cost. Not all centres provide the same services, but these can include medical care, nursing, health education, physiotherapy, dental care, counselling and social welfare. Look in the White Pages telephone directory under 'Community Health Centres' or 'Health' to find one near you.

Medicines

If you are sick, your doctor or GP may prescribe medicine such as antibiotics. Prescription medicines are available at chemists and pharmacies. To purchase prescription medicines, you must provide your doctor's prescription to the chemist.

Your health insurance will only pay for prescription medicines above a certain dollar value. Make sure you show your health insurance card when you are paying for prescription medicines at the chemist.

If you normally take any prescription medicines, you should have a letter from your regular doctor with details about your condition and the medicine you are taking. This will help if you need treatment or medicine for your medical condition.

If you have any questions about medicine, speak to the chemist or phone the Medicine Hotline on 1300 888 763 from 9.00am - 6.00pm Monday - Friday.

General health

When your health declines, so does your happiness, your social life and your studies. Take time to look after yourself to get the most out of your time in Australia and ensure you don't miss classes.

Mental wellbeing

Living in a new culture can be stressful and difficult. If you feel lonely or stressed, talk to friends, staff or a campus counsellor.

For more serious issues, your GP or medical health centre are able to refer you to professionals who can help.

You can also contact Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre on 07 3167 8333 or 1800 188 189.

Homesickness and cultural adjustment

It is very normal to feel homesick - most people who travel experience it at some stage. It can be triggered by different things such as food, smells, music, lifestyle or just missing family and friends.

Homesickness can be experienced at different periods and for different lengths of time. It can make you frustrated, depressed or angry. This can affect your studies and how you react with your classmates.

If you feel homesick, it is a good idea to talk to somebody about your feelings. There are associations and clubs from particular cultures or religions in Brisbane that you might like to join. This may help you find support from people that have experienced the same challenges.

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE also has free counselling services to help you with your needs. You can contact these counselling services through Student Services on your campus.

Make sure you give yourself some time to adjust to your new surroundings and cultural environment. It is important to maintain contact with your family and friends at home particularly during the adjustment period. Remember that you are here to experience and enjoy a new and different culture!

Health

Physical wellbeing

While you are studying, make sure you eat and drink well. Drink plenty of water through the day and eat a balanced diet of fruit and vegetables. Students can spend a lot of time indoors studying, so you might want to find a sport or hobby to help you get lots of exercise.

Sexual health

If you have any concerns during your stay about sexual matters, talk to a campus counsellor for further referrals or your GP for advice.

Visit www.health.qld.gov.au/sexhealth/default.asp.

Dental, optical and alternative therapies

Dental, optical and alternative therapies are not covered by your health insurance and may be expensive compared to your home country.

Look in the Yellow Pages telephone directory or online to find one convenient to you.



Managing your finances

Banking

Exchanging money

Australian currency consists of dollars and cents (AUD). Money exchanges can change your country's currency into Australian currency. You can exchange your money at dedicated money exchanges at the airport, in the Queen Street Mall (in the city centre), or at any bank. Rates can vary between different banks and exchanges, so check before you exchange money to get the best rate possible.

Banks and ATMs

Banking services are provided by banks, building societies and credit unions.

There are five major banks in Australia: ANZ, National Australia Bank, Commonwealth Bank, Suncorp and Westpac. All five of these banks have automatic teller machines (ATM) throughout Brisbane. Bank opening hours are generally Monday to Thursday from 9.30am - 4.00pm and Friday from 9.30am - 5.00pm.

How to open a bank account

Once you are settled in Brisbane, it is a good idea to open a bank account. If you open your account within six weeks of your arrival, you will only need to show your passport as identification. After six weeks, you must show additional identification to open an account.

You can choose any bank or building society you want to open your account. You will need to show your passport, student ID (which will help you avoid higher bank fees) and some money to deposit. Your first deposit can be any amount from as little as \$5.

To withdraw money you can go into any branch of your bank, or just use your bank card at an ATM. You may need to set up a personal identification number (PIN) in order to use an ATM. Ask at your bank if you need help doing this.

If your bank card is lost or stolen you *must* phone your bank immediately.



Managing your finances

Budgeting

When you live and study away from home, it can be easy to spend lots of money quickly. It is a good idea to set up a budget to help you manage your expenses.

Initial expenses

Below is an example of the initial expenses you might incur when you arrive:

Temporary accommodation	\$400
Rental bond (four weeks rent @ \$200/week)	\$800
Advance rent (two weeks @ \$200/week)	\$400
Electricity connection	\$80
Telephone connection	\$60
Gas connection	\$80
Household items – furniture, crockery, etc	\$400
Transportation	\$50
Educational expenses	\$250
Other expenses	\$200
Total	\$2,720

Note: These figures are approximate only.

Ongoing expenses

Once you have established your accommodation and extras, such as your telephone and electricity, you will need to budget for ongoing costs. Usually, your ongoing expenses will fall into four categories:

- » Utilities (telephone, electricity and gas – every three months).
- » Living (rent, food, transportation, entertainment – weekly).

- » Education (photocopying, printing, for instance – as needed).
- » Unexpected (return home, family visits, health costs not covered by health insurance).

The cost of living in Brisbane varies greatly, depending on your personal needs and tastes. While the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) suggests that you will need \$1500 or more per month, you may need more, especially if you are renting a house or apartment on your own.

Below is an example of weekly expenses you might need to budget for (amounts vary with individual needs):

Electricity/gas	\$20
Entertainment	\$30
Telephone	\$25
Educational	\$20
Rent (share accommodation)	\$130
Unexpected	\$20
Food	\$70
Transportation	\$25
Total	\$340 per week

Are you entitled to work in Australia?

Student visa requirements allow you to work up to 20 hours a week at a paying job during the semester. During semester holidays, you can work as many hours as you like. Other types of visas have other rules and conditions about working.

Phone Immigration on 13 18 81 or visit www.immi.gov.au for more information about working and your visa.

Work experience

Some of Brisbane North Institute of TAFE programs feature in-the-field work experience as part of the program. If work experience is required and assessed as part of your program, you are allowed to work more than 20 hours a week. However, you cannot be paid for more than 20 hours a week at any time. Contact your International Student Support Officer (ISSO) for more information.

