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Before Leaving Home

The Monash South Africa (MSA) Campus has prepared this guide to assist you with your transition to South Africa. Please read it carefully and make sure you complete all the steps in the pre-departure checklist. If you have any questions, please contact us by email on musa-abroad@monash.edu.

1) Pre-Departure Checklist

☐ Return your Acceptance form and Acknowledgement of Conditions form to Monash Abroad

You must sign and return these forms before you leave for South Africa so that Monash Abroad can approve your travel grant.

☐ Obtain a valid student visa

Students from outside South Africa are responsible for obtaining their own student visa/study permit. Processing times vary, so be sure to apply early.

☐ Purchase Travel Insurance

It is a condition of your participation in the intercampus exchange program that you purchase comprehensive travel insurance. Please send a copy of your travel insurance policy to your home campus Monash Abroad officer.

☐ Organise yourself

Make sure you have information on traveling to South Africa, living in the Gauteng province and studying at Monash South Africa

☐ Arrange your airport pick-up

The Monash South Africa airport transfer service is available free of charge to exchange students, upon arrival on campus for the first time. It is important to arrange this as far in advance as possible before the service is required.

☐ Organise your Accommodation

All exchange students are placed in on-campus accommodation. To secure your place, please ensure that you have submitted your accommodation application form and your signed residence declaration form to musaaccommodation@monash.edu

☐ Make arrangements for South African currency

It is recommended that you have approximately R2, 000 to R3, 000 to cover your first month’s expenses and to tide you over until you are able to open a bank account.

☐ Update your contact details in WES

Make sure your postal, emergency contact and home (i.e. South African) addresses and telephone numbers are all up to date in WES so that both your home and host campus can keep in touch with you.
**Make copies of all important documents to bring in your hand luggage**

- Student Visa
- Student Exchange Offer Letter
- Monash student ID card
- Passport Information Page
- Other formal identification
- International drivers license and/or drivers license from your home country (optional)
- Proof of travel insurance

It is important that you have all these documents with you throughout your stay in South Africa. We suggest that you put a second copy of each in your suitcase and leave a third copy at home with your family.

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**2) Type of Monash Student**

You will be classified as an international intercampus exchange student or if you are from a non-Monash campus, an exchange student. Other international students at Monash, most of whom are doing full degrees, make up quite a big and diverse group of students who study at the South African campus.

Some of the information for international students on the Monash website (www.monash.ac.za/international/) might be useful, however not all information is relevant to you. You should refer to the documentation that we send you directly for information about these subjects.

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**3) Visa application**

It is each student’s own responsibility to ensure that they have the correct student visa/study permit, and that if you extend your stay in South Africa, you ensure that your visa is renewed in time. We advise students to rather apply for a visa for two semesters as a precaution – if you decide to extend, it won’t cost you anything extra.

- Prior to leaving your home country, students must obtain a study permit from the nearest South African High Commission, Embassy, Consulate or Trade Commission
- Students must have an offer letter and a Confirmation of Enrolment in order to apply for a study permit
- Application details and forms can be obtained from your nearest South African High Commission, Embassy, Consulate or Trade Commission
- For more detailed information, visit the South African Department of Home Affairs website at [www.home-affairs.gov.za](http://www.home-affairs.gov.za) and look for “Temporary Residence Permits” under “Immigration Services”. Australian students can also visit [http://www.sahc.org.au/visas/Study_Permit.htm](http://www.sahc.org.au/visas/Study_Permit.htm)

*Note: A visitor’s visa cannot be converted to a study permit once a student is in South Africa. In accordance with South African law, students arriving without a study permit will not be allowed to complete enrolment and will be required to return to their home country.*
4) Travel Insurance
It is a condition of your participation in the intercampus exchange program that you purchase comprehensive travel insurance in your home country before leaving home, with coverage including, but not limited to:

- Unlimited medical and hospital costs and some dental
- Emergency evacuation costs
- Cancellation costs
- Baggage loss / laptop loss
- Personal liability

Please check thoroughly what your travel insurance will and will not cover and the insurance claim procedures before leaving home.

