

**UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**  
**REPORT FROM EXCHANGE YEAR**  
**2008/2009**

**Aileen Ryan**  
**James Nerney**

**BEFORE LEAVING:**

Once you have been accepted by UCD, you must send a formal application to University of Melbourne including two references and a personal reflection on why you wish to study in Melbourne. This is just a formality so there is no need to be worried about it – lecturers are used to writing academic references even if they don't know you too well and we even got one reference from the Auditor of the Law Society.

The next thing you need to do is get your student visa. The easiest way to do this is to apply online. This is very simple and straightforward and, contrary to reports from previous years, this method does not require you to get a chest x-ray to check for TB. The processing of your visa application will take some time so apply for it as early as possible and don't be too worried if it does not arrive until near your departure date. It is all done electronically, so you don't have to visit an embassy or even send off your passport, the visa confirmation will arrive by email.

If your travelling directly to Australia there are no injections or immunizations required.

Luggage weight restrictions are quite strictly enforced. The weight limit if travelling via Asia is 20kg, although you can probably get away with an extra 2-3kgs. Our advice would be to put heavy items in a large hand luggage bag.

Australian customs are very strict so make sure that there are no wooden items, food, plants/flowers or mucky shoes in your luggage as these can incur fines. Also, make sure that you have a prescription for any medications that you may be bringing. Other than that, just make sure that you wear very comfortable clothes for the flight, as it's probably the longest you'll ever be on a plane! Also, winter in Melbourne is quite chilly so bring a coat and a few warm items.

**ON ARRIVAL/ORIENTATION**

You will be quite jetlagged when you arrive in Melbourne. The best way to combat this is to try and get into as normal a routine as possible and not sleep until night-time; naps only prolong the agony! If at all possible, arrive a day or two before orientation as this will give you time to recover.

When you arrive, it will be the middle of winter but this is quite similar to the Irish summer so it is very easy to adjust.

The University runs a 5-day “Melbourne Welcome” programme the week before term starts for all new international students. This is optional but highly recommended. Although it does cost approximately €500, it includes accommodation and meals and provides a great introduction to Melbourne including tourist activities, tours of the city and University, information about transport and services in Melbourne. It is a great way to meet people who are in the same situation as you and is definitely worth the money.

There is an international student centre in the University. They can give you information and help with transport queries, accommodation (if you don't already have it), getting a job, health services and many other things.

## **ACADEMIC STUDIES**

You study four modules per semester and these can be chosen from any faculty but must be mainly from law. You can only study optional modules in the law faculty. You will provisionally pick subjects when you send off your application to Melbourne but these must be confirmed when you arrive. Our advice is to go into the Law School and speak to them about this, as certain subjects' availability may change. There is additionally a School of Criminology which offers a number of interesting subjects which are not available in UCD and are well worth studying. Melbourne University also has a breadth programme which offers a lot of Australian cultural modules which give you a valuable insight into life in Australia and its heritage.

Some subjects which we particularly recommend are: Advocacy, Global Criminology and International Human Rights Law.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

There are three choices of housing for studying Melbourne: a residential college, international student housing or a shared house/apartment.

We both stayed in Newman College, one of the residential colleges beside the University. We looked into the other two options and found that, while international housing (e.g. RMIT Village or UniLodge) is cheaper, it does not include meals and does not give you the opportunity to interact and live with Australian students. If you have never lived away from home, a shared house may be a good option for you (rent is cheap) but is hard to arrange from Ireland as it is midway through the academic year and you may end up living with complete strangers. If you are interested in this option, we think it best to leave it until second semester so you can organise it over the summer holidays.

We both agree that a residential college is the best place to stay. There are 12 residential colleges located beside the University. You apply for a place in a residential college online. It is the preferred accommodation for Australian students so they are hard to get into but Newman College has a history of accepting students

from UCD (they have yet to turn down an applicant) so we were advised to apply there.

A residential college is somewhat similar to halls of residence. In Newman College, you have your own private room and share 2/3 bathrooms with approx. 7 other students on your floor. All meals are included and served three times a day. There are, however, no kitchen facilities for students. The main advantage of living in a college is the social aspect to it. The colleges vary in size, having between approx. 100 – 350 students in different colleges. There are about 250 students living in Newman College, the vast majority of whom are Australian. There are many social events organised by the college ranging from music evenings, discos, balls and even a river cruise. One of the interesting aspects of college life is the formal dinners which are held 3 nights a week. Unlike the normal buffet style dinner of other meals, these 45 minute long dinners are served to your table and sometimes include wine. For these dinners, students must dress smartly and wear academic gowns (which are provided by the college).

College life is a unique experience. There is always something to do, a fun activity to prepare for or a new friend to be made. We would highly recommend it, in particular Newman College, as a choice of accommodation.

Note: Newman is a Catholic college and offers religious services but there are numerous people of other religions in residence and none of the services are mandatory.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR/JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Your student visa allows you to work up to 20 hours a week. Jobs are relatively easy to get, especially around the University, and are fairly well paid.

Melbourne is a very cultural city and there are a host of theatres, operas, museums and other exhibits to see. It also has a unique alleyway culture with countless interesting and unusual bars and live music venues. It is famous for sports events such as the Australian Tennis Open, the Melbourne Horse Racing Cup and Australian Rules Football. It truly lives up to its name as “The World’s Most Liveable City”

We hope you enjoy your time there!

## **ESTIMATED COST OF LIVING 2008/2009**

### **ACCOMMODATION - €**

**Campus** - Approx. €8,500 (depending on exchange rate)

This was in Newman College, one of the residential colleges attached to the University. Although it is quite a bit more expensive than sharing a house or apartment, it includes three meals a day every day, a private room with shared bathroom facilities and is also located directly beside the university so there are no transportation costs. The benefits of living in a college make it well worth the money.

**TRANSPORTATION - €**

Flights (return Ireland - Australia): Approx €1,500.

Public transport in Melbourne is very efficient and cheap. A two hour tram ticket, for example, costs approx €1 (with a student concession card).

**FOOD/MEALS - €**

As mentioned above, all meals are included in residential colleges. Eating out generally costs approx. €8 – €10 for a main course. Groceries are, in general, cheaper than in Ireland.

**ACADEMIC EXPENSES - €**

You must pay the annual UCD Registration fee but there are no additional fees for University of Melbourne. Library facilities are excellent so there is no need to buy books. Course reading materials are free within the Law faculty and are approx €20 per subject in other faculties.

**PERSONAL EXPENSES - €**

Nights out are no more expensive than in Ireland. The cost of traveling within Australia is quite expensive due to the long flights between different cities (e.g. return flight to Sydney approx. €80, return flight to New Zealand approx. €250). In terms of spending money for the year, apart from any travel and accommodation costs, it is possible to live (in a residential college) very comfortably on €3,000.

If you have any queries, questions or concerns feel free to contact us:

[aileenryan87@gmail.com](mailto:aileenryan87@gmail.com)

[jamesnerney@hotmail.com](mailto:jamesnerney@hotmail.com)