



CEF University Survival Guide

For

Rural and Regional Students

Tips and resources for students
leaving home to attend uni, TAFE and college

Prepared by The Country Education Foundation with the generous
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www.cef.org.au

The Country Education Foundation (CEF)

About the CEF

The CEF is a national, not-for-profit organisation that establishes and supports local country education foundations across Australia – enabling them to raise funds for local youth to help them with their transition from high school into further education, training or jobs.

We began as a single foundation in Boorowa, in 1993, and have since grown into a family of more than 40 education foundations operating in Queensland, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia.

What we do

We provide financial assistance and other support to young people in rural and regional areas to help them with post-high school education, training or jobs. For university students, we assist them with expenses such as rent, transport, textbooks and study materials.

We partner with more than 30 universities, corporate and philanthropic organisations across the country to leverage and increase the support we provide to students. We work with these partners to deliver opportunities to rural and regional students that otherwise would not be available.

Why we created this guide

We created this guide to help regional and rural students survive and thrive at uni, TAFE or college - or any other pursuit that might require them to leave home after school. Whether its finding accommodation or part time work, knowing where to access a bulk-billing doctor or even setting up a low-fee bank account - there are all sorts of handy tips and resources.

Best of all, the guide includes the ten top tips from some of our current students - the ones who've made it through that first difficult year - on adjusting to your new life away from home. Importantly, the guide offers handy advice for all students, regardless of whether they are attending university or TAFE in a regional or metropolitan area.

Important note for users of this guide

This Guide has been prepared by CEF staff, interns, volunteers and students. We've included information sourced online and from the personal experiences of past and current CEF students and parents. We've done our very best to ensure that the information in the Guide is correct, complete and up to date, but we take no responsibility for any changes which may be made after the time of publication.

The resources we've listed are offered as a general guide. The CEF does not endorse or recommend these services or businesses. Rather, we are providing this information for you to use as a starting point for your own research and choices. Having said that, the one piece of advice that we endorse heartily is that offered by one of our interns, Rebecca Tomkins, when we asked her for her top tip for surviving first year uni:

**“When things get tough at uni
it is really important to keep calm...
and just keep going”.**

Top Tips for Study

1. Buy a hard drive and **BACK UP ALL YOUR WORK**. You wouldn't believe how many students lose huge amounts of work that hasn't been backed up.
2. Learn how to reference. Get on to this early as it will never go away – it is required for every academic assignment. (NB some students have been marked down and have even failed an assignment because they have not referenced correctly!)
3. Be on top of your tutorial and class sign ups – that leftover 8am tutorial is still there for a reason...
4. Keep ahead of your study, assignments and readings – don't leave things until the last minute... you'll regret it.
5. Be sure to check the attendance requirements for each of your subjects as some lectures and tutorials are compulsory and if you do not attend you will fail.
6. Your relationship with your lecturers and tutors will be very different from high school – much less formal.
7. There is no spoon-feeding at university and most lecturers or tutors will not chase you up for an assignment – you need to take full responsibility.
8. FYI: Plagiarism is a **HUGE** academic crime at university! So don't cut and paste from the internet... re-word, re-word, re-word, re-word – every assignment, every time!
9. Use websites and software that help check your assignments for plagiarism and grammatical error. An example is turnitin: http://turnitin.com/en_us/home
10. Never give up. When things get tough just stay calm, keep going and **ASK FOR HELP**.



When things get tough... just keep going.

Top Tips for Living – on and off campus

1. Learn to use a washing machine and know the difference between detergents for top loaders and front loaders. Ignore this advice at your peril!
2. Buy a clothes horse and pegs and be wary of communal clothes lines... sometimes things mysteriously go missing.
3. If you don't want others to use your 'stuff' keep it in your locked cupboard or room. That ice cream you left in the common room freezer and that Blu-ray you left on the common room table may no longer be 'yours' if you leave it there.
4. If you are a 'catered' student, take advantage of the food available to you on campus. Don't waste your money on food you probably won't eat (but you might want to invest in a sandwich press for late night snacks!)
5. Be respectful to your room-mates – don't be the annoying one who plays music loudly until the early hours of the morning, leaves dirty dishes next to the sink for a week or hogs the common room TV.
6. Don't feel pressured to participate in unsafe or inappropriate pranks, drinking or substance abuse – and don't hesitate to seek help if others are placing your safety at risk.
7. Buy a pair of thongs for the shared bathrooms.
8. Expect to get a bit homesick, especially in the first month or two. That's normal. And if you are stressed or not coping well, ask for help. Most unis have free or subsidised counseling services for students.
9. Learn about your new community – it's probably very different from home and you might need to adapt to different conditions and environments. If you're unsure, ask an older student, lecturer or tutor.
10. Keep an eye out for student discounts... many businesses and services offer great discounts for students – from haircuts to meals, movie tickets to bus fares. It never hurts to ask!