5) Electrical Equipment
The electricity supply in South Africa is 220/230 volts and 50 MHz. Be sure you check with the manufacturer whether the appliances you are planning to bring can operate safely. Most modern laptops can operate on multiple voltages but make sure you check yours with the manufacturer.

South Africa uses a three pin plug (the round pin type), Type M. Adaptors are easily available in most chain stores, and might be cheaper to buy in South Africa than back home.

Plug point samples:

6) Weather and Climate
A subtropical location, moderated by ocean on three sides of the country and the altitude of the interior plateau, account for the warm temperate conditions so typical of South Africa - and so popular with its foreign visitors.

South Africa is famous for its sunshine. It's a relatively dry country, with an average annual rainfall of about 464mm (compared to a world average of about 860mm). While the Western Cape gets most of its rainfall in winter, the rest of the country is generally a summer-rainfall region.

At the same time, temperatures in South Africa tend to be lower than in other countries at similar latitudes - such as Australia - due mainly to greater elevation above sea level.

On the interior plateau the altitude - Johannesburg lies at 1 694 meters - keeps the average summer temperatures below 30 degrees Celsius. In winter, for the same reason, night-time temperatures can drop to freezing point, in some places lower.

South Africa's coastal regions are therefore warmest in winter. There is, however, a striking contrast between temperatures on the country's east and west coasts, due respectively to the warm Agulhas and cold Benguela Currents that sweep the coastlines.
Being in the southern hemisphere, our seasons stand in opposition to those of Europe and North America, so, yes - we spend Christmas on the beach!

See the following website for a 7-day extended forecast (search for Gauteng, Johannesburg):
www.southafricanweather.co.za/aat/

7) Banking Facilities
You are advised to open a bank account as soon as possible after arriving at Monash South Africa. Bank operating hours vary but are usually from 9:00 to 15:00 on weekdays and from 9:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. Banks are closed on Sundays and public holidays.

The bank of choice for most Monash South Africa students is First National Bank (FNB) as there is a branch at the Featherbrooke shopping complex (within walking distance of the campus) and an FNB automatic teller machine (ATM) on campus – located in the seminar building, opposite “The Chill Out Lounge” restaurant. Representatives of this bank are also available on campus during orientation week to assist you to open an account.

How to open a bank account
In order to open a bank account, the bank requires details such as your name and address. You will also be required by law to complete a form and asked for some additional personal details and documents such as:

- Your passport/a driving license/ID
- Your Monash Student ID card (issued to you during orientation week)
- Your Proof of Enrolment letter
- Proof of residence accommodation in South Africa (this can be obtained from the Student Services Centre at MSA for on-campus accommodation)

Bank charges
Many banks exempt full-time students from bank charges. You should ask the bank if it is prepared to waive these charges.

Bank deposits and electronic transfers from outside South Africa
All bank deposits from outside South Africa must include an additional R150 for bank charges.

8) Other Useful Information
Some useful links for information such as services on campus, places of attraction and other tourist information for those who are studying in South Africa for the first time are available at the links below. Please take some time to read the information available from these links.

http://www.monash.ac.za/students/
www.sa-venues.com/tourist_and_visitor_information_.htm
www.southafrica.net/sat/content/en/za/home
9) Airport Pick-up Reception Service

Monash South Africa provides a complimentary airport reception service to all International Exchange students upon arrival on campus for the first time. If you arrive with a friend or family member you need to make separate transportation arrangements for your accompanying friend/family members.

Bookings can be made by emailing musa-transport@monash.edu and musa-abroad@monash.edu at least ten working days before your arrival or departure from the campus. Please note that if you make your booking late, we unfortunately cannot guarantee your complimentary airport pick-up!