Finding work

You can start by talking to the Student Support Officers in Student Services at each campus. They can help you write a resume or application, prepare for job interviews and find a job. You must make an appointment and register with Student Services to use their help.

There are many different ways to start your job search:

- » Look in the newspaper under the 'job vacancies' or 'positions vacant' section, especially on Saturday.
- » Visit websites such as www.seek.com.au and www.careerone.com.au.

- » The Brisbane North Institute of TAFE Student Newsletter also provides resume samples, interview tips and updated job vacancies.
- » Contact an employment agency. You can find employment agencies listed in the Yellow Pages telephone directory.
- » Visit the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations at www.workplace.gov.au. Find links and advice on jobs and careers, training, government assistance and work conditions.

Recognising your skills

Specialist qualifications you may have already gained from your home country in areas such as engineering, construction, metalwork, electrical or catering can be recognised in Australia. Having your qualifications recognised will allow you to look for work in these areas.

To find out how to have your skills recognised, phone Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) in Queensland on 07 3223 1423 (within Australia). If you are enquiring from overseas, phone the TRA's Canberra number on +61 2 6121 7456.

Working in Australia

Working conditions

If you work in Australia, your job will have certain conditions associated with it. Most jobs and working conditions are covered by Commonwealth or state ‘awards’. Awards cover areas such as minimum wages, allowances, overtime, penalty rates, working hours and days off for holidays/vacations, long service or sickness.

Some workplaces are covered by Certified Agreements. These are agreements made about wages and employment conditions (such as overtime and days off) made directly between an employer and a group of employees or employee unions.

For more information about unions, phone the Australian Council of Trade Unions on 1300 362 223 or go to **www.actu.asn.au**.

If you need more information about working conditions, phone the Office of the Employment Advocate on 1300 366 632 or Wageline on 1300 369 945.

Your pay

Taxes

All Australians pay tax on their earnings. The amount of tax they pay varies from person to person. The government takes out tax before workers receive their pay.

If you intend to work while living in Australia, you must apply for a Tax File Number (TFN). This is a unique number issued to you which helps the government identify you in the tax system.

You should apply for your TFN as soon as possible when you arrive in Australia. You can apply quickly and easily online at www.ato.gov.au/individuals – make sure you have your passport details available. It can take up to one month to get your TFN.

Once you have a TFN, you don’t ever have to apply again while working in Australia. Applying for a TFN is free.

Tax returns

The Australian tax year runs from 1 July to 30 June of the following year. Under Australian law, anyone who earns an income during the tax year must file a tax return by 31 October. To find out if you are required to file a tax return, contact the Australian Tax Office on 13 28 61 or go to **www.ato.gov.au**.

Tax Help is a free service available to people on low incomes, such as students, who need help with tax questions and tax returns. Phone 13 28 61 to find your nearest Tax Help Centre.

Superannuation

Superannuation (or 'super') is a government sponsored savings program. You add money to it from your earnings while you are young to make sure you have enough money to live on when you retire (around age 65). Most employed people are members of a super fund. Employers must put an amount equal to nine per cent of your salary into your super fund. You can put additional money from your pay into your super fund, if you wish, but you will not be able to access that money until you are 65.

Your employer should give you the name of their super fund. To check that your employer is paying the right amount into your super fund, phone the super fund.

If you have questions about super, phone the Australian Taxation Office Superannuation infoline on 13 10 20.

You can receive your super after you have left Australia and your visa has expired. You can lodge an application to do this by visiting www.ato.gov.au.



Leisure time

Mild to warm weather for most of the year means that some of Queensland's best features are found outdoors. Brisbane residents enjoy socialising outdoors (known as 'al fresco') at cafes, restaurants and pubs around the city and suburbs.

In the past, Brisbane North Institute of TAFE international students have enjoyed organised activities such as Brisbane bus tours, visits to Lone Pine and Australia Zoo, barbecues and playing volleyball and basketball.

Contact your campus Student Support Officer, International Student Support Officer or look at campus noticeboards to find out if any activities have been organised.

Outdoor activities

Brisbane residents love spending time outdoors, participating in activities such as camping, bushwalking, swimming and playing sports. You can find all sorts of outdoor activities and events around Brisbane at www.ourbrisbane.com or www.lonelyplanet.com.

If you enjoy outdoor activities, make sure you stay safe:

- » Swim only at those beaches that are patrolled by lifesavers. Not all Queensland beaches have lifesavers patrolling them. Remember to swim only between the flags.
- » Never fish or swim alone.
- » Queensland's sun is harsh – make sure you wear a hat and 30+ sunscreen when you are outdoors.

Culture

Brisbane city has a variety of museums including the Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Museum and the interactive Science Centre. There are often special exhibits, events and free activities – check websites for specific times and events.

Brisbane is also home to cultural activities such as theatre, concerts, movies and events.

Visit www.ourbrisbane.com or www.brisbane.qld.gov.au to see what's on.

Television and radio

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) television and radio stations have programs in many languages. Weekly programs are listed in newspapers such as *The Courier-Mail*.

A list of ethnic radio stations can be found at the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC) website at www.nembc.org.au.

Some multilingual radio stations in Queensland include Community Radio 4CCR FM (89.1 MHz), Radio 4EB FM (98.1 MHz) and SBS Brisbane FM (93.3 MHz).

Internet

There are several ways for you to access the Internet at little or no cost. As a student at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, you can use our internet access computers in the Learning Hubs. Check with your campus Learning Hubs for opening hours.

Each enrolled student is allowed 50 MB per semester for program-related materials and downloads. If you are over your 50 MB limit you will be locked out of your account until you organise for additional space.

You can top up your Internet access free of charge. This can be done at the Enrolment Centres on your campus.



Logging in for the first time

To use the Internet you must first be enrolled in your class. When you log in the first time, you need to enter your username (student ID number) and your password (which is your date of birth). For example, if your date of birth is May 5, 1970, your password will be 05051970). Once you have successfully logged in, you should change your password.

Other Internet locations

Brisbane City Council libraries feature computers with free internet access in most of their public libraries. Go to www.ourbrisbane.com.au for a list of library locations and services.

Piccabeen Community Centre (Brisbane) offers free computer and Internet access, as well as tutors and classes.