Top Tips for Parents and Carers

1. Research and discuss university or off-campus accommodation together before you settle on something. Get advice from older students or other families who have kids in uni already.
2. Find out what equipment and basics are provided where they are staying, and make a list of all the essential things they might need to bring along. (e.g. pots, pans, kettle, toaster).
3. Give them some tips on how to budget. They need to be able to manage their own money. Devise a financial plan – needs vs wants. There will be unforeseen expenses they might never anticipate...
4. If they don't already have them, teach them a few basic domestic skills...cooking (try a few easy and economical recipes - <http://student-finance.com.au/budget-meals-for-students>), how to use a washing machine, cleaning.
5. Talk to your child about substance abuse. Excessive drinking, drugs... these can seriously affect their performance at uni - and their health.
6. Talk about personal safety and how things will probably be different away from home – they need to think about adjusting to a new environment.
7. Let them know it is normal to feel home sick. Encourage them to meet new people. Use student resources (eg. counsellors, tutors, resident assistants). Get professional help if it lasts for more than a month or two. Many unis offer handy resources to help with things like this too. ANU, for example, offers these tips on their website: <http://counselling.anu.edu.au/brochure/i-want-go-home-tips-battling-homesickness>
8. Make sure your child has means to communicate with you - and keep in contact with them (NB don't expect a daily call!).
9. Send a surprise 'care package'. A parcel of treats (especially in those first few weeks) can go a long way!
10. Educate yourself. You will feel more comfortable if you do the right research – learn about the university, accommodation, program literature etc.


Handy Contacts and Resources


(Please note disclaimer on P2 of this Guide)

Subject	Resources	Hot Tip
Finding Work	<p>Typical websites for finding work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek.com.au • jobseeker.com.au • gumtree.com.au • au.indeed.com/job • pedestrian.tv/jobs/ - (a great website for internships!) • careerone.com.au • studentedge.com.au/jobs/ <p>Also check out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The classified section of your local paper • Local shop/business notice boards • Search engines (Google or Yahoo) <p>Most universities provide student employment opportunities so keep up-to-date with positions offered by your university.</p>	<p>Tip: try looking on social media sites, such as Facebook. Most towns or suburbs have Facebook pages or groups where jobs are promoted.</p> <p>Maybe even check out a company you want to work for on their social media site.</p>
Resumes, applications and interviews	<p>Finding a job, creating a resume, and attending an interview can all be a bit daunting – especially when you’re in a new place and adjusting to a different environment, like university.</p> <p>However, by being prepared, you give yourself the best possible chance of success. The CEF website has some resources that will assist you with your application letter, resume, and tips for an effective interview. Find them at: https://cef.org.au/students/student-support/</p>	<p>Most employers will want to see a Resume and check references.</p> <p>Make sure yours are up to date!</p>
Mental Health Services	<p>Headspace</p> <p>This is a National Youth Mental Health Foundation that assists young people between 12-25 years. They have 55 centres across Australia and offer free services in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General health • Mental health and counselling • Education, employment and other services • Alcohol and other drug services. <p>Find them at: www.headspace.org.au</p>	
	<p>Black Dog Institute</p> <p>The Black Dog Institute has a great interactive, self help website which enables users to track and write about their moods and view information and tips on how to manage mild-to-moderate stress, anxiety, and depression. Find them at: https://www.mycompass.org.au</p>	

