Welcome to Homestay
A guide for ICTE students
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Welcome to homestay

Homestay is a unique opportunity to learn about Australian culture by living with an Australian host in a safe and supportive environment. ICTE Homestay hosts have been chosen by us because their homes are close to UQ and they can help you settle into life here. Your homestay host may be either a single person, a couple, or a family.

In the homestay you will have the sole use of a private bedroom with a bed, desk, chair, a lamp and a storage space for clothes and personal items. You will be provided with a key to the homestay and will have access to the shared areas of the home including the kitchen, living areas and laundry.

This guide will assist you in making your stay in Australia a memorable experience.
Your first day

On your first day your homestay family will show you around the house and explain where to find things.

They may also give you some guidelines about living in their home.

If you are tired after your flight, tell your homestay family that you need to rest.

If at first you do not understand what they say, ask them to repeat something or to speak more slowly.

Try to relax with your homestay family and remember you can always ask for help.

A smile is always a good way to start a friendship.
Travel times in Brisbane may be longer than you are used to and you should be prepared to travel up to one hour to and from campus every day.

Your homestay family will tell you which bus, train or ferry you need to take to get to ICTE. It is a good idea to store these directions on your phone or tablet. You can also take a photo of the bus stop and other landmarks to help you remember where to get off when you come home.

Make a note of your homestay address and phone number as well. It is a good idea to exchange phone numbers with your homestay family.

ICTE students do not get concession fares on public transport, so you must buy a full price adult ticket.

The cheapest way to travel is with an electronic go card. When you purchase your go card you will pay a refundable deposit of $10. You can buy one (and purchase extra travel credit) at Campus News: St Lucia campus.

To find bus, train and ferry timetables: translink.com.au

Phone: 13 12 30
Communication is key when living in homestay. Please discuss your likes and dislikes with your host family.

Dinner time is your opportunity to interact with the family and practise your English. Please remember to always tell your homestay family if you will not be home for dinner.

Some families have guidelines about using the kitchen so please follow their advice. Also ask if you can help to set and clear the table and wash the dishes.

Please do not keep food in your bedroom as it will attract insects.

It is polite to say “please” when asking for food, and “thank you” when accepting food.

Please do not bring your mobile phone to the dinner table.

It is polite to wait for other family members to sit at the table before you eat your meal.

It is usually expected that you take your plate and glass to the kitchen after dinner.
Laundry and cleaning

Cleaning your room
Please keep your bedroom clean and tidy. Your homestay family will show you where to find the things you will need to keep your room clean.

Washing your clothes
Your homestay family will show you how to use the washing machine, where to dry your clothes and where the iron is stored. If you prefer, your host may wash your clothes.

Water use
It is safe to drink water from the tap in Australia.

Australia is a very dry country and saving water is important in Australian homes.

Please keep your shower duration between 5-7 minutes.

You will need to bring your own shampoo, toothpaste, soap and other personal items including a hairdryer, if required.
Telephone and internet

You may already have a mobile phone. You can buy a SIM card or a phone at shopping centres, newsagents or mobile phone shops.

Internet access on campus is free for ICTE students. If you have a wireless laptop, you can also use this for free in the ICTE building and at campus ‘hot-spots’.

Wifi will be provided in your homestay. However, please note that large downloads, like movies, may not be permitted.
Homestay safety

Let your homestay family know if you will be returning home late. Make sure you know how to get home safely by checking the times of buses and trains. If you are very late, you might have to take a taxi.

Ask your homestay family before inviting guests home.

If you plan to go away for any period, let your homestay family know where you are going. If you plan a trip of more than a week, please inform the ICTE Accommodation Office. You will need to continue paying to keep your room.

While in homestay it is a requirement that at least one host be present in the homestay overnight. This means that if your hosts intend to go away during your stay you will need to move to a temporary homestay. The ICTE Accommodation Office can assist with the arrangement of a temporary homestay, as well as transport to the homestay.

Australia is a safe place, but as in all countries, home security is important. Remember:

• Make sure you have a key and that you know the house alarm codes.
• Lock all doors and windows (your homestay family are allowed to enter your room to check).
• Do not leave money in your room.
• Do not keep your house key together with your homestay address details in case you lose it.
Culture and communicating

Living with a homestay family is an opportunity for you to use English in everyday situations and learn about Australia. For the host family, it is an opportunity to learn about your culture. At first, you may find it difficult to understand each other. Be patient and ask your host family to speak slowly.

Occasionally, there might be a misunderstanding or problem due to differences in language or culture. Some of the most common misunderstandings in homestay can be easily resolved by asking questions and talking to your homestay family. If you need somebody else to talk to, there are staff at the ICTE Accommodation Office who can help.

Sometimes you might want to be alone in your room. Just explain that you need some time to yourself; your host family will understand.
Living with pets

Many homestay families have pets (such as dogs, cats, birds or fish). The pet is a member of the family and is often allowed inside the house. If you do not want the pet in your room, make sure you tell the family and keep your bedroom door closed.

