



STUDENT HANDBOOK

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF ENGLISH

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Welcome to the Australian College of English!

We are pleased you have chosen to take an English Course with us, and hope your studies will be rewarding, enjoyable and successful.

ACE Courses are famous all over the world for the high quality of teaching and materials, and for the commitment and professionalism of our teachers. Our extensive experience, range of courses and excellent facilities mean you have chosen one of the best places in the world to study English.

Your progress and well-being are of central importance to us. We have created this Student Handbook to give you some basic information about:

- ACE
- Brisbane
- living in Australia

If there is anything we can help you with - questions, problems or information - we will - just ask!

General English Levels

We have six levels at ACE. Students usually spend **12 weeks** at each level:

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 100 | Elementary |
| 200 | Pre-Intermediate |
| 300 | Intermediate |
| 400 | Upper Intermediate |
| 500 | Pre-Advanced |
| 600 | Advanced |

We take great care in placing students in the best class for you. If you feel that your class is too easy or too difficult, or if you have any other problems, talk to your teacher first, then the Director of Studies.

Options Classes

In the afternoons, classes at levels 100 and 200 continue their General English work.

Classes from 300 to 600 can choose an Option Class. Students study in this class for 4 weeks. After four weeks you can choose the same Option Class or decide to try a different one.

These option classes are an important part of your course. You can focus on an area that you like, need extra help with, or which you are interested in.

You usually have a different Options Class teacher to your Main Class.

PSA - Programmed Self Access

Full-time students have 5 hours of Programmed Self-Access per week. PSA is a time for students to study independently with a teacher available to help with individual needs and questions.

There is a PSA menu which you can choose from every day. The menu is also displayed in your classroom and on the PSA Notice Board between the Listening Centre and the Computer Centre.

1. Computer Centre

The College has two computer rooms with special language learning programs to help you improve your English skills. We will show you how to use this software on the first day.

You can also use the Internet, MSN Messenger, Word, Real audio & video streams and much more in the Computer Centre.

During PSA times the Computer Centres is for English study, so we ask that students use **English only**.

There are special times when you can use the Computer Centres in your Language:

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Before school: | 7.30 - 8.30 |
| Lunchtime: | 11.45 - 12.45 |
| After school: | 3.00 - 5.00 |

2. Listening Centre

The Listening Centre is a great place for listening and pronunciation practice. There are two indexes which can help you find the material most useful for you:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Level Index | on the wall outside the Listening Centre |
| Nationality Index | on the wall inside |

The Level Index is linked to your course, and shows you practice materials useful for each week of Main Class. The Nationality Index lists materials that will help you with pronunciation problems for people who speak your first language

3. Study Rooms

Study Rooms are always available for quiet work, with a teacher to help you. This is an excellent opportunity for you to work on areas you find difficult, to look again at things you studied in your Main Class, or to do your homework.

If you aren't sure what to do, the teacher can help you choose something useful.

4. DVD Club

DVD Club helps you to develop your listening skills, extend your vocabulary, and improve your pronunciation by watching films. We show a different movie each week - look at the PSA menu for this week's film.

All movies have English sub-titles.

5. Conversation Club

Join a teacher and other students for English conversation practice. This is a great choice for students who need to develop confidence and fluency with speaking.

We talk about a different subject each week - look on the PSA menu for one that interests you.

Homework

Homework is a very important part of your course. We set at least one hour's homework every night.

If you want to do more work outside class time, talk to your teacher who will be happy to set you more.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT STUDYING AT ACE BRISBANE

ACE Brisbane is an adult learning community. We have very few rules, but we ask you to respect them so that we can all work in a professional environment:

English Only Policy

ACE Brisbane has an **English Only** Policy covering most of the school. Please see the separate yellow sheet for full information.

Your teacher will also expect you to speak English in class at all times.

Attendance

It is extremely important for the success of your courses that you attend **all lessons**.

If you have a Student Visa, the Australian Government requires you to attend a minimum of 80% of lessons. If you are sick and visit a Doctor, ask for a Medical Certificate.

Failure to achieve 80% attendance could result in the your visa being cancelled, an early flight back to your country, and make it much more difficult to travel to Australia in the future.

Lateness

It is important that you are on time for all classes so that you do not disturb the teacher and waste the time of students who make the effort to be in class ready to work.

If you are up to 5 minutes late in the morning, your teacher will ask you to wait outside the class room until it is a convenient time to enter. If you are more than 5 minutes late, you will not be allowed into class until the start of the next lesson.

Students who are late after break or lunch may not enter the class. Latecomers are also marked absent.

This serious policy is for the benefit of all students; please respect it.

Smoking

ACE Brisbane is in a Smoke-Free building.

Please do not smoke anywhere inside. There are smoking areas outside the building.

Eating & Drinking

Please do not eat or drink in any classroom, the Listening Centre or Computer Centre. This helps keep these areas clean.

