The end of your last semester at the University of Sydney is coming up quickly! Although you are thinking about your last assessments and exams, it is worth taking some time to think about returning to your home country so that you can prepare yourself practically, financially and emotionally for your departure from Sydney.

Attached are some checklists to help you with your preparations for leaving Sydney to make sure that you have everything covered and don’t forget something important with all the excitement of finishing University. There are also some quick tips for you based on the experiences of previous international students who have undertaken the seemingly mammoth task of relocating overseas.

Just as it took a lot of time and effort to prepare to move to Sydney at the beginning of your studies, there are a large range of tasks to be done before you leave. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to complete the things that need to be done to avoid stress and rush in the days before your departure.

Thank you for being part of our University community! Have a safe trip home!
**Travel preparations**

You will need to make arrangements for you and any possessions you wish to take with you to get home! Make sure you are aware of the date your visa will expire to make sure you leave Australia before then. Book flights as early as possible for cheaper prices and more of choice of airlines, flight times and dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Make sure you…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Book flight home**  | □ Check the date of your last exam or assessment  
□ Check the date that your visa expires and extend if required/allowed  
□ Book flights early within your visa period  
□ Make sure your passport is valid  
□ Get travel insurance for cover in transit and during stop overs  
□ If you are going to stop in another country on your way home, arrange any visas you will need  
□ If you are going to travel in Australia before you return home, book transport and accommodation but ensure you do not overstay your visa |
| **Explore shipping options** | □ Think realistically about how much luggage you will have and check the maximum weight included with your airfare  
□ If you think you will have excess baggage, explore the costs involved for taking it on your flight  
□ If excess baggage costs are expensive consider other options, including:  
  □ Do you need the item? If you can replace it cheaply at home, sell or give away the item  
  □ Shipping or posting items can be cheaper than paying for excess baggage. Explore costs and check with different companies and freight services – ask if they have student discounts  
  □ Shipping by sea or air is a good option for large/heavy items that you do not need immediately upon your return home  
  □ Posting items is useful for lighter items you will need soon after you return home.  
  □ Get insurance for items you ship or post and take photographs of all items in case anything is damaged or lost |
| **Before you fly**     | □ Think about how much luggage you will have and if you will be able to carry it all on public transport – a taxi or pick up service might be a better option  
□ Check your baggage allowance again and make sure your luggage does not exceed the maximum amount to avoid excess baggage fees when you check in. Also check the maximum amount of carry-on luggage you are allowed to take on board and check for any prohibited items.  
□ Confirm your flight 72 hours before departure  
□ Pack a change of clothes in your carry-on luggage if you have a long flight or stop over on the way home. If the airline doesn’t provide them, you might also want to pack a tooth brush and moisturiser.  
□ Check how long you need to be at the airport before your departure  
□ Take into account possible delays due to traffic or public transport issues  
□ Arrive at the airport early enough to do any duty free shopping you want to do and claim any refunds you are owed from paying Goods and Services Tax (GST) in Australia  
□ Check the Australian immigration website: [www.border.gov.au](http://www.border.gov.au) to make sure your luggage complies with all Australian customs requirements  
□ Check your home country’s immigration website to ensure your luggage complies with all of their customs requirements  
□ Make arrangements to be picked up or transport from the airport |
# Leaving the University

