



REGIONAL AND REMOTE PLACEMENT GUIDE

Contents

Why should I consider a regional or remote placement? _____	1
What is considered regional or remote? _____	2
Who is eligible for a regional or remote placement? _____	3
How do I organise my regional or remote placement? _____	6
Are there any scholarships or financial aids available for regional or remote placements? _____	9
I have a rural or remote placement, now what? _____	11
What if my circumstances change and I can no longer attend my regional or remote placement? _____	14
Cultural awareness _____	15
Your wellbeing _____	16
What should I do if things go wrong? _____	19
Essential Placement Checklist _____	20
What communication will I receive while I am on my regional or remote placement? _____	21

Why should I consider a regional or remote placement?

There are many advantages to participating in a regional or remote placement that may not be available in metropolitan placements. The wide variety of tasks performed by regional or remote professionals ensures that you will develop a strong sense of teamwork, flexibility, and an increased skill set.

Currently there is a shortage of regional and remote professionals. Experiencing regional and remote practice and engaging with a regional and remote community could entice you to work in that community once graduated.

Regional and remote placements offer the opportunity for nursing, midwifery, paramedicine, allied health, and education students to further their professional development in an environment that offers many new experiences. This includes the chance to meet new people in both professional and social circumstances, which can lead to lifelong friendships, mentorships, and professional relationships. Regional and remote placements provide a realistic understanding of regional and remote service provisions and the skills required for a career out bush. On completion, students have a greater sense of confidence and increased skills and knowledge.

Students are often given a higher sense of autonomy and responsibility which enhances confidence. In some areas, students will discover that regional and remote professionals may have limited access to some equipment and resources which requires innovation and flexibility. Regional and remote placements encourage students to develop a professional network through closer dealings with other staff including specialists from both health and community agencies. Placements in regional and remote areas across Australia offer the opportunity to increase your understanding of the unique issues of people living in the bush.

Working in Indigenous communities is an amazing experience that offers students the chance to learn about different cultural groups, while seeing firsthand what improvements they could make by choosing to practice in a regional or remote location after graduating.



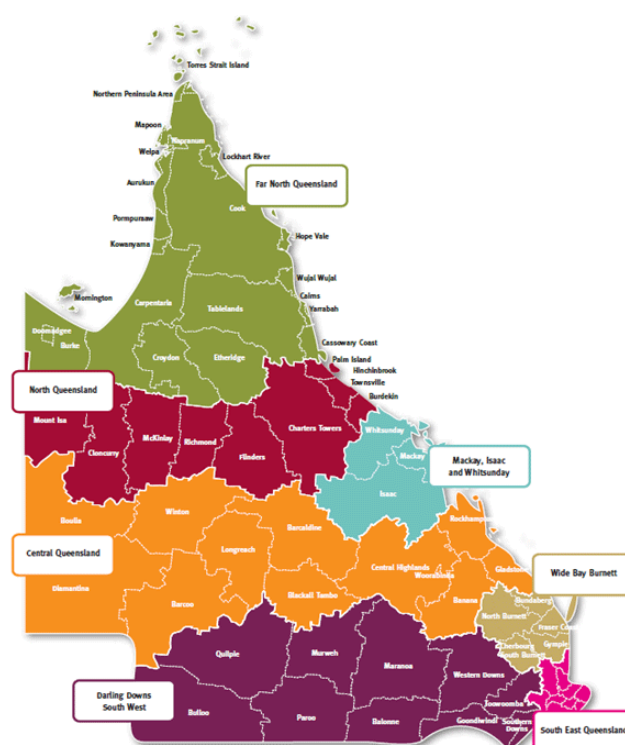
What is considered regional or remote?

The defining characteristic of a regional or remote placement is that it is not in a major city or urban area.

These placements can be in smaller towns, rural areas or even in international locations (depending on what areas are available for your discipline). The defining characteristic of a regional or remote placement is that it is not in a major city or urban area.