You are very welcome to eat and drink in the Student Room on the first floor or the lounge area on the second floor.

Mobile Telephones

Mobile telephones must be **switched off** at all times during lessons and PSA.

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT VISA REGULATIONS

1. If you have a Student Visa you have said to the Australian Government that your primary reason for being in Australia is full-time study. This means you must maintain a minimum of 80% attendance.
2. You are required to give the school your address in Brisbane on the first day. If you change your address, you must give it to Reception immediately.
3. If you want to extend your Student Visa, we can help you. Please talk with Reception as soon as you know - we recommend four weeks before your old visa finishes.

BOOMERANG CLUB

The ACE Boomerang Club offers you a great choice of different trips and social activities during the week and at weekends.

We will visit your classes each week to tell you about what is happening. You can also check the Boomerang desk in Reception.

We can also help you arrange car hire, sky-diving, scuba diving lessons and various other activities and tours - just ask!

HOMESTAY

Staying with a homestay family is a great way of experiencing family life and improving your English. You will also learn something about Australian life and culture. Don't be surprised if things are different to your life in your own country!

Good communication is essential to a successful and happy stay with a family. Don't be afraid to start conversations yourself – any time is a good time for conversation practice!

We recommend that you:

- tell your homestay "mother" or "father" if you will be home late at night, are staying with a friend or are going to miss dinner. This is polite, and will stop them from worrying about where you are!
- ask your family's permission before inviting people to visit you - usually your homestay family will be happy for you to do this, but it is polite to ask.
- say "please" when you are asking for something, "thank you" when somebody does something for you, and "sorry" or "excuse me" if you do something wrong or make a mistake. All these are normal in Australia.

Homestay is not a hotel. As a member of the family, you will need to keep your room tidy, make your bed, take part in conversation, and help the family with small jobs like clearing the table, making a cup of coffee, etc.

Keys

Your homestay family will give you a house key, so that you can come and go as you like.

Food

You will get breakfast and dinner every day, and lunch at weekends. It's okay to tell your homestay family about what you like and don't like!

It is polite to ask before you take food from the kitchen.

Washing Clothes

Your homestay family will wash and dry your clothes at least one time per week.

If you want to iron your clothes - that's your responsibility!

Telephone

Please ask your homestay family before using the telephone.

You can buy telephone cards which make calls free for your homestay - and they are much cheaper for you when you call internationally. If your homestay would prefer you not to use their phone, you can also use these cards from Public Telephones, Mobile / Cell Phones, and the telephone in the school

Paying for Homestay

All money for homestay should be paid direct to ACE at Reception. This makes things easy for you and your homestay family.

Changing or cancelling homestay

You must talk with us **two weeks** before extending, changing or stopping your homestay.

If you don't, or can't, you may have to pay a change fee.

If you take a holiday during your course and want to return to the same homestay family, you need to pay \$100.00 per week so that we can keep your room for you.

Problems with Homestay

If you have any problems with your homestay, please speak to Kaylene.

Often what look like big problems can be easily solved with our understanding and help!

SHARE ACCOMMODATION

If you are here for a long time, Share Accommodation can be a good option.

We have a noticeboard near the stairs where you can find information about this. You can also look in the Courier Mail newspaper on Wednesday and Saturday, or on the internet.

We are always happy to help with information and advice, but we can't actually organise this type of accommodation for you.

MONEY AND BANKS

We are very happy to help you open a bank account - just ask in reception.

We recommend ANZ Bank - it's close to the school and completely free to open and use your account. Normally you get an ATM card that you can also use in shops like a credit card.

Banks are closed on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, but ATMs are everywhere, and you can use any one! Try to use only ANZ machines, as you have to pay to use other banks' machines.

HEALTH AND TRAVEL INSURANCE

If you have a Student Visa, you already have a special **health insurance** called Medibank Overseas Student Health Cover (OHSC). Ask in reception for your insurance card; it sometimes takes a few days to arrive.

If you have another visa, we strongly recommend that you get **health insurance**. We also recommend that every student get personal **travel insurance**. This will help if things get lost or stolen.

If you don't already have both of these - talk to us and we'll help.

DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS

We understand that being sick away from home can be extra stressful, and we will do everything we can to help.

Your homestay family can help you make an appointment to see their doctor. If you prefer, there is a medical centre close to the school and we can make an appointment for you.

Often you will need to pay the doctor first, and use the receipt to get the money back from your insurance company.

Your insurance will almost certainly pay for everything if you need to visit a public hospital, including an ambulance. You can also choose to visit a private hospital if you like.

SHOPPING

The usual shopping hours for stores in Queensland are 8.30 - 5.00. Shops open late (until 9.00) on Fridays (or Thursdays in some suburbs):

The closest supermarket to school is **Woolworths**, on Adelaide Street. **Queen Street** is the main shopping street in the city. Big shopping malls include the **Myer Centre**, and there are also cinemas there.