Phone 07 3354 2555 or go to **www.picabeen.org.au** for information.

For information about the best ways to access the Internet, phone NetSpots on 1800 222 797.



Laws and safety in Australia

Brisbane is generally a safe city. By following the laws and taking a few extra precautions, your stay here should be safe and worry free.

Your safety

Carry a mobile phone with you, with your ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact entered in the phone contacts. If you are ever in immediate danger or fear for your safety, call triple zero (000) and ask for the police immediately.

Australia is a safe and peaceful country but like anywhere else in the world, you need to be aware of your surroundings and stay safe. Some safety tips to remember:

- » Do not walk alone at night.
- » Walk in well lit areas.
- » Be careful when using elevators, empty stairways, or toilet areas.
- » Avoid using ATMs in dark or empty places.
- » Never hitchhike.
- » Wearing headphones may decrease your awareness.
- » Be alert! Be aware of your surroundings!
- » Never carry a lot of money with you.
- » Try not to over-expose valuable items (laptops, MP3 players, mobile phones) to the public.
- » Keep your bag next to you at all times.
- » Never accept favours from people you do not know (accepting a lift in a car with a stranger for example).

Obeying the law

As a visitor to Australia, you are obliged to obey the same laws and follow the same rules as citizens. Breaking the law can result in fines, imprisonment or deportation.

Australia has several community organisations which can provide legal advice and inform you of your legal rights. If you need help or have questions, contact:

- » Legal Aid Queensland
Ph: 1300 651 188
- » Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services
Ph: 1800 244 504
- » South Brisbane Immigration and Community Legal Service
Ph: 07 3846 3189

In Australia, everyone is considered equal, regardless of race, gender, country of origin, political or religious affiliation, disability, sexual preference or marital status. All people should be treated fairly. It is illegal to insult, humiliate, offend or intimidate another person based on their differences, or sexually harass anyone.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against or treated unfairly, contact one of the organisations listed above for advice.

Violence

It is illegal to act violently against another person, whether the violence happens in public or at home. Violence at home is called domestic violence. It is punished just as harshly as a crime committed in public.

Domestic violence and violence against children are considered severe crimes. Anyone who engages in these crimes will be harshly punished with a jail sentence or deportation.

Noise and pollution

Laws protect Australians from too much noise. Your neighbours will generally tolerate occasional noise, but if it is frequent, very loud or occurs at night, a noise complaint may be made.

It is illegal to litter and pollute the environment. Make sure you dispose of all your rubbish in a proper bin to help keep Australia beautiful. Brisbane recycles waste such as cardboard and drink bottles – look for a recycling bin before tossing away your rubbish.

Find out what items are suitable for recycling at www.brisbane.qld.gov.au.

The environment

Native plants and animals are protected by Australian law. Collecting or capturing native plants and animals is illegal and can result in large fines or imprisonment.

You should also avoid lighting fires outdoors. Australia is a dry country and one small spark from an outdoor fire can turn into a raging bushfire!

Smoking, drinking and drugs

Smoking is banned in many public places in Australia, including airports, government offices, medical centres, workplaces and within four metres of a building entrance.

Smoking in restaurants and shopping centres is also banned in most states and territories.

Non-smoking areas are often (but not always) shown by a sign. If you aren't sure whether smoking is permitted, ask. Smokers must also dispose of their cigarette butts in garbage bins – *not* on the ground. You must be 18 years or older to buy cigarettes and tobacco products.

You must be 18 years or older to drink alcohol legally in Australia. Drinking alcohol is banned in some public places, regardless of age.

All drugs, other than those prescribed by a doctor or general practitioner, are illegal in Australia.

Religion

In Australia, there is no official religion. People are allowed to practise any religion they choose, as long as it does not break any laws (such as violence against another person).

Relationships

Marriage in Australia is acceptable for men and women over the age of 18 years. Arranged marriages are less common but still acceptable, as long as both people are over the age of 18 years and willing partners. If a person is already married, they may not marry another person. Being married to more than one person at a time is illegal.

The age at which the law recognises your right to have a sexual relationship with another person (known as the Legal Age of Consent) is 16 years in Queensland. This law exists to protect young people.

You can find out more about the Age of Consent or any sexual health issues from a doctor or GP or by contacting the Sexual Health Line on 07 3240 5881 or Brisbane Sexual Health Clinic on 07 3837 5611.



Pets and animals

Although you may want to keep a pet, there are laws about what kinds of pets you can have at home and how many. It is illegal to keep native Australian animals as pets. In Brisbane, some animals need to be registered, go to www.brisbane.qld.gov.au for information about how to register your pet.

No animal or pet can be brought into Australia without quarantine.

Australia has strict laws protecting animals from neglect and abuse. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) is an organisation set up to protect animals.

RSPCA inspectors have the power to confiscate animals that are mistreated and to prosecute the animals' owners.

Arrive early

It is essential that you arrive in Brisbane before both your international orientation and your faculty orientation. You will formally commence your enrolment into your program at these orientations, so attendance is mandatory.

What to do first

Contact the International Unit at:

International Unit
Level 1, Block 6,
Fulcher Road, Red Hill.

You must bring your passport and student visa with you. You can contact your International Student Support Officer (ISSO) before leaving for Australia by phoning +6 17 3259 9221 or emailing the International Unit at International.bnit@det.qld.gov.au.

International student orientation

Your ISSO can help you settle into Brisbane and prepare you to start studying at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE. You will need to bring with you:

- » Your passport and student visa.
- » Your orientation letter.

With this handbook you should have received an orientation letter with details of times and places to go. At the international orientation, you will learn about settling into Brisbane and your studies at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE. You *must* attend this session.

Studying at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE (BNIT)

Identification (ID) cards

You will be registered for an identification card at the international orientation by providing your letter of offer. After registering, you will be eligible for your student ID card. The ISSO will organise to have your ID photos taken and you will be given your student ID card.

Your student ID is essential. It is used for security and will enable you to borrow library books, gain travel concessions and open bank accounts. Student ID cards can also give you discounts on shopping and entertainment. Whenever you are making a purchase, always ask if a student discount is available.

Faculty orientation

Your faculty orientation will provide insight into Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, your faculty and your program. You may need to show your student ID card to prove you have already attended the international student orientation.