Bulk-Billing	<p>Medicare defines bulk-billing as “when a provider bills Medicare directly for any medical or allied health service that the patient receives”. In other words, if the health care provider is 'bulk billing' and you have a Medicare card, you will not need to pay up front for their services.</p> <p>For more information on bulk-billing and Medicare visit: http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/medicare/bulk-billing.jsp</p> <p>1800BulkBill - This is a free service that connects patients to bulk billed health care services. http://www.1800bulkbill.com.au/ OR free call 1800 285 524</p>	<p>Tip: Remember it’s not just GPs that bulk-bill – dentists and other health care professionals also offer bulk billing.</p>
Bulk-billing by State/Territory		
ACT	<p>Australian National University The ANU University Health Service is an on-campus fully accredited primary health care facility that provides bulk billing to ANU Australian students.</p> <p>University of Canberra UC’s Medical Service provides general practitioner services and offers bulk billing to Australian UC students.</p> <p>Additional Visit www.health.act.gov.au and type in “bulk-bill” for a list of additional health care providers that offer bulk billing in Canberra.</p>	
NSW Sydney Area	<p>For students living in Sydney, below are some links to websites that list health care providers that offer bulk-billing in the metropolitan area: http://www.doctors-4u.com/sydney/sydney-bulkbill.htm#n http://ve.net.au/services/medical-centres</p>	
Regional NSW	<p>Charles Sturt University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange – The Wellness House: www.thewellnesshouse.com.au • Bathurst – Westpoint Medical Practice: www.ipn.com.au/gp/nsw-bathurst-westpoint-medical-practice/ • Wagga Wagga – Trial Street Medical Centre: www.trailstreetmc.com.au/ • Albury-Wodonga – Elmwood Medical Centre: www.elmwoodmedical.com.au/ • Dubbo – Western Plains Medical Centre <p>Southern Cross University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lismore – The SCU Health Clinic offers bulk-billing to SCU students • Coffs Harbour – CMC Coastal Medical Clinics & Coastal Skin Cancer Clinic 	

QLD	<p>Brisbane For students living in Brisbane visit: http://www.doctors-4u.com/brisbane/b_bill.htm</p> <p>Cairns & Townsville For students living in Cairns or Townsville visit: http://www.jcu.edu.au/student/JCU_125636.html</p>	
SA	<p>Adelaide For health care providers that bulk-bill in Adelaide visit: www.doctors-4u.com/adelaide/abulkb.htm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flinders University Flinders University’s “The Health Service” is a Medical Centre that offers Flinders University students access to bulk billing medical services. • University of Adelaide Offers a University Health Practice called “Adelaide Unicare” that provides students from the University of Adelaide with bulk billing health care services. <p><i>Please note: Listed centres are just a sample - there may be more centres in your location that offer bulk billing for university students.</i></p>	
Counselling & Support	<p>Counselling provides students with assistance when they are experiencing a range of academic or personal concerns. Generally, most services provide treatment, counselling and advice for medical and personal problems.</p> <p>Some universities provide students with access to free counselling services. At the CEF we recommend your first point of contact be ‘student services’ to find out what your university offers to its students. The Universities below that are in partnership with the CEF offer Free Counselling Services to their students.</p>	
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Canberra • Canberra Institute of Technology • Australian National University 	
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Sturt University • University of Wollongong • University of Newcastle • The University of Sydney • Australian Catholic University • Southern Cross University • Macquarie University • University of New South Wales • University of Technology Sydney • University of Western Sydney 	

QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensland University of Technology • James Cook University 	
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flinders University, • University of South Australia • The University of Adelaide 	
Textbooks	<p>Borrow If you are really organised you can borrow textbooks or other reading materials from the library (your university library or perhaps the public library). But you'll need to be getting in early as libraries generally only have a few copies and they tend to walk out the door quite quickly.</p> <p>Buy You can buy textbooks brand new from shops like the Co-op Bookshop. If this is the option for you, you need to become a member of the Co-op Bookshop. Joining costs \$20 and gives you membership for life - and will provide you with a discount on all your textbooks.</p> <p>Other websites you can buy brand new textbooks include: www.unibooks.com.au www.fishpond.com.au</p> <p>Buying second hand textbooks will also save you money. Searching around campus on pin-boards or notice boards (try online too) will often lead you to other students selling their textbooks.</p> <p>There are also websites dedicated to connecting sellers and buyers of second hand uni textbooks. Check out: https://studentvip.com.au/textbooks and www.zookal.com</p> <p>Rent Renting your textbooks is also an option. Below are some of the websites that will rent uni textbooks for the duration of the semester: www.jekkle.com.au www.zookal.com www.textbookrentals.com.au</p>	<p>Tip: Try eBay, The Trading Post or Gumtree to buy new or second-hand textbooks.</p> 