Monash South Africa uses the services of our airport pick-up officers who will drive you to the Monash South Africa campus. The officer will carry a signboard stating “Monash South Africa”. Please identify yourself to the officer. The officer is only authorised to take you to campus - do not ask for another destination unless approved by the Monash South Africa Abroad team.

Do not panic if you cannot find the Monash representative immediately on arrival at the airport. Wait about 30 minutes and if you still do not find the representative call his cell phone number, which will be emailed to you. If you do not get through, call the Monash Student Services Centre, or if it is after hours, the Monash Security Gatehouse.

If for some reason you are unable to arrive on time for the orientation program or before the commencement of the semester, you MUST notify the South Africa Abroad team of your intended late arrival date. This notification can be done via e-mail to musa-abroad@monash.edu.

You may need to seek approval from your School for late enrolment and/or late commencement of your course. Please note that your School reserves the right not to approve late commencement/enrolment, and you may need to defer your course to the following semester.

Taxis are available also from O.R. Tambo airport to transport you to Monash South Africa. Taxis charge about R400-R600 for this trip.

Airport transfers for your other own personal travel purposes throughout the semester can also be arranged by emailing musa-transport@monash.edu. The cost of transfers to and from O.R. Tambo Airport and Park Station will be R150 per transfer.

Please note:
- Your booking for transport is not confirmed unless you have received written confirmation from Monash South Africa.
- You must inform Monash if you change your flight details or no longer require the transport service, otherwise penalties may be incurred.
- Remember to copy musa-abroad@monash.edu when you book your airport pick up, so that we also have that details!

10) Accommodation

Exchange students are placed in Residences 1, 2 and 3, which consist of self-catering apartments with four single rooms per unit.

Each apartment features:
- Two bathrooms per unit
- A kitchen with a four plate stove, two fridges, table and chairs and a microwave oven.
- Living room with couches and aerial for television connection (TV not included)
- Internet access points in all bedrooms (computers not supplied)
- Bedrooms have built in cupboards and are furnished with a bed, bedside table, desk, chair and curtains.
• Students need to provide their own bedside lamps, cooking utensils (including kettle, toaster etc), heaters/fans, radio, laptop and any other items you might require to make the room feel cozy*
• You might want to arrive on campus and meet your flat mates first, so that you can share the kitchen equipment needed

All exchange students will receive a free welcome pack with linen and a towel-set in their rooms upon arrival.

Food and groceries can be bought at Featherbrooke shopping centre which is within walking distance of campus; there are also two restaurant/cafeterias on campus; Hotspot and The Chillout Lounge, where you can buy light meals and snacks.

*Please note that we will schedule a few selected trips to the nearby Clearwater Mall, where you can purchase any items you couldn’t bring from home. More details will be emailed to you closer to your arrival.

Resident welfare and support

In the Resident Support Team at MSA Residence, there are ten student Residential Advisors appointed every year. RA’s are there to provide support and assistance to all residents living on - campus. RA’s are available at all times to respond to any residential student welfare or emergency needs. The RA for your block/apartment will leave their contact number in your room upon arrival, in case you have any questions or need to contact them.

You need to ensure your residence fees are paid before you arrive and proof of payment supplied to Student Fees Unit (musafees@monash.edu) as well as the Residence Office in order to assist you with assigning your room.

We advise you that it is in your best interest to arrive on a weekday (Monday to Friday) between 8:30 and 16:30, as limited services for Residences, IT staff, library services etc might apply on weekends.

Be aware that during orientation week, there will be a separate Residence Orientation taking place during the evenings – more details will be supplied upon arrival. It is compulsory that you attend the Information Session evening, as a lot of useful details regarding residence life will be discussed.

Residence Services also organise trips and outings during the semester – more details of this will be given at the Residence orientation.

Please take note that the Residences are closed between November and February – if you are on exchange for a year you will need to store your belongings (see www.stor-age.co.za), and make an alternative accommodation arrangement during the holiday period. There are short-stay places available in the area, and Residence Services can give you contact details.