There are several factors that contribute to a location being considered regional or remote:

- **Population size:** regional or remote placements typically have a smaller population size compared to major cities)
- **Accessibility:** Regional or remote placements may have limited access to public transportation, education institutions, healthcare facilities and other essential services
- **Infrastructure:** Regional or remote areas may have limited infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and telecommunications networks.
- **Climate:** Regional or remote areas may have harsher climates, such as extreme temperatures, high altitudes, or coastal regions prone to natural disasters.
- **Language and culture:** Regional or remote areas may have unique languages and cultural practices that differ from those in major cities.
- **Political stability:** Some regional or remote areas may experience political instability or conflict, which can impact the safety and security of individuals living there.



The [Queensland Health map of Queensland](#) shows the areas classified as regional and remote, by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This includes the below breakdown:

Regional Areas	Remote Areas
Biloela	Bamaga
Blackwater	Blackall
Bundaberg	Burketown
Emerald	Cloncurry
Gladstone	Cooktown
Innisfail	Doomadgee
Mundubbera	Longreach
Roma	Mt Isa
Theodore	Thursday Island
Townsville	Weipa

Who is eligible for a regional or remote placement?

Regional and remote placements are offered across a broad range of disciplines, including Allied Health, Education, Engineering, Medical Laboratory Science, Midwifery, Nursing, Paramedicine and Social Work. For each discipline, you must meet a specific eligibility criterion to attend a regional and remote placement.

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS

To be considered for a Biomedical Science regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled into one of the following courses:
 - LFS304 Clinical Placement 1
 - LFS305 Clinical Placement 2

EDUCATION STUDENTS

To be considered for an Education regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Second year of study or later (excludes EDU205)
- Academically achieving (i.e. GPA of 5 or above)
- Successful past PEx Reports with high levels of APST rated 'achieved'
- Attend a suitability interview
- Approval from the Course Coordinator (arranged by the Placement Office)

ENGINEERING STUDENTS

To be considered for an Engineering regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled in one of the Engineering undergraduate programs
- Be enrolled in one of the Engineering Masters programs

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE

To be considered for a Medical Laboratory Science regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Enrolled in UB001 Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science (Pathology)
- Successfully completed pre-requisite courses such as MLS101 Foundations in Medical Laboratory Science, MLS100 Haematology and MLS121 Histopathology
- Enrolled in one of the following courses:
 - MLS131 Medical Laboratory Placement 1
 - MLS231 Medical Laboratory Placement 2, or
 - MLS402 Medical Laboratory Placement 3
- Approval from the Course Coordinator (arranged by the Placement Office)

MIDWIFERY STUDENTS

To be considered for a Midwifery regional, remote, or interstate placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled into HLT312 Midwifery Internship (Session 4 or Semester 2)
- Has demonstrated completion of all COC experiences prior to the commencement of this placement and have documented sufficient MPEs to demonstrate that undertaking this placement will not negatively impact their successful completion of the program

- Must have a minimum GPA of 5
- Has not previously benefited from a regional, remote, or interstate experience in this degree
- Has demonstrated exemplary professional conduct on campus and on previous clinical practicums
- Does not need to be a recipient of a scholarship or bursary for a regional, remote, or interstate placement
- States that they can fully finance this experience
- Has not withdrawn from a previously allocated regional/ remote/ interstate placement
- Is fully compliant with ALL pre-clinical mandatorys no later than 4 weeks prior to commencement of placement and for the duration of the placement as per Sonia Online
- Has read and understands the possible risks of attending a placement away from the UniSC region and is aware of what level of insurance cover is provided by UniSC and what is personally required
- Commits to attending the placement once allocated. Cannot withdraw