<p>Assignments & Studying</p>	<p>Google Scholar When you are researching for an assignment, Google Scholar is an awesome tool! Make sure you go to “settings” and type in your university in the library links section. This will link nearly all of the databases your university provides students with, to one simple search via Google Scholar.</p> <p>Uni Learning Starting university is daunting enough, especially when you are trying to get your head around concepts like “academic writing. “Uni Learning” helps you transition from how you may be used to writing for high school, to the skills required at a university level in areas such as effective writing, note-taking, critical thinking and essay writing. Take a look at: http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/</p>	<p>Tip: The best study tip of all? When things get tough, don't panic... just keep going!</p> 
<p>Financial support</p>	<p>Many students, especially those from rural and regional areas, require financial support whilst attending university. If you are in search of scholarships or financial assistance, there are many different organisations that can assist.</p> <p>Look out for independent, not-for-profit organisations that assist youth and/or university students. For instance, our organisation – The Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEF) focuses on supporting regional and rural youth. The Australian Government, through Centrelink can also provide financial assistance.</p> <p>Additionally, your university should have a financial assistance or scholarships section on their website.</p> <p>The CEF Scholarships Guide Each year the CEF compiles a Scholarships Guide that provides students with state-by state, information on scholarships from each of our education partners. This is published on our website in September each year. To view the CEFA 2014 National Scholarships Guide go to: https://cef.org.au/scholarships-for-rural-and-regional-students/</p> <p>Study Assist This is a website that provides information to students about Australian Government assistance for financing tertiary study. It offers valuable information in areas such as HELP loans, study options, paying back HELP debt, government scholarships and awards, as well as information about student income support. http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist/Hobsons Course</p>	<p>Tip: Most scholarship and grant opportunities are advertised in the second half of each year for assistance in the following academic year.</p> <p>CEF grants and many other scholarship schemes have already been allocated for 2014.</p> <p>Keep an eye out in the second half of 2014 if you are looking for assistance for 2015.</p>

	<p>Finder This website provides comprehensive and independent information about tertiary education pathways in Australia. It's a great resource for university students as the website offers information on nearly every popular uni topic.</p> <p>It even offers a "Scholarship Search" which will narrow down scholarships suitable for you based on where and what you're studying. http://www.hobsonscoursefinder.com.au/</p>	
<p>Government Assistance</p>	<p>Centrelink – offers various government financial assistance options to university students. Go to: http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/payments-for-students-and-trainees</p> <p>Youth Allowance - provides financial help for people aged 16 to 24 years who are studying full-time, undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship, training or looking for work. Go to: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/youth-allowance/</p> <p>Austudy - provides financial help if you are 25 years or over and in approved full time study or apprenticeship/training. Go to: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/austudy</p> <p>Abstudy - provides financial help for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who are studying or undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship. Go to: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy</p> <p>Remote Area Allowance - provides extra financial help if you are getting an income support payment and you live in a remote area. Go to: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/remote-area-allowance</p> <p>Start-up Scholarships – Financial help for full-time students undertaking an approved scholarship course at a higher education institution and are receiving Youth Allowance, Austudy or ABSTUDY Living Allowance. Go to: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/student-start-up-scholarship</p> <p>Relocation Scholarship The Relocation Scholarship is an annual payment to help students in higher education who live away from their family home while studying. Go to: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/relocation-scholarship</p>	<p>Tip: We recommend a visit to the Study Assist website as it addresses many questions and concerns university students have about "uni fees".</p>