At your faculty orientation, you will be given general information about studying at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE – how to find your way around campus, how to change, defer or withdraw from class, health and safety issues, support services available (counselling and disability assistance, employment) and how to use campus facilities including libraries and Internet. You will also learn information about your program such as timetables and material requirements.



Studying at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE (BNIT)

Student rules

All students of Brisbane North Institute of TAFE are expected to follow the rules and regulations set out for students. You can find these on the website:

www.bn.tafe.qld.gov.au/resources/pdf/TAFE_QLDStudentRules07.pdf

You should read through the rules to make sure you understand them. Ignorance is not an excuse to break the rules. Student rules cover topics including:

- » Institute responsibilities.
- » Conditions of enrolment.
- » Program of study progress.
- » Withdrawal/cancellation/change of enrolment.
- » Advanced standing (including Transfer Credit and RPL).
- » Misconduct – cheating, plagiarism and collusion and appeals.
- » Assessment, appeals and deferred/special assessment.
- » Results and awards.
- » Code of conduct.

Complaints and grievances

A student grievance is a complaint lodged by a student of Brisbane North Institute of TAFE relating to staff, other students or procedures.

Mediation is a voluntary discussion between the aggrieved party, the person involved in the grievance, and a third party separate from the grievance.

Any comments or feedback you provide are confidential. In no way will your feedback affect your grades and studies.

How to resolve your grievance

Follow these steps if you have a student grievance (each step is designed to resolve the issue, however, if this does not occur, continue to the next step).

- » Discuss the issue with family, friends or the person involved in the grievance.
- » Make a verbal complaint to another staff member (this can be an Institute Counsellor, campus Student Support Officer or International Student Support Officer).
- » Submit a written complaint by using the Client Feedback Forms which are located in the library, faculties and student services areas on campus. (Please note that the relevant manager will deal with your complaint).

To appeal the outcome

- » An Institute ‘Appeals Committee’ is gathered, a hearing is held and the committee then makes a decision.
- » If you are not satisfied with the decision, you may wish to access the Queensland Ombudsman, an independent office which investigates complaints about decisions made by the state’s public agencies (including Brisbane North Institute of TAFE). Visit the ombudsman website for more information and how to lodge a complaint **www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au**.
- » You have the right to bring a support person with you to any discussions.
- » You can withdraw your grievance or alter the method of resolution at any time. If your grievance relates to sexual harassment, you should contact a Harassment Referral Officer or phone 07 3259 9037.

- » For Academic Appeals refer to the Student Rules located at www.bn.tafe.qld.gov.au/services/student/policies.html

International student visa conditions

If you are in Australia on a student visa, you must meet the conditions of your visa in order to live and study in Brisbane. These include:

Holidays

You may only take holidays during semester breaks. Any holidays taken during the semester will be considered absences.

If you are leaving Brisbane for a semester break holiday, DIAC requires that you tell the International Unit when you are travelling, where you are going and when you will be back.

Attendance

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE monitor and record the attendance of all international students. You must attend all classes. If you are late or not in class, you will be marked absent. If you are sick, you must present medical certificates for each day you are away from class. If your attendance falls below 80 per cent, the International Unit will ask you to sign an agreement to state you are aware your attendance is low.

If your attendance does not improve and falls below 80 per cent, you will be reported to DIAC without further notification where your visa status will be re-assessed. They will ask to see any medical certificates or proof of non-attendance. DIAC may cancel your visa and send you home for non-attendance. If this happens you will not be allowed re-entry to Australia for three years.

Academic performance

You must complete all class activities and assignments, and pass your program requirements. If you are having trouble, please talk to your teachers to arrange help.

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE monitor and record the academic progression of all international students and have intervention strategies in place should you be deemed at risk of unsatisfactory progress.

If you continue to fail academically following intervention and support from the faculty, you may be reported to DIAC on grounds of poor performance. DIAC will not extend visas if your grades are poor. Your ISSO will provide more information on performance requirements at orientation.

Changing your address

You must inform both Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and DIAC within seven days each time you move. Brisbane North Institute of TAFE must be able to contact you at all times. Brisbane North Institute of TAFE may need to contact you in an emergency, to discuss your studies, or to send out your results.

If we cannot contact you, you may be regarded as missing and the police will be informed. If you have not told us your address and do not receive your results, you will be charged money to have a new copy sent to you.

To change your address, you will need to put your new address in writing either by email or completion of a Personal Details Form and send this to the International Unit.

You must also notify DIAC within seven days of change of address. The Change of Address Form (Form 929) can be found on the DIAC website www.immi.gov.au under 'Forms and Booklets'.

Studying at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE (BNIT)

Health insurance

You must have health cover for the duration of your program. Failure to do so is a breach of your visa conditions. It also places you at financial risk should you fall ill as medical costs can be expensive.

Terminating studies/returning home

You must advise the International Unit in writing if you want to end your studies at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and/or return home. This letter will need to outline the reasons for termination, date of advice and your signature. You will be given an exit interview and must provide sufficient evidence (such as medical certificates, copy of flight details, and copy of offer letter). Your student visa will then be cancelled. You must continue to attend class until the process is complete. If you don't, it will reflect on your attendance records, which could affect your ability to study in Australia in the future.

The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students states that you must study with the education provider of your principal program for the first six months of that program. Applications for withdrawal from your principle provider within the first six months of study can only be approved under exceptional circumstances.

General student information

Paying fees

You must pay all relevant fees before your semester starts, or you will not be allowed to start or continue your studies.

Enrolling in classes

There are two types of enrolments: program level and class level. When you are accepted to study at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, you are enrolled into a program of study.

You must also enrol into classes each semester. This is essential. It will not happen automatically – you must enrol yourself by completing an Enrolment Form provided by faculty staff and submit to the enrolments office. If you do not enrol into classes, you will not be on the class attendance rolls and you will not be awarded a result.

If you have any questions about enrolment, contact your faculty staff.

It is also important to find out the dates your classes commence before you go on your semester holiday.

Refunds

Prior to receiving your confirmation of enrolment into Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, you would have signed in the agreement to our International Refund Policy.

Please refer to the International Refund Policy for information if you are applying for a refund. Students are not entitled to refund of tuition fees once the semester of study has commenced. Please remember that as attendance to the international and faculty orientations are mandatory, these are considered as your commencement dates.