With all the excitement of finishing your studies, the stress of final exams and assessments and decisions about your future, don't forget about these important tasks you need to finalise before you leave the University of Sydney.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Make sure you…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay all outstanding fees or fines</td>
<td>☐ Check you do not owe any library, parking or student amenities fees – costs may increase if they are overdue and they may impact your ability to access your final course transcript or to graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return all borrowed items</td>
<td>☐ This could include library books, DVDs, CDs or journals; laboratory or studio equipment; IT devices and keys/ swipe cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order copies of your academic transcripts</td>
<td>☐ If your final transcript is available before you leave, it is a good idea to get additional copies while you are still in Sydney – it is faster and cheaper than ordering them at a later date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change your postal address on Sydney Student</td>
<td>☐ Make sure you update your address to a valid address in your home country so all correspondence is sent to the correct address.   ○ <strong>TIP</strong> – if you don’t know what your address will be, ask your parents or a friend to temporarily use theirs. Update your address once you have settled in back home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get copies of your course outlines</td>
<td>☐ In future you may wish to apply for recognition of prior learning and have to provide details about your course syllabus. Get copies now while they are still current as it can be tricky to get outlines if the course changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for graduation</td>
<td>☐ Find out the date of your graduation from the Student Centre   ☐ Check the date that your visa expires – you may have to apply for an extension if you wish to stay until your graduation or get a tourist visa if you wish to return to Sydney for your graduation – check with Student Centre   ☐ Determine graduation costs including academic dress hire   ☐ Check again your postal address and email address are updated to ensure you receive all correspondence about your graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get University souvenirs</td>
<td>☐ You might like to purchase University of Sydney merchandise – clothing or branded items – to take home with you or provide as gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out about Alumni and Development team and their services</td>
<td>☐ Alumni can be a great way to stay connected with the University but also provide fantastic services to you, including:   ○ In country Alumni chapters and events to network back home   ○ Careers information and connections   ○ Online mentoring and careers services   ○ Information about further study options at the University of Sydney, scholarships and services for international students   ○ Ambassadorship and volunteer opportunities   ○ Alumni awards   ○ Sydney Alumni Magazine   ○ A free University of Sydney alumni email address   ○ Visit the Alumni website for further information: <a href="http://sydney.edu.au/alumni-giving.html">http://sydney.edu.au/alumni-giving.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Leaving your accommodation
Whether living in University owned residences, share housing or renting privately, there are many tasks you need to complete prior to moving out of your accommodation to ensure that any bond money you are entitled to is returned to you and you have a clear rental record for future lease applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Make sure you…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Provide written notification to your landlord** | ☐ Check your lease or with your landlord, real estate or residence manager the required amount of time you are legally required to provide that you will be moving out/ending the lease and ensure you provide written notification within this time to avoid financial penalties  
☐ If you live with other people, make sure you advise them of the date you will leave and provide sufficient time for them to locate another flatmate if they need to fill the vacancy  
☐ Check whether your name is on the lease – even if others want to stay in the residence, you might want to have your name taken off so you are not responsible for the property after your departure |
| **Moving out** | ☐ Make a list of your possessions and sort them into items you will take home and items you will dispose of, give away or sell.  
☐ TIP: Be ruthless – if you can replace the item cheaply at home you don’t want to have to pay additional shipping or baggage costs just to take it with you.  
☐ If you decide to dispose of items, there are a number of services and sites that can assist you:  
☐ Donate to charity – many charities appreciate donations of clothes, furniture, appliances and other articles that are in good condition. Some, such as the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul and the Red Cross can even come and pick up items if you give them enough time; otherwise you will need to deliver them to a collection centre. NOTE: charities often do not take donated mattresses  
☐ Sell them to second hand stores or online via eBay or Gumtree – add photos so buyers can see the condition of goods and make sure you provide enough time for posting, delivering or pick up before you have to leave  
☐ Hold a garage sale and advertise on noticeboards around the University  
☐ If you have anything broken, unsuitable for sale or items such as mattresses, contact your local council to see if they provide free curb-side rubbish collections. If they don’t, you might need to pay to have the items collected and taken away.  
☑ For items you decide to keep, consider what kind of moving and storage equipment you might need, including employing removal services, hiring a truck, buying or finding packing boxes, suitcases or bags and having an area to store moved items to after you leave your residence.  
☐ TIP: Look at Gumtree for small moving companies who provide a truck and labour for less than many commercial companies but make sure they are reputable and have insurance including coverage for any breakages or damage to items.  
☐ If you decide to freight or post items home, look into the cheapest options and ensure they are packaged, photographed and insured. |
Leaving your accommodation - continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Make sure you…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Getting your bond back** | □ Make sure you leave the premises clean and tidy – landlords must take into account reasonable wear and tear but tenants are responsible for cleaning and repairs of anything they have damaged.  
□ Don’t just tidy – you need to vacuum, sweep, mop, dust and wipe clean all surfaces.  
□ You are also responsible to make sure the oven, the garden, shared laundry spaces and garages are also clean and tidy  
□ Make sure you return all keys, swipe cards and garage door openers  
□ If your landlord decides to take any of your bond for cleaning, repairs, unpaid rent or other issue, this must be mutually agreed to. If you feel that you have unfairly been penalised financially, contact the NSW Tenant Tribunal to discuss your options.  
  ○ **TIP:** If you are going to rent again, ask your landlord or real estate for a rental reference for future rental applications |
| **Finalising bills and cancelling utilities** | □ If you pay rent by direct debit or credit card, ensure you cancel this after your final rent payment  
□ There are a range of services you will need to check are paid in full and cancelled before you leave:  
  ○ Electricity  
  ○ Gas  
  ○ Water  
  ○ Telephone  
  ○ Mobile phone contract  
  ○ Gym membership  
  ○ Internet  
  ○ Post office box – redirect mail to your new address at Australia Post  
□ If you are moving out of share accommodation, make sure you pay your share of bills or ensure you can be contacted after your departure to pay bills you need to contribute towards  
□ If you are moving out of shared accommodation, have your name removed from any utility contracts so you are not liable for future bills |
| **Temporary accommodation** | □ Ensure you have somewhere to stay in between the dates that you leave your accommodation and when you leave Australia. |
Leaving work
Even if you have only been working casually while you have been studying in Australia, you may be entitled to a tax return and a payout of any accumulated superannuation. Speak to your manager or the Human Resources department to find out more about this and if you are eligible, how to lodge a tax return. If you have worked for more than one employer while you were in Australia, make sure you contact each of them to make sure you receive everything that you are entitled to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Make sure you…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide written notification to your employer</strong></td>
<td>□ If you are on a contract, check the notification period you are required to provide to your employer and ensure you give notice in writing within this period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internships/Work Experience</strong></td>
<td>□ If you were working as an intern, make sure you get a reference from your employer and any certification they can provide to authenticate your experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Return any borrowed items</strong></td>
<td>□ This could include items such as laptops, mobile phones, corporate cards, uniforms, office keys and swipe cards, books and identification cards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Contact your manager or HR**             | □ Make sure you will be paid out any wages, annual leave or sick leave that may be owing to you  
  □ Request a group certificate and lodge a tax return through the Australian Tax Office in case you are due for a tax refund  
  □ Change your contact details including email and mailing address so that you receive any further correspondence, including your group certificate if it isn’t available when you depart |
| **Contact your superannuation provider**   | □ You may have accumulated superannuation benefits – find out if you are entitled to a payout of the accumulated amount  
  □ Change your address with your superannuation provider |
| **Prepare for your next job**              | □ Make sure you take a copy of your position description to help you provide details of your work experience in future job applications  
  □ Ask your manager if they can provide a written reference for you or would be happy to be listed on your CV as a reference for future job applications  
  □ If you work for a multi-national company, ask around to find out if any colleagues have contacts in offices in your home country.  
    □ **TIP:** Do this even if you don’t work in a multi-national company - the best source of jobs is word of mouth referrals through your networks! |
| **Stay in touch**                          | □ Your colleagues and managers are excellent contacts and referees for future employment. Get their phone numbers, email addresses and LinkedIn details  
  □ If you are interested in returning to Australia in future to work, speak to the recruitment department about their sponsorship policies and hiring processes and ask if you can be contacted regarding any future vacancies the company may have.  
    □ **TIP:** If you are thinking of returning to Australia to work, it might be worth speaking to a migration consultant while you are still in Sydney to find out about this process, what is required of you and any costs involved. |
Financial and logistical preparations