NURSING STUDENTS

To be considered for a Nursing regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled in one of the following courses:
 - NUR227 Nursing Practice 2
 - NUR287 Nursing Practice 3
 - NUR304 Nursing Practice 4
 - NUR300 Nursing Internship (Session 4 or 6)
- Academically achieving a GPA of 4 or above
- Have successful past ANSAT assessments, demonstrating an excellent standard of Australian Nursing Standards. As well as demonstrating exemplary professional conduct on campus.
- Pre-clinical mandatorys are fully compliant for the duration of the placement
- Can commit to financing and attending a regional and remote placement once allocated

PARAMEDICINE STUDENTS

To be considered for a Paramedicine QLD regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled into one of the following courses:
 - PAR103 Paramedic Foundation Practicum 1
 - PAR203 Paramedic Clinical Practicum 2
 - PAR312 Paramedic Clinical Practicum 3

SOCIAL WORK AND HUMAN SERVICES STUDENTS

To be considered for a Social Work and Human Services regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled into one of the following courses:
 - SWK201 Human Services Placement 1
 - SWK305 Human Services Placement 2
 - SWK300 Social Work Field Education 1
 - SWK400 Social Work Field Education 2
 - SWK700 Master of Social Work Field Education 1
 - SWK701 Master of Social Work Field Education 2

SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCE STUDENTS

To be considered for a Sport and Exercise Science regional and remote placement, you must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled into one of the following courses:
 - SPX304 Bachelor of Sports Studies
 - SPX340 Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science
 - SPX300 Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science
 - SPX402 or SPX403 Bachelor of Clinical Exercise Physiology

How do I organise my regional or remote placement?

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS

To apply for a rural or remote placement complete an EOI Form and book an interview with the Course Coordinator to discuss your EOI Form and where you have indicated your areas of interest lie.

The Course Coordinator will then match you to one of the various organisations deemed suitable for a student placement, based on your interview.

If you request to complete a rural and remote placement the Course Coordinator will then vet the site to check if there is suitable supervision and duties available at the organisation.

You are responsible for the cost of travel, living expenses and accommodation while on placement (unless the organisation offers accommodation).

Availability of placements in rural and remote areas vary due the operational requirements of the host facilities and their ability to support students.

EDUCATION STUDENTS

If eligible, apply for a rural and remote placement by following the below steps:

1. Login to your Sonia Online account
2. Click on the FORMS tab
3. Select the "Rural and Remote Application Form" from the dropdown forms list
4. Click on the red Edit Details button to complete your form.
5. Click on the "Electronically sign/Submit" button to submit your form.

Please Note: If the form is not yet available on Sonia Online for the semester you wish to undertake your rural and remote placement, please check back closer to the start of the Semester.

You will be e-mailed by the Placement Office to let you know if your application for a rural and remote placement has been approved or not.

Contact the Education Professional Learning Office at edprofessionallearning@usc.edu.au for more information.

Please note you are prohibited from being placed at any School with a 7A transfer ranking (TR).

ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Engineering students can apply to attend a rural and remote placement via your professional practice student application form. The Course Coordinator, when reviewing your application form will then vet the site to ensure that the host organization has an Engineer that will supervise you and establish that the duties you will be carrying out on placement, will ensure accreditation is met.

You are responsible for the cost of travel, accommodation & living expenses while on placement (unless the organisation offers accommodation).

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE

Upon completing an expression of interest form, indicating which region/s you would like to attend, UniSC Placement Officers will submit the requests to the relevant pathology services. These services will then advise which laboratories we can allocate students to. If a suitable laboratory is identified, you will receive an offer of placement via email.

Please see the attached link for a list of possible locations: [Laboratories | Pathology Queensland | Queensland Health](#)

Students are responsible for the cost of travel and accommodation while on placement.

MIDWIFERY STUDENTS

Applications are via an Expression of Interest (EOI) form only – available on Sonia Online under 'Forms' and must be submitted electronically by the advertised deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Availability of placements in rural, remote, or interstate placements varies due the operational requirements of the host facilities and their ability to support students. As an example, students have previously undertaken placements in locations such as Longreach, Thursday Island, and Katherine.