If a student successfully meets the English language entry requirements and all other conditions for entry to a BNIT Formal Program during their ELICOS Program, they may apply to credit the balance of paid ELICOS tuition fees to their Formal Program. Such credit may be no less than 1 ELICOS week, is not transferable to another student, and will not be refunded.

If you want to defer your studies, Brisbane North Institute of TAFE may hold tuition fees for up to one year until you resume studying.

If you withdraw from the program after you have deferred for one year, tuition fees will not be refunded.

Refund requests must be put in writing to the International Unit Manager, who will assess your request. You may appeal refund decisions by writing to the Director of Brisbane North Institute of TAFE within 14 days of receiving notification by accessing the complaints and grievances process (page 39). If your request is approved, your refund will be issued within two weeks. Refunds are made to the person who signed the contract and are paid in the currency in which the funds were received.

Contact the International Unit for more information on +61 7 3259 9221.

Graduation

At the end of your studies, students studying formal programs (Diploma and Advanced Diploma) may attend a formal graduation. You are encouraged to invite your family and friends to this ceremony. Your faculty will give you the actual date of the graduation ceremony closer to the date.

ELICOS students also have a more informal graduation.

Student support services

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE prides itself on the outstanding 'extras' it offers its students. Everyone who studies at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE is invited to use our range of student support services.



International Student Support Officer (ISSO)

International Unit
Level 1, Block 6,
Fulcher Rd, Red Hill
Ph: 07 3259 9069

Your ISSO is here to make your stay in Australia easier. They can help with support and information on everything from visas and travel, to accommodation, health and general support.

Each faculty has administration officers who can help you with questions or problems you might have with your programs, enrolments, attendance, results/awards or academic concerns.

Student employment

If you have permission to work from DIAC and want to find a job, the campus Student Support Officer can help you. This service is free and includes:

- » Career advice.
- » Job vacancies.
- » Resume and application preparation.
- » Help preparing for interview.

Note: An appointment is required.

Studying at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE



Disability services

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE aims to provide a quality education for all students on an equal basis. To do that, we offer a range of physical and human resources to help students maximise their studies, including:

- » Sign language interpreters.
- » Readers and scribes.
- » Learning support personnel.
- » Adaptive equipment.
- » Alternative assessment arrangements.

Note: An appointment is required

Phone: 07 3259 9037

Learning support

Contact your faculty or Student Services for further information. The aim of our learning support is to help students develop the skills in order to complete assignments. International students can access extra help with their studies, such as being assigned a tutor, or being allowed to attend extra classes.

Counselling

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE counsellors are experienced, trained professionals who are there to help you at no cost. Special counsellors for international students and those from non-English speaking backgrounds are available. A counsellor can provide advice and guidance on a range of issues, whether they are personal or study-related, including:

- » Career and program advice.
- » Mediation and support for educational issues.
- » Time and study management
- » Financial hardship.
- » Personal issues.
- » Cultural issues.
- » Admission procedures.
- » Special needs.
- » Sexual harassment and grievances.

Note: An appointment is required.

Phone: 07 3259 9037

Campuses and facilities

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE is made up of five campuses, with different programs offered at each campus. The campus you attend depends on the program you are studying – check your letter of offer to find out which campus (or campuses) you will attend.

Each of our five campuses is in a different location in Brisbane and features different facilities. These include dining areas, restaurants, sporting facilities, and libraries.

Bracken Ridge Campus

Norris Road, Bracken Ridge.

On-campus facilities: Art studio, computer access, learning information centre, engineering and computer design facilities, food science laboratory, state of the art kitchen, Polaris Restaurant and bar, library, Student Services, bookshop, ATM and a 200-seat lecture theatre. Free off-street parking available.

Nearby facilities: Shopping centre, post office and ATMs (located in Triple C Shopping Centre, corner of Norris and Telegraph Roads, Bracken Ridge).

Caboolture Campus

Tallon Road, Caboolture.

On-campus facilities: Isabella's Restaurant and Swish's Hairdressing Salon (both of which are open to the public), canteen, library, Student Services and bookshop. Free off-street parking available.

Nearby facilities: Shopping centre, post office, banks and ATMs (located in Caboolture Park Shopping Centre, King Street, Caboolture).

Grovely Campus

Fitzsimmons Street, Keperra.

On-campus facilities: Canteen, library, Student Services, plant nursery (open to public). The campus is easily accessed by train. Free off-street parking available.

Nearby facilities: Fast food outlets, shopping centre, post office, banks and ATMs (located in Kmart Shopping Plaza, corner of Dawson Parade and Patricks Road, Arana Hills).

Ithaca Campus

Fulcher Road, Red Hill.

On-campus facilities: Canteen, library, electronic learning centre, two large lecture theatres, Student Services and the International Program Unit. Free off-street parking available.

Nearby facilities: Broncos Leagues Football Club, shops, banks, ATMs and post office.

Redcliffe Campus

66-68 Klingner Road, Redcliffe.

On-campus facilities: Canteen, library, Student Services and learning information centre. Free off-street parking available.

Nearby facilities: Easy walking distance to Redcliffe business area and the nearby beach.

Studying at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE (BNIT)

Additional information about studying

Recognition of prior academic qualifications

If you have already studied outside Australia, you might like to have qualifications you earned from those studies recognised here in Australia. Recognition of your previous academic qualifications may enable you to further your studies.

It is important that your qualification documents are in English. If not, you should have them translated into English. The Australian Education International – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) can give you information on how to have your post-secondary qualifications recognised. Phone AEI-NOOSR on 1800 020 086 for information.

The Queensland Government provides a free service for assessing overseas professional and technical qualifications – visit the government website at www.training.qld.gov.au/information/skills-recognition or phone 07 3247 4901.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the formal recognition of a person's current skills and knowledge, no matter how, when or where the learning occurred.

Even if you have never formally studied or trained in a particular area, you may have gained knowledge and skills through your education, training, work and life experience.

RPL is a recognition process evidenced in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework and could provide you with a full or part qualification, and avoid duplication of training.

It could be used to identify what training you may need to complete a qualification, or provide a pathway to higher qualifications.

Let Brisbane North Institute of TAFE (BNIT) show you how to obtain your qualification faster!