If you don’t want to live in a homestay with pets for religious or health reasons, make sure you include this information in your ICTE Homestay application form.
Money matters

To make homestay arrangements as simple as possible, all payments are managed by the ICTE Accommodation Office. Please do not pay the host family directly.

Your weekly ICTE Homestay fee includes gas, wifi and electricity bills. If you want to extend your stay, talk to the ICTE Accommodation Office.

There are other situations when you might need money. If you go with the family on an excursion, to a movie or out for dinner, you might need to pay for yourself. It is a good idea to check how much money you need before you accept an invitation. If you don’t want to join in with the family excursion, it is ok to decline an invitation from your homestay family.
Manners

Australians appreciate good manners. Saying “please”, “thank you”, “excuse me” or “sorry” is an easy way to keep a good relationship with your host family. Also, say “hi” (or “good morning”) when you get up and say “bye” when you leave.

Most Australians will expect you to use their first names, however, some people may prefer that you use their formal names (e.g. Mr and Mrs Jones). When you meet someone for the first time they will usually tell you what they prefer to be called.

If you want to borrow something or take photographs, ask politely. Helping with small household chores is also appreciated.

If you are a smoker, it is important to tell the Accommodation Office when you book homestay. Some families do not host students who smoke. When you are in homestay check with the host family about where you can smoke and where to throw away the cigarette butts.
Tips for living in homestay

Living in a foreign country with a new family can be an amazing experience, but there may also be some challenges. Please remember that each homestay is unique and your homestay experience will most likely be different to that of your friends.

Here are some tips to make your stay easier:

- Keep an open mind: Be prepared to discover a new way of life.
- Communicate with your family: Don’t be afraid to ask if you would like something.
- Showers: Save water by keeping showers short, usually 5 minutes.
- Insects: There are many insects in Australia and it is common to see them in your homestay. Most insects are harmless. Talk to your host family if you are worried about them.
- Text your host family: Your hosts care about you and need to know where you are. Please let your family know if you will be late or will miss dinner.
- Safety and security: Brisbane is a safe and friendly city, but we advise students to consider their personal safety and the security of their belongings at all times.
Practice questions

**General questions**

Should I take off my shoes?

I’m sorry, I don’t understand. Can you speak a little slower?

Could you say that again, please?

Can I join you in the living room?

I am very tired. I would like to go to my room. Is that alright?

Could you show me how to lock the house, please?

Can you tell me how to catch the bus/train to ICTE, please?

**For the kitchen / meals**

What time does the family usually eat dinner/breakfast?

Can I store some food/fruit in the fridge, please?

Can I help you to prepare dinner?

Can I help set the table?

Thank you for dinner. It was very good. Can I help you with the dishes?

I am still a little bit hungry; can I have some more food, please?

I plan to eat in town with my friends tonight. Is that alright?

I will be home a bit later tonight. Please can you save me some dinner?

I would like to cook some food for you. When is convenient for you?

**For the bathroom**

When can I use the shower?

What is the best time for me to use the bathroom in the morning/ evening?

Can I leave my toiletries in the bathroom?

Can I have an extra towel please?

Can I have a clean towel, please?
**Laundry**

Can I wash my clothes, please?
When is the best time for me to do my laundry?
Where can I wash my clothes by hand?
Where can I hang my wet washing?
I would like to iron my clothes. Can I use the iron? Where do you keep it?

**For your room**

I am a little cold at night. Can I have an extra blanket, please?
Can I change my sheets, please?
Is it OK if I open the windows at night?
Is it OK if I close the windows at night?
I would like to clean my room; can I use the vacuum cleaner? Where do you keep it?
I am not used to pets. Could you make sure the cat/dog stays out of my room, please?

**Using the phone / internet**

Can I make a short local phone call, please?
Can I use my international phone card to make an international call, please?
Is it possible for me to use the Internet?

**Other**

My friend would like to visit my homestay.
Can I invite him/her on Saturday?
Is it alright for me to smoke in the garden?
Where can I put my cigarette butts?
I would like to take a photograph of you and your children. Is that alright?
I would like to put some photographs of your family on social media. Is that alright?
May I watch TV?
Help with homestay

Talking to your homestay family can solve many common problems. If you keep quiet about a problem, the family might not realise what is wrong. If this happens, a small problem can quickly become a big one. It is important to have good communication between yourself and the family.

Moving from one homestay family to another might not be the best solution.

If you have tried talking to your host family but you are still not happy, you can talk to the ICTE Accommodation Officers. They can try to help solve the problem with your homestay family. You can contact them during normal office hours (8am-5pm). You can also contact the Accommodation Officers outside office hours in an emergency.
Contact Us

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Level 4, Sir Llew Edwards Building (#14)
The University of Queensland
Corner University Drive and Campbell Road
St Lucia 4072 QLD

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homestay@ict.e.uq.edu.au

Emergencies only
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