Please refer to the below steps for this process:

1. Submit EOI via Sonia Online when enrolled in the eligible clinical course HLT312.
2. Applications will then be shortlisted as per the Selection Criteria.
3. Student interviews will be undertaken by the Course Coordinator.
4. Students will be emailed with an offer and details regarding the rural, remote, or interstate placement allocated at least 6 weeks prior to commencement date.
5. Details will be available to view on Sonia Online 6 weeks prior to placement.

Please Note: Students are not to source their own placements and the above list is for general guidance.

NURSING STUDENTS

Requests are by application only and you will receive an email advising you once applications have opened for your upcoming placement course.

Email and phone requests outside of the application process are not considered.

Once you have received an email to notify you that applications for regional and remote placements are now open, you will be directed to submit an online Expression of Interest (EOI) Form(s) per course, available on [Sonia Online](#), under 'Forms'.

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

PARAMEDICINE STUDENTS

Upon completing a placement preference form, indicating which Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) stations you would like to attend, UniSC Placement Officers will submit the station requests to QAS. QAS will then advise which stations we can allocate students to, allocations will take place dependent on availability.

You can request QLD rural and remote stations in areas such as Cairns, Central Qld, Darling Downs, Mackay, Townsville & Wide Bay.

Students are responsible for the cost of travel, accommodation and living expenses while on placement.

SOCIAL WORK AND HUMAN SERVICES STUDENTS

To apply for a rural or remote placement, complete a placement information interview form and book an interview with one of the Field Education team to discuss your interview form, where you have indicated your areas of interest in the Social Work / Human Services field.

The Field Education team will then match you to one of many organisations they deal with, based on your interview.

If you request to complete a rural and remote placement the Field Education team then assess the site to check if there is a Social Worker available at the organisation to supervise you and assess the duties you will be carrying out, to ensure accreditation is met.

You are responsible for the cost of travel, accommodation & living expenses while on placement (unless the organisation offers accommodation).

Availability of placements in rural and remote areas vary due to the operational requirements of the host facilities and their ability to support students. As an example, students have previously undertaken placements in locations such as Tasmania, Wide Bay, Rockhampton, New South Wales, and Emerald.

SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCE STUDENTS

To apply for a rural or remote placement, contact your placement officer at shssplacements@usc.edu.au, who will arrange for you to book an interview with one of the Academic team to discuss your areas of interest and available placements in rural and remote areas.

You are responsible for the cost of travel, accommodation & living expenses while on placement (unless the organisation offers accommodation).

Availability of placements in rural and remote areas vary due to the operational requirements of the host facilities and their ability to support students.

Are there any scholarships or financial aid available for regional or remote placements?

We understand that there are a lot of financial obligations when completing a regional or remote placement, this can include accommodation, travel, food on top of managing your usual finances while you are away from home. We understand that this can be a very large financial commitment.

Where you are facing financial hardship, we would suggest that you contact Student Wellbeing and one of the staff there can talk you through your options for seeking support to attend your placement. You may also get in touch with the Student Guild welfare service who are sometimes able to provide practical support for students in financial hardship. There are no costs associated with student services at UniSC, and each matter is treated confidentially.

UniSC offers a wide range of scholarships and bursaries for all types of students including students undertaking placements as part of their program. You are only required to lodge one online application via the [UniSC website](#) for the majority of scholarships and bursaries on offer to undergraduate students each semester. The Scholarships team will put you forward for all the awards for which you meet the eligibility criteria.

If you wish to be considered for a scholarship in each semester that you study, you must complete and submit a scholarship application form for every semester that you are enrolled.

The two main rounds for scholarship applications are open on the following dates each year:

- **Semester 1:** 1 September to 30 November (in the year prior)
- **Semester 2:** 1 April to 31 May (current year)

Some scholarships and bursaries do require individual application forms and may be available outside of the 2 main application rounds. The specific application forms are available in the relevant [Semester 1](#) and [Semester 2](#) listing by clicking on the “Other Scholarships” tab.