Credit transfers

If you have already formally studied at another institution, you may be able to have credits transferred towards your program at Brisbane North Institute of TAFE. Credit transfer can only be granted if the credits are considered equivalent, which is determined through a formal process. Credits for programs of less than one semester cannot be transferred. For more information, contact the International Unit.

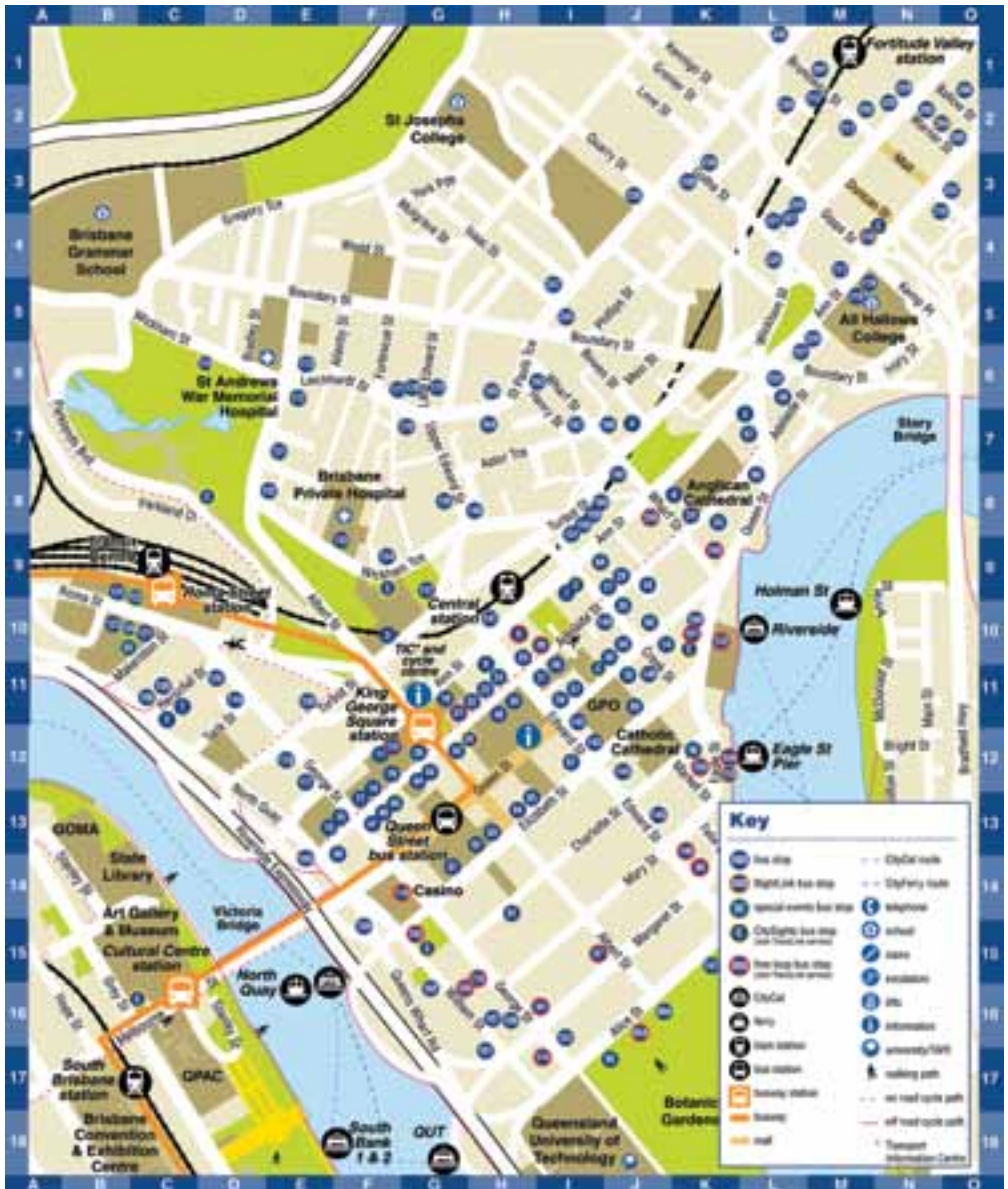
Trades Recognition Australia

Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is part of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations which assesses the skills of trade and associate professional occupations for people from other countries.

Competency-based training

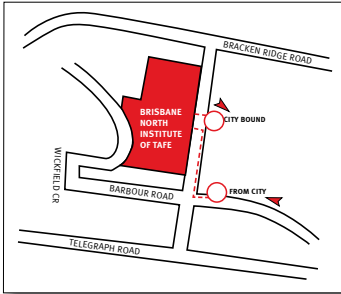
Brisbane North Institute of TAFE uses a competency-based method of assessing skills. The key to competency-based assessment is that it is based on the actual skills and knowledge a student can demonstrate outside of the classroom (such as the workplace).

Brisbane CBD transport map



Bracken Ridge Campus transport map

Bus services between the City CBD and Brisbane North Institute of TAFE Bracken Ridge Campus, Norris Road, Bracken Ridge



- bus route 330**
servicing
Bracken Ridge
North Point (BNIT Bracken Ridge)
Zillmere
Chermiside
QUT Kelvin Grove
Brisbane City
- bus route 331**
servicing
Bracken Ridge
North Point (BNIT Bracken Ridge)
Zillmere
Chermiside
Spring Hill
Brisbane City
- train route IPCA**
Ipswich to Caboolture