<p>Student Discounts & Tips</p>	<p>UNiDAYS Is a free online ‘students perks’ website providing university students with discounts to stores around the globe. www.myunidays.com</p> <p>Student VIP Another website that provides university students with discounts and free access to handy websites such as StudentVIP Textbooks, Student Internships, Student Flatmates, Discount Detectives and Student Grants – just to name a few! www.studentvip.com.au</p> <p>Student Edge Provides signed-up students with discounts to big brands such as Microsoft, Booktopia, Optus, Apple and Dell. It will also provide you with free access to online information regarding student support services in areas such as health, wellbeing, study and career tools. Student Edge also provides information on jobs, internships, events, and competitions relevant for Australian university students. www.studentedge.com.au</p> <p>Student Flights Offers discount travel (more than just flights) exclusively for students or young persons under the age of 26. www.studentflights.com.au</p> <p>Retail Discounts Some major retail stores in Australia, such as Jay Jays offer discounts to students.</p> <p>NRMA – Free2go NRMA has a Roadside Assistance package specifically for 16-20 year olds called NRMA Free2go. Free2go Membership offers personal roadside assistance 24/7, regardless of what vehicle you’re in, whether you are a driver or a passenger. Membership is free for your first year! Plus you’ll receive heaps of other benefits including special offers, competitions, motoring advice and driving tips.</p> <p>Hobsons Course Finder We mentioned this website in our scholarships section. Clearly by the name, it helps you find university courses; however, it is much more than just that!</p> <p>It provides uni students with a wealth of information on things such as healthy living, safety, student clubs and societies, facts about student exchange, information on postgraduate pursuits, tips on budgeting and financial assistance, success in exams and it also addresses those sometimes scary “uni myths” – Plus lots more... www.hobsonscoursefinder.com.au</p>	<p>Tip: Don’t forget to get in contact with or visit your university’s student services.</p> <p>Tip: Always carry your student I.D. whilst shopping and ask stores if they do discounts for uni students.</p>
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	<p>Lost on Campus (our favourite app!) Lost on Campus is a free app, designed to ensure that university students never again get lost whilst on campus: http://lostoncampus.com.au</p> <p>The app also provides students with maps of their campus and allows them to search for lecture rooms, offices, labs, toilets, coffee shops and more! If that's not helpful enough, the app also has a comments and chat section so you can find out everyone's opinion of a particular location.</p>	
Travel by state/territory	Each of the following states allows tertiary students to apply for a concession card that will provide you with a discounted fare. Visit the websites below to find out the eligibility criteria required to apply for a travel concession card.	Tip: Make sure you always carry your student concession card with you when travelling on public transport... if you don't you will pay full price.
	NSW - Transport NSW offers Travel Concessions for NSW Tertiary Students. Go to: http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/content/travel-concessions-tertiary-students	
	SA - Adelaide Metro offers concessions fares to holders of approved South Australian Government student ID cards. Go to: http://www.adelaidemetro.com.au/Tickets/Concession-Cards#student	
	NT - Transport NT offers NT university students that hold standard issued student ID cards to concession fares. Go to: http://www.transport.nt.gov.au/public/ticket-fares-concessions-and-free-travel	
	Qld - TransLink offers full-time QLD tertiary students a 50% concession fare card. Go to: http://translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/concessions	
	ACT - Transport for Canberra offers University and College Students Concession fares at all times. Go to: http://www.transport.act.gov.au/catch_a_bus/myway/concessions	
Banking	<p>Some banks offer special deals and benefits for students - such as no monthly account fees or withdrawal fees. Each bank offers different student benefits and student options.</p> <p>For more information contact your bank or contact an independent organisation that can offer you advice. eg Money Smart is a free, government sponsored website that offers financial advice to all Australians. Go to: www.moneysmart.gov.au/</p>	<p>Tip: All of the banks mentioned below offer no monthly account or withdrawal fees, however, benefits do vary, so choose carefully.</p> <p>Do your research to find out whether any of these or other student packages is suitable for your circumstances.</p>

	<p>The following list provides examples of what some of the major banks offer to uni students.</p> <p>Commonwealth Bank “Faculty of the Free” for students. One benefit of this initiative is that the bank offers no card issue fees on travel money cards.</p> <p>Bank West “Student Account” option. One benefit is that students can have no minimum opening balance.</p> <p>Westpac “Westpac Choice Student Package”. One benefit is that students receive unlimited fee free transactions across branches, Westpac/St.George/BankSA ATMs.</p> <p>ANZ “ANZ Access Advantage” is designed for students. One of the benefits is that it offers students unlimited access to phone and internet banking.</p> <p>St. George “Complete Freedom Student Account” which gives students fee-free everyday banking in St. George braches as well as when using Eftpos, BPAY®, Visa Debit Card, Bank@Post™, Internet, Mobile and Phone Banking.</p>	