Relocating overseas can be expensive – airfares, travel insurance, moving costs, freight charges, finalising bills… Make sure you receive all funds and refunds that you are entitled to and tie up all loose ends – it is easier to do this here in person than when you are back at home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Make sure you…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finalise all bills, fines, fees</td>
<td>□ As previously mentioned, ensure you have paid any money you owe in full so that it does not cause you future issues with graduation, credit history or future visas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Overseas Student Health Cover | □ Submit any outstanding medical insurance claims  
□ Contact your health cover provider – you may be entitled to a refund if you are covered for longer than you will remain in Australia - you will need to provide evidence of your departure.  
□ Change your contact details with your provider for any future correspondence  
□ If you had any significant medical conditions or were prescribed long term pharmaceuticals, you may like to ask for a copy of your medical records or a letter from your doctor describing the condition you are being treated for that you can provide to your doctor at home  
□ Ask your doctor if they know if your medication is available in your home country and if there are any other names it may be known as  
□ If you need to take any prescription drugs (i.e. opioid analgesics) with you in your hand luggage during your flight home, check with your doctor or a pharmacist if you will need a letter authorising this. |
| If you worked in Australia | □ As mentioned above, if you have worked in Australia, speak to HR about accessing your group certificate, lodge a tax return and contact your superannuation provider about any money owing |
| Close Australian bank accounts | □ Ensure all credit card balances, loans and bank fees are paid in full  
□ Shortly before you depart, close Australian bank accounts and have the balance transferred to your home account  
□ Change your contact details with your bank for future correspondence  
□ Make sure you keep enough money for your final days in Australia and for incidental expenses during your journey home  
□ Do not take out large amounts of cash – you must declare to Customs at the airport if you leave Australia with more than $10,000 cash in Australian or equivalent foreign currency |
| Get GST and WET refunds | □ If you made major purchases while you lived in Australia and retained receipts that prove you paid GST/WET for the item, you may be entitled to have this amount refunded at the airport. You will need to provide proof of purchase and take the item as hand luggage, wear on the aircraft or provide proof that you have shipped the item/s. Further information is available: www.border.gov.au/Trav/Ente/Tour |
| Exchange Australian currency | □ If you still have Australian currency on you at the airport, don't forget to exchange it to either the currency you will need during your travel home or to your home currency |
Adjusting to life back home