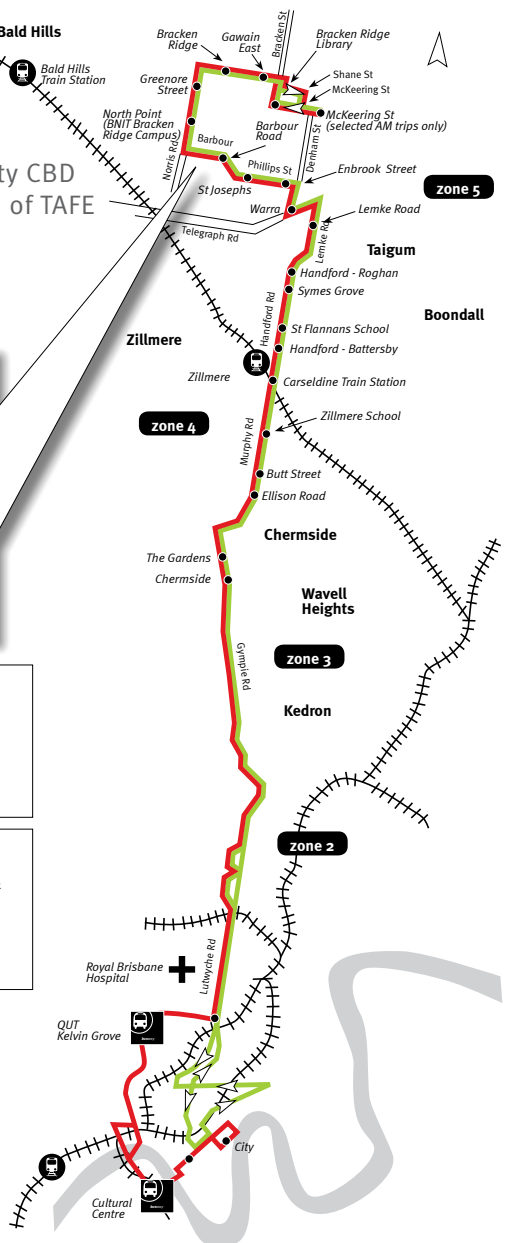
Services run every 15 minutes in peak, and every 30 minutes off peak approximately
For more detailed information:
www.transinfo.com.au
 phone 131 230
 This map is not to scale and should be used as a guide only

key

- route 331
- route 330
- bus stop
- connecting train station
- busway station
- train line

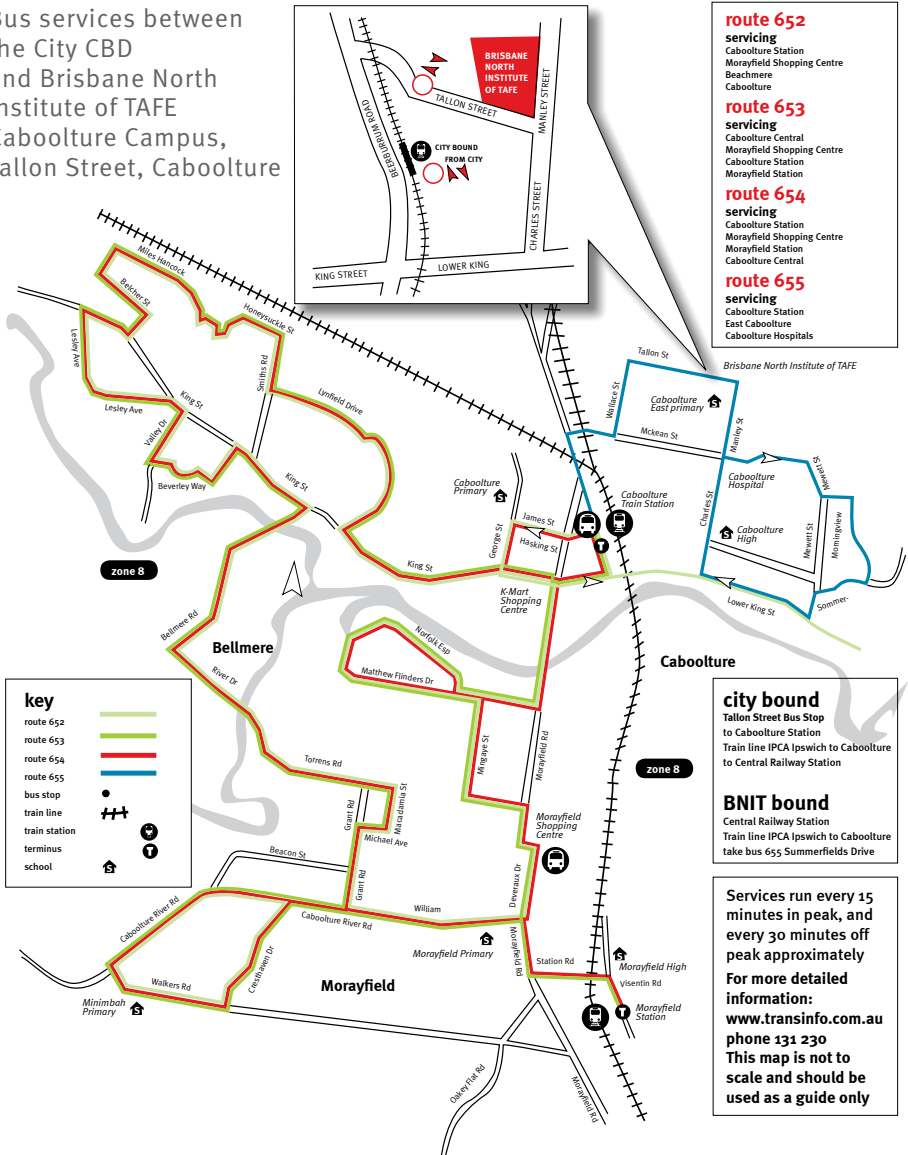
city bound
 Barbour Road Bus Stop
 Approximately 150 metre walk
 Zones travelled: 5

BNIT bound
 Adelaide St Broadway
 Stop 40



Caboolture Campus transport map

Bus services between the City CBD and Brisbane North Institute of TAFE Caboolture Campus, Tallon Street, Caboolture



Grovely Campus transport map

Bus services between the City CBD and Brisbane North Institute of TAFE Grovely Campus, Fitzsimmons Street, Keperra

city bound
 Arana Hills K-Mart
 Connecting Bus:
 Route 390 Bus Brookside
 to City - Adelaide Street, Stop 39
 Connecting Train:
 Route BNF
 Central Railway Station
 to Ferry Grove Railway Station
 Zones travelled: 1-3