You may also be interested in having a look at the [External scholarships and awards](#) listed on the UniSC website which are available from government departments, businesses and industry groups. Applications will need to be sent directly to the external agency supporting the scholarships on offer.

EDUCATION STUDENTS

It is encouraged that you apply for a [Tim Fairfax Family Foundation \(TFFF\) Bursary](#), to assist you with placement-related costs such as travel and accommodation.

Some other scholarships and/or bursaries to consider also include:

- [Indigenous Education Placement Bursary](#)
- [Professional Experience Grants](#) (QLD Gov) - Please read criteria carefully as some sites are excluded.

MIDWIFERY STUDENTS

It is encouraged that you apply for internal and external scholarships and/or bursaries. It is up to the individual student to ascertain eligibility and apply for various scholarships.

You may wish to consider the following [USC Scholarships](#) options:

- [Lucy Harris Bursary: Fraser Coast Campus Scholarship | Available in SEM 1](#)

- [Helen Hall Rural and remote Nursing Bursary | Available in SEM 1](#)

Some additional scholarships that are offered external which you may want to consider include:

- [Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme: First Nations Health Scholarship](#)
- [CRANApplus scholarships and grants National Rural Health Alliance LTD](#)
- [QCWA - Student Bursaries](#)

NURSING STUDENTS

You are encouraged to apply for internal and external scholarships and/or bursaries. It is your responsibility to check eligibility and apply for scholarships. Some [USC Scholarships](#) include:

- [Lucy Harris Bursary: Fraser Coast Campus Scholarship](#)
- [Helen Hall Rural and remote Nursing Bursary](#)
- [L and R Foundation Nursing Placement Bursary](#)

Some additional scholarships that are offered external which you may want to consider include:

- [Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme: First Nations Health Scholarship](#)
- [CRANApplus Scholarships and Grants](#)

PARAMEDICINE STUDENTS

You are encouraged to apply for internal and external scholarships. It is your responsibility to check eligibility and apply for scholarships. Some [USC Scholarships](#) include:

- [The Mills Family Regional Scholarship](#)
- [Helen Hall Rural and Remote Bursary](#)
- [Eve-Jorgensen Regional Study Support Bursary](#)

Some additional scholarships that are offered external which you may want to consider include:

- [NextGen Medics](#)
- [ACEN Student Scholarships](#)
- [TROHPIQ Rural Scholarships & Bursaries](#)

I have a rural or remote placement, now what?

There are many things to organise before you go on your rural or remote placement. To ensure that your placement is successful, you will need to do some research before you begin.

Here are a few things to consider when planning your placement.

Successful applicants can commence making travel and accommodation arrangements. Please however, be mindful that some facilities can cancel placements due to unforeseen circumstances. In the unlikely event that this occurs, every attempt will be made to source another placement, but cannot be guaranteed. For this reason, it is highly recommended that students consider a travel insurance policy. Information about insurance cover and risk management whilst on a rural, remote, or interstate placement can be found on the [UniSC Insurance Information for Students](#) page.

All other information specific to the placement will be accessible on Sonia Online. As a matter of importance, please pay attention to specific, additional immunisation requirements at some locations.

Your UniSC Placement Office will provide you with the dates and duration for your placement. Your allocation will be available on Sonia Online under the placements tab. Information regarding your placement will be available through your placement officer.

EXPECTATIONS AND PROCESSES

It is your responsibility to read and understand the contents of your discipline-specific Handbook, which is available on your discipline-specific Sonia Online Homepage.

It is strongly recommended that you refer to your handbook prior to every placement as the content of the handbook does change over time. Not being away of the content of the handbook may impact on the successful completion of your placement. The handbook covers important process and policies, including:

- What to do when absent from your placement
- How make-up is managed
- What to do when incidents arise during placement
- What are your professional requirements

You can also refer to following FAQs on the University website:

- [Nursing Student's FAQs](#)
- [Education Student's FAQs](#)

COMMUNITY

Being on placement can be a daunting experience if you are away from home, family, friends, and familiar surroundings. This can especially be true in a more rural or remote setting.