The area around and under **Anzac Square** (next to the school) is great for buying food at lunchtime.

Speak to Reception if you would like more information or recommendations on shopping or restaurants in the city.

POST / MAIL

The main Post Office is on Anzac Square. Ask in Reception for information on stamp and prices.

EMERGENCIES

The number to call if there is something really serious happening, and you need the Police, Fire Service or Ambulance:

000

TRANSPORT

For information on public transport (bus, train, ferry):

telephone: 13 12 30

internet: www.transinfo.qld.gov.au

Bus, Train, Ferry, CityCat

Brisbane bus, train and ferry **tickets** work on a zone system. Ask your homestay family or reception about which zone ticket you need .

Weekly tickets are a good ticket to buy. These tickets can be purchased from any train station. You can travel as many times on any bus, train or ferry within your zone within one weekly period.

| | | | |
|--------|---------|----------|--------|
| 1 zone | \$17.60 | one trip | \$2.20 |
| 2 zone | \$20.80 | one trip | \$2.60 |
| 3 zone | \$24.00 | one trip | \$3.00 |

If you will not use the bus, train or ferry every day over a weekly period then a Ten Trip Saver is a good ticket to buy. This ticket allows you to travel 10 times on one ticket over a long period of time. Prices are the same as above.

Unfortunately you **cannot** buy cheaper ("concession") tickets as an international student.

There are fines of \$150 for travelling on the wrong ticket.

Trains

The main city station is Central Station, opposite the school on Ann Street. As well as travelling around the city, you can visit the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast on the train. You can also go to Cleveland, and then take a ferry to Stradbroke Island.

At weekends, a return ticket is the same price as a normal single ticket - great value!

Taxis

You can call and order a taxi, or get one from a rank (line) in the City

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Black and White: | 13 10 08 |
| Yellow | 13 19 24 |

WORK

If you have a Student Visa you can work up to 20 hours a week:

- first you need to visit Immigration to get permission to work.
- then you have to go to the Tax Office to get a special number, called a TFN.

Students on a Tourist / Visitor visa are NOT allowed to work.

You can use the internet (try www.careerone.com.au), newspaper (Courier Mail on Saturdays and Wednesday), or just walk around the city to find a job.

Talk to your teacher and we can help you with a CV or Resume.

HELP AT ACE

At ACE Brisbane, we want you to enjoy your studies and your stay in Australia.

Being in a new country can sometimes be a difficult experience, especially at first.

We have a lot of experience with helping new students become more relaxed and comfortable. So if you have a problem, a question, or need information, please ask us.

If you have a question about your class you can talk with:

your teacher, or
the Director of Studies, **Jon Fawcett**

If you have a question about your accommodation, talk with:

the Accommodation Manager, **Kaylene Waring**

If you have a question about fees, your visa or need any general information, talk with:

the Reception Staff, **Beth Stewart, Susan Midgley & Tina Jackson**

If you would like to talk about a personal problem, you can talk with:

Jon Fawcett, Director of Studies / National Principal
Kaylene Waring, Office/Accommodation Manager
Shoji Kuwayama, Marketing Manager

We can also help you find a member of staff who speaks your language, or a local organisation which can help with more serious problems.

If your problem is serious and has still not been solved, you can follow our **Grievance Procedure**:

You are, on induction, introduced to the key people in our organisation. You are encouraged to discuss any problems you may have with the appropriate member of staff.

If you are not able to find a solution to your problem, please bring your concerns to:

Jon Fawcett
Director of Studies / National Principal

You have the right to be represented by a nominee if you so choose. If you do have a problem, and need someone to translate for you, ACE will organise a translator for you.

If you are dissatisfied with the Director of Studies' decision, you can contact the Queensland Office of Fair Trading, at the address below:

Queensland Office of Fair Trading

Level 21, State Law Building
50 Ann Street
GPO Box 3111
Brisbane, QLD 4001

Phone: 1 300 658 030

Fax: (07) 3246 1589 email: BrisbaneOFT@dtrft.qld.gov.au

The external avenue for appeal is the Education Queensland Overseas Unit, at the address below:

Chief Executive Officer
Education Queensland Overseas Unit
Floor 1, 130 Mary Street
Brisbane, Qld 4000

Phone: (07) 3224 6958

The Chief Executive Officer has the authority to suspend or cancel the College's registration at any time, if justified.

Should you lodge a complaint with the Chief Executive Officer of Education Queensland, this in no way affects your right to take further action at a later date, if you so wish.

This Grievance Procedure does not remove the right to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

You are reminded that once you have commenced your course our written refund agreement specifies that no refund of tuition fees can be made if you decide to shorten your course.

This agreement does not remove the right to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

For a full copy of our Cancellation and Refund Policy, see Reception or visit our website - www.ace.edu.au

NOTES