BNIT bound
 City - Adelaide Street, Stop 20
 Route 390 Bus Brookside
 Connecting Train:
 Route BNF
 Central Railway Station
 to Ferry Grove Railway Station

route 390 servicing (peak hour service)
 Arana Hills
 Everton Hills
 Mitchelton
 City

route 397 servicing
 Ferry Grove
 Ferry Hills
 Arana Hills
 Everton Hills
 Mitchelton

route 398 servicing
 Ferry Grove
 Ferry Hills
 Arana Hills
 Grovely
 Mitchelton

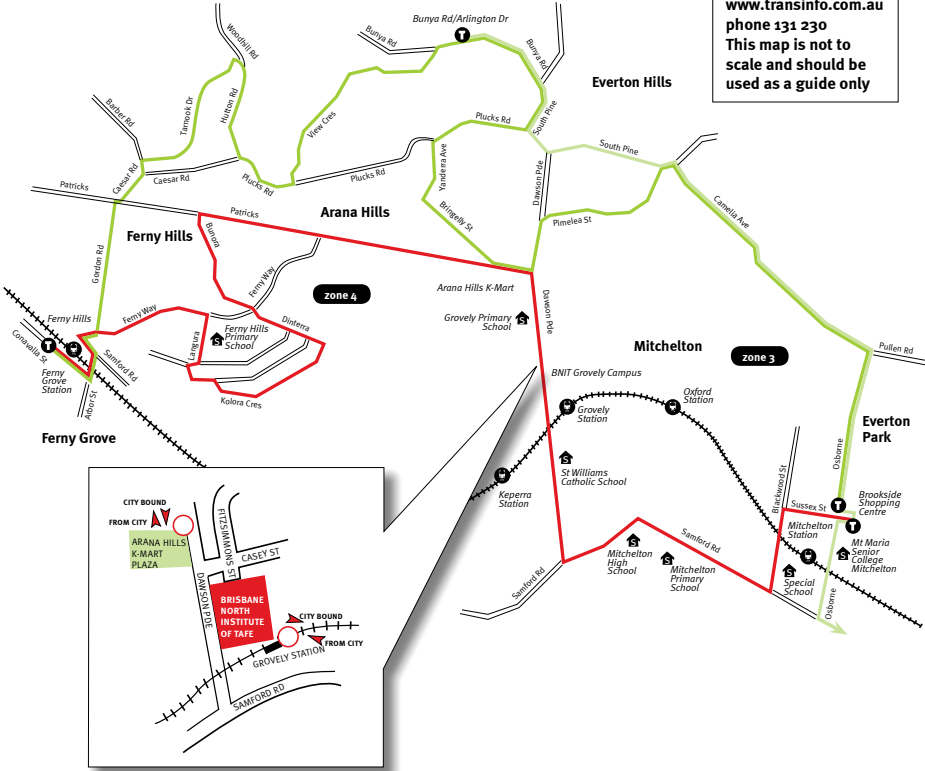
key

- route 350
- route 352
- route 398
- bus stop
- train line
- train station
- terminus
- school

Services run every 15 minutes in peak, and every 30 minutes off peak approximately

For more detailed information:
www.transinfo.com.au
 phone 131 230

This map is not to scale and should be used as a guide only



Ithaca Campus transport map

Bus services between the City CBD and Brisbane North Institute of TAFE Ithaca Campus, Fulcher Road, Red Hill

- route 350**
servicing
Bridgeman Downs
Everton Park
Enoggera
Ashgrove
City
- route 352**
servicing
McDowall
Stafford Heights
Everton Park
Enoggera
Ashgrove
City
- route 355**
servicing
Albany Creek
Everton Park
Enoggera
Ashgrove
City

city bound
Stop 14
corner of Boon Street and
Waterworks Road
Approximately 468 metre walk
Zones travelled: 2

BNIT bound
Stop 14
164 Waterworks Road
Approximately 468 metre walk
Zones travelled: 2

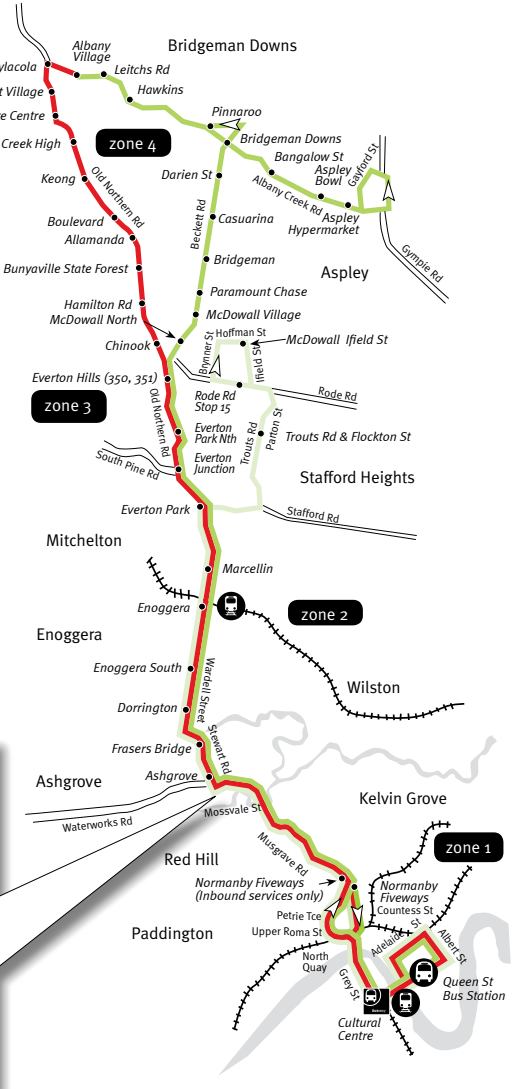
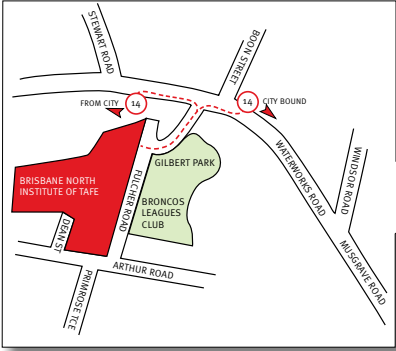
Services run every 15 minutes in peak, and every 30 minutes off peak approximately

For more detailed information:
www.transinfo.com.au
phone 131 230

This map is not to scale and should be used as a guide only

key

- route 350
- route 352
- route 355
- bus stop
- bus interchange
- connecting train station
- busway station



Extra bus routes also include 378, 379, 380 and 381