To make your placement easier to settle in to and to make the most of your stay, you should learn about the town before you go.

A good place to start is by contacting the Tourist Centre if one exists or searching the internet. Find out about the size of the population, climate, the demographics of the town, what other health services are available if any, and the geography. Buy or download a map of the town before you go. It is also important to research what services and recreational facilities are offered.

If you enjoy going to the movies you should find out if they have a cinema, or if you play sport or exercise find out about the local gym, sporting events or other activities you can participate in during your stay. Banks and shops in rural and remote towns may have different opening hours to those in the city and you do not want to be left without food or money. You may like to find out the location of the nearest church or place of religious worship.

We would also recommend finding out about the availability of internet and mobile coverage for your placement area, you may need to purchase a pre-paid SIM card to ensure you will have coverage while on placement.

The client population is also something to consider and may influence the kinds of injuries that may be common e.g. the common injuries in a crayfishing town will be different to those common in a mining town.

Health Students

You can become a member of the National Rural Health Student Network (NTHSN) and connect with other health students in rural and remote Australia. Watch the YouTube clip on the NRHSN website under the [Resources](#) tab.

UniSC also works closely with [TROHPHQ](#), which is southeast Queensland's rural health club dedicated to helping medical, nursing, and allied health students experience the unique career and lifestyle opportunities to be found in regional, rural and remote medicine. The club services UniSC students with social events, scholarships, seminars, and training days and much more.

TRANSPORT

Many rural and remote towns and communities have very limited (if any) public transport facilities. This will need to be a major consideration in your decision to participate in a rural placement. Before your placement is organised, you will need to decide how you will get there. Options might include train, bus, plane or driving your own car. You will need to investigate whether there are train or bus services, as well as considering the condition of your car and your experience and confidence in driving long distances.

You will need to research what the local public transport options are, and whether there are taxi services. You should also consider the distance between your accommodation and workplace. You will have to organise how to get to work and decide whether you can walk there, or if you will need transport. You may consider taking your bike or finding out if you are able to hire one.

ACCOMMODATION

Your accommodation is a very important consideration in your decision to undertake a regional or remote placement. You need to find out what accommodation is available, if there is any through your university or your workplace or whether your supervisor can recommend somewhere, and any costs associated. You need to research what facilities are available i.e., cooking facilities and utensils, bed linen, laundry, TV, fridge etc. Ensure you know their contact details, including arrangements for picking up your keys on arrival.

SUPERVISOR

A phone call or email to your supervisor to introduce yourself is a great opportunity to discuss your placement and ask questions.

You should try to determine what your expected tasks and caseload will be like. You will be able to discuss your work hours, uniform or dress code, available facilities such as a computer or library, who you will be working with, whether there will be other students, whether you need to take anything with you, and what is expected of you.

Gathering as much information as possible beforehand will provide you with the best opportunity for a successful placement.

Be prepared and organised before leaving will help make your placement a rewarding and fun experience. Refer to the “Essential Placement Checklist” which can be found further in this booklet.

What if my circumstances change and I can no longer attend my regional or remote placement?

If your personal circumstances change, contact your [Placement Office](#) immediately to discuss options.

Cultural awareness

All communities have their own culture, whether mining, farming, tourist, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As with any cultural learning experience, unwitting errors and embarrassments are likely to occur, but they will allow you to learn and be better prepared for the future.

An awareness of the differences in cultural values and a commitment to developing sufficient understanding will help the process of adjusting to a different culture. Some courses contain a cultural awareness course. If your course does not offer such courses, there are recommended readings below.

The path of adjustment can be easier if the student finds a cultural mentor from within the local population. With a mentor, mistakes will become lessons, and repeating them repeatedly will become avoidable. Seek out Indigenous Health Workers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers if appropriate and ask for their advice.