For any other accommodation queries; please contact the Residence Department on (+27 11) 950 4210 or email musaaccommodation@monash.edu

11) Contact Details

While you are in South Africa, it is essential that staff at both your home campus and host campus can keep in touch with you. Make sure that you update the most current addresses in WES before you leave and keep them up to date throughout your stay in South Africa. Please also supply the musa-abroad@monash.edu with your new South African mobile phone number, as soon as you have one.
Postal Address: - You must enter the address where you want mail from your home campus to be sent.

Emergency contact: – You must nominate the person you want contacted in an emergency, usually a member of your family at home.

Home address: - You must enter the address of the place you are staying in South Africa, including the arranged accommodation, and your South African telephone numbers.

Don’t forget to update all these details when you return home at the end of your intercampus exchange.

After Arriving in South Africa

12) Monash Abroad Orientation
Please be aware that attendance at all sessions during orientation is compulsory – the orientation schedule will be emailed to you.

13) Enrolments
Changing your units
Intercampus Exchange students from Monash Australia and Monash Malaysia do not need to complete any enrolment formalities after arrival in South Africa.

If you want to change or alter your enrolment after you arrive in South Africa, please contact your home faculty in Australia or Malaysia to obtain approval as the MSA campus will not be able to amend your enrolment.

Transferring to Monash South Africa
You can do a maximum of 2 semesters on the intercampus exchange program at the South Africa campus. If you want to stay longer you must lodged a transfer application. If at the end of your intercampus exchange you decide that you would like to transfer to the South African campus to complete your degree, you will need to apply to the Student Services Department.

14) Services on Campus
Academic Services
The Student Services Centre will assist with enrollment, course advice and other academic services during your stay. During the Monash Abroad orientation we will give you contact details for the exchange and Study Abroad advisors in the Student Services Centre.

Internet Access
Monash Information Technology Services (ITS) is a service-orientated division that focuses on providing effective infrastructure and information solutions for Monash South Africa.

All on-campus accommodation at MSA provides 24-hour online internet access points in each bedroom (computers are not supplied in the bedrooms). Internet access is also available on computers in the library and in computer labs during office hours.

All students studying at Monash are given an Authcate account which provides access to electronic services on the internet such as email, my Monash, the library, and the Web Enrolment System (WES). Your need to use
your current Authcate username and password from your home campus at MSA, - you will however need to acquire a new Novell – password for the MSA server. This can be done at the ITS helpdesk.

If you are a student from a partner or non-Monash campus; we will advise and assist you during orientation.

Your email is one of the main sources of communication between you and the university and you are expected to check it regularly and at least weekly.

A wireless internet network is also available around most parts of the campus. To learn how to set up your wireless internet, or for any other IT-related queries, please visit the ITS website on http://its.monash.ac.za/

Student Development and Support Services - Transition to the MSA Campus
Transition involves adjusting to new teaching styles, new requirements, new expectations and for many international students, adjusting to classes and lectures conducted in a different style. Although you have come from a Monash campus, you may find the transition of adjusting to a new environment, culture and style of teaching to be challenging.

A range of student development and support services are provided free of charge to students to help ease the transition to a different campus and enable students to achieve their best potential. These services focus on both academic and social student orientation and interaction.

The Student Development Department offers professional counseling, support and advice to students on emotional, psychological, health, spiritual, educational, family and physical concerns in order to enhance the academic performance and wellbeing of the MSA community.

You are welcome to see someone in the Student Development Department, situated in the Library and Learning Commons building, for any concern or assistance that you may require. Appointments can be made in person or telephonically on (+27) 011 950 4117 anytime during office hours.

Clubs and Societies; Sports and Recreation
Building up a network of friends will make your time at MSA much more enjoyable. The environment at Monash is very friendly and social. Join one of the many clubs and societies on campus – your Student Representative Council will tell you more about all the options available during orientation week.