International study and travel is a transformative experience – it will impact the way you think, your perspectives, provide you with additional knowledge you did not have before and create long term connections and memories of another country and culture. You will probably be excited to return to see family and friends that you have been missing, eat at your favourite places, speak your first language and reacquaint yourself with life back home. However, you need to remember that the people and places you left have also changed and developed and things may feel strange or unfamiliar when you arrive. You might also feel homesick for your life and friends in Sydney. Below is some information to help you prepare for the feelings and situations you might experience when you first arrive home and some tips to help you settle back in as quickly as possible.

Things to remember:

- Coming home isn’t just about a flight and a change of location – it is an emotional journey as well. Prepare yourself by thinking about what you are hoping for and what you are worried about and have a plan for managing these feelings.
- You will have expectations about what life, family and friends will be like back home – that’s ok, we all have expectations! But keep yourself open and flexible, knowing that just as your experiences in Australia have changed you, so have the people and places at home; as well as the politics, latest trends, current events and atmosphere. It will take some time to reintegrate so be patient with yourself and keep an open mind.
- Be prepared for some reverse culture shock – you might be surprised how much of a local Sydney-sider you have become! Remember how strange and unfamiliar Australia was when you first arrived and give yourself the opportunity to be surprised by your new surroundings – even if they are familiar! Give yourself time to refamiliarise yourself with life in your home country - see new places, meet new people and adjust to the culture, pace and style of life back home.
- You might be on an emotional rollercoaster – sometimes excited and happy to be home, other times, lonely, disoriented, bored or feeling like you no longer fit in. It is natural to miss your lifestyle in Sydney but don’t romanticise it- try and stay realistic. Give yourself permission to miss the things you no longer have available to you but remember that when you lived in Sydney, you had moments when you felt just this way about your friends, family and life at home. Remember – this is a normal reaction to change and it will pass.
- You are full of stories and experiences that your family and friends might not be able to relate to, or they may seem uninterested in hearing about your time in Sydney. They will also have their own stories about what has happened in their life while you were away. Make sure you ask questions and listen to them too.
- There may be a period of downtime after you get home – you might be looking for a job or a place to live or just deciding what comes next. Try not to get upset if things don’t happen quickly and keep trying different things and stay positive, even if sometimes it feels a bit hopeless. Keep trying and trust that the next step is just waiting for you to find it.

Tips

- Reflect on your experiences in Australia to provide you with a sense of achievement and closure:
  o Remember what it was like arriving in Sydney all those years ago and how you felt. Do you think you will feel differently when you are leaving?
  o Think about your favourite place and favourite memory – or maybe there are more than one! What was it about that time and place that were so important?
  o Consider how you have changed since you arrived in Sydney.
What have you learned?
What are you most proud of?
What has surprised you the most about yourself?
Is there anything I will be happy to get away from or leave behind?
What do you miss the most?
Are your goals different now that you have graduated?
What part of your experience as an international student has taught you the most?
How are you going to use this knowledge and experience throughout the rest of your life?

- Try not to make comparisons about what is better or worse in Australia or your home country. Remain balanced and appreciative of the positives and negatives of life in each place without being too critical or praising of either.
- Communicate and don’t isolate yourself. You might be frustrated that people at home don’t understand what you went through when you lived in Sydney, or they might not seem interested in your stories. Make sure that as you share your experiences with others you remain open to hearing about what their life has been like while you have been away – ask questions and listen and hopefully others will do the same.
- Tap into your alumni network in your home country – these are people who have experienced similar things to you when they studied in Sydney and can help you re-adjust to home but still feel connected to Sydney – plus they can be a network of new friends and contacts to source work opportunities and social activities through. You can also network online via the Alumni website and mentoring platforms – a great way to keep in contact and up-to-date with the University. Visit the website to find out more: sydney.edu.au/alumni-giving
- If you really miss your life in Sydney, consider your options for returning – either to undertake further study or to work. Explore your options on the University of Sydney website about postgraduate study, scholarships and work opportunities for students; or speak to a migration consultant about your eligibility to work in Australia. If you can obtain a work visa, look at websites such as www.seek.com.au for job vacancies in your field of work.
- You are now a valued member of an elite group – graduates of the University of Sydney! Recognise how much you have achieved- you successfully completed studies in an unfamiliar culture a long way from home. If you can do that, you can do anything. Believe in yourself and your abilities.

The University of Sydney congratulates you on your achievements and wishes you the very best for your future endeavours.