Undertaking cultural awareness

training before placements is a great way to help you gain an understanding of cultural beliefs and avoid errors that may offend community members, which can in turn negatively impact on the provision of health care and your experience.

While adjusting to a new culture, remember that flexibility, sensitivity, respect for difference, a non-judgemental approach and optimism are key factors for developing relationships within a new community. Being culturally aware starts with being aware of your own culture, values, and assumptions. Aboriginal cultural awareness means having knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people's history, values, belief systems, experience, and lifestyles. It is not about becoming an expert on Aboriginal culture; however, it is about being aware of the differences that exist, appreciating and understanding those differences, and accepting them.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- 'Australia's rural and remote health: a social justice perspective', by Janie Dade Smith
- 'Bridging cultures in Aboriginal health', by Binang Goonj
- UniSC [Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Practice Toolkit](#)



Your health and wellbeing

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

You will experience a culture shock to some degree while you are living in a town or community different to your own. This is normal, everyone who travels experiences this—it may be more profound in the more isolated communities in Australia.

Some students undertaking a rural or remote placement may feel a little homesick being away from family and friends. It is important to recognise that this could occur and try to develop strategies for coping with it before you leave. Make sure that you know how you will keep in contact with your family, partner, and friends.

While you may miss your loved ones, you can still enjoy your country experience by getting involved as much as possible. Go out and join in community events and meetings, sporting activities, markets, Lions/Rotary while you are there. Accept social invitations from colleagues and people that you meet outside of work. Take time to explore the local area. It is vital that you remember you are a student of UniSC whilst you are on placement. The UniSC Code of Conduct applies to you at work and while you are out in the community.

KEEPING SAFE

When on a regional or remote placement, you will need to consider your personal safety just as you would anywhere. This is important both in clinical and non-clinical situations. These are just some hints that may be useful, not only on placements but anywhere. Also, it is important to consider that at some point in your career, you may encounter an aggressive patient/student.

Some important tips (use this list as a starting point to consider other issues that may arise):

- Make an informal risk assessment for yourself, considering issues such as transport, accommodation (including the availability of a phone and mobile coverage) and supervision before you go.
- Reach out to your host site prior to placement to ask about internet and mobile coverage as your phone provider may not have coverage at your placement location and you may require a pre-paid SIM for the duration of your placement.
- Do not walk around the town or community by yourself at night, in unlit areas, or in isolated locations.
- Ask a local mentor about what places should be avoided in the community for cultural or safety reasons.
- Observe local customs in terms of culturally appropriate dress.
- Lock your accommodation at night or when out during the day.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back, even by an SMS to a friend, if leaving the community for sightseeing etc.
- Ensure you have the appropriate driving skills if driving over unsealed roads and tell someone if you do not feel confident. Plan your travel to, from and around the community. Identify fuel availability, weather and road warnings and always carry maps and water.
- When beginning your placement, ask about safety procedures, personal alarms, and location of a 'safe room' or location in the event of an aggressive patient.
- Do not approach or confront an aggressive patient or community member but ensure your safety first and follow the advice of your supervisors.
- Do not get involved or take sides in personal disputes between community members.

SAFETY AND ACTION ON REGIONAL AND RURAL ROADS

For those of you who are placed in regional and rural locations this may involve driving long distances and on unfamiliar roads. During placement you may be required to drive your own vehicle or a placement vehicle to an outreach visit or another location.

Students are generally not insured to drive a vehicle other than their own, so please check with your facility if you are asked to drive one of their cars.

You should have your own car insurance for your vehicle. Have a record of your insurance company, your membership, and their number.

Consider your mobile phone network – ask your host-site what network is required to have the best coverage for the area/s you will be driving in.

INSURANCE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

A student who undertakes an approved unpaid placement in Australia as a requirement of their course or degree program is covered by