If you are sports-minded you can look at the extensive variety of sporting facilities and clubs offered on campus. For more information, see www.monash.ac.za/sport/sport-clubs

Campus restaurants
There are two restaurants/cafeterias on campus, The Hotspot and Chillout Lounge. Both serve light meals and take-aways, and are open from 9:00 to 17:00 every day during the semester. On-campus accommodation is however self-catering. The closest supermarket is “Pick and Pay” at the Featherbrooke centre, which is within walking distance from campus.
15) Working in South Africa
As an international student at a higher educational institution with a valid study permit, you may work part-time for up to 20 hours per week. However, you may not work during academic vacations. Please check the South African Home affairs website on www.home-affairs.gov.za/- before you apply for a job, as this is subject to change.

Students are however able to participate as much as they wish in the many voluntary volunteer and community engagement projects on campus, where there is no exchange of money for work completed. For more details, please see http://www.monash.ac.za/student-life/volunteering/

16) Communication
Payphones
Payphones are located at the airport, all suburban shopping centres, railway stations, other public centres as well as on the Monash South Africa campus.

What is the cost?
Calls are timed and charged by the minute. Payphones accept South African coins and some accept pre-paid phone cards.

How to make an international call
International calls can be made direct from all telephones in South Africa including payphones.

To call home simply dial the following:
- The international access code: 00
- Your country code
- The area code for your city (remember not to dial the first zero)
- Your family's telephone number

A call connection fee applies for all successful connections. International calls are timed and charged according to the destination, time of day and day of the week.

Mobile / cellular phones
If you are thinking about taking your locally-connected mobile phone with you to South Africa, please check that you have international roaming which can be used in South Africa.

Alternatively, if you are bringing your mobile phone to be connected in South Africa please make sure it is compatible with the South African network. In South Africa there are several companies offering mobile phone contracts and 'pay-as-you-go' pre-paid services.

It is a good idea to talk to senior students on campus about the best deals, rates and plans. Students on a budget are strongly advised to consider the use of a pre-paid mobile phone as this will enable you to easily monitor and control your spending.

RICA
On 1 July 2009, the RICA law has been implemented in South Africa. RICA is the Regulation of Interception of Communications Act (and Provision of Communication-Related Information Act). This requires everyone that has an active cell phone number or purchases a new Prepaid Starter Pack to register their SIM cards. All current and new contract, top-up and prepaid customers are required to register their SIM cards.
When registering a SIM card you are required to have your cell phone number, full names and surname ID number or passport number handy. Your passport will be sufficient to confirm proof of identity. A document that includes the SIM card holder’s name and residential address will be required; - you can get a letter confirming your address from Student Services.

Postal services
The South African Post Office manages most postal services in the country. There are other privately owned postal services (for example Postnet) which also offer postal delivery, speed services and courier services at varying costs. There is a Postnet office at the Featherbrooke shopping complex within walking distance of the Monash South Africa campus.

17) Cost of Living
In addition to annual tuition fees and residence fees, students are responsible for all their own day-to-day living expenses. The currency used in South African Rand (ZAR). Please see the internet for the most up-to-date currency exchange rates. Some suggested sites are: www.xe.com or www.x-rates.com or www.oanda.com

In South Africa most students are able to live on about R2000 – R3000 per month, excluding accommodation fees. The following are some approximate price guides for budgeting for one person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk (2l)</td>
<td>R15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread (1 loaf)</td>
<td>R 10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apples (1kg-seasonal)</td>
<td>R18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes (1kg-seasonal)</td>
<td>R20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mince (1kg)</td>
<td>R45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs (6)</td>
<td>R12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal (500gr)</td>
<td>R27.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Juice (1l)</td>
<td>R15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shampoo</td>
<td>R27.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothpaste</td>
<td>R 15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly groceries</td>
<td>R850.00 - R2000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeans (pair)</td>
<td>R90.00 - R600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-shirt</td>
<td>R50.00 - R160.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie ticket</td>
<td>R20.00 - R 48.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza</td>
<td>R50.00 - R 85.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td>R50.00 - R350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text books (p/bk)</td>
<td>R200.00 - R1 500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery</td>
<td>R200.00 - R500.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shopping
The Monash campus is situated in one of the fastest developing areas in the country. There are several shopping centres and malls near the campus. Become familiar with the range of shops in the local shopping centres as these are generally the most convenient places to shop.
The shopping centres closest to Monash South Africa are:

- Featherbrooke Village shopping centre (walking distance from campus)
- Ruimsig shopping centre
- Retail Crossing
- Clearwater Mall
- Town Square shopping centre
- Hillfox shopping centre
- Northgate Mall
- Westgate Mall
- Cresta Mall

**Paying for goods**

In South Africa there are several methods of paying for goods and services. You can pay by cash, cheque, debit card and credit card. Enquire about the different forms of payment when paying for goods and services, as there may be extra costs involved.

**Eating out**

South Africa’s diversity is world renowned. There are many restaurants that specialise in a diverse range of food from authentic African to Indian, Chinese, French, Italian and Greek. You will be able to find familiar foods from your own country at reasonable prices. Fast food places such as KFC, McDonalds, Pizza Perfect, Wimpy, Nando’s and Steers can be found in most shopping centres within close proximity of Monash South Africa.

Remember that tipping is customary in South Africa. A guideline for visitors is the following: Porters R5 per item, taxis 10%, waiters and waitresses in restaurants 10-15%

**18) Safety advice**

You need to be aware of personal safety issues, especially when travelling in any foreign country.

For example:

- Be prepared and alert.
- Plan your trip and tell someone when you expect to return.
- Always lock your car. Check inside the car before getting in. Always have your car key in your hand before entering a car park.
- Avoid walking through isolated bushy areas on your own, rather go with a group of friends or stick to busier main routes.
- Use the Monash campus security services wherever possible.
- Avoid dark areas, parks and poorly lit streets and lanes at night, rather stick to areas that are well lit.
- Always carry change for phone calls and parking meters.
- Keep handbags, purses or wallets on or close to your body.
- Ensure that any valuable possessions (such as mobile phones, computers, jewels, electrical goods, your car etc) are kept in a safe place and consider purchasing insurance to cover your possessions against damage or theft.

**Emergency number 10111: Flying squad, fire, police and ambulance (free call).**

**19) Emergency Assistance**

Please ensure you have the necessary telephone numbers to call in the event of an emergency. Should you require assistance while at your accommodation, please proceed to the Residence Management office.

**Important Contact Numbers**

- Campus Security: Externally: (+27 11) 950 4099; Internally: #333
- Student Services: Exchange Liaison Advisor (Masego - office hours) (+27 11) 950 4337
- Advancement: Study Abroad Coordinator (Cristelle - office hours) (+27 11) 950 4005
- Residence Management Offices: (+27 11) 950 4210
- Ruimsig Medical Center: (+27 11) 958 0364
- Ruimsig Post Office: (+27 11) 958 1438
- Life Line: (+27 11) 714 2000
- Police: (+27 11) 795 1960 / 10111
- Ambulance: 10177 / 082911
- Fire Department: 1022
- Traffic Department: 1022
- From a mobile phone – dial 112 in case of an emergency

Other useful numbers are as follows:

- Head of Campus Security, Mr Werner Caroto: (mobile) 083 2804861
- Campus nurse: Extension #4101
- Counseling Service: Extension #4117
- Facilities & Maintenance: Mr Peter Goddard: (office) #4042
- IT Services, Helpdesk office: Extension #4077
- Student Services: Extension #4000
- Library Services: Extension #4050

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Go to: www.facebook.com/MSAStudyAbroad

See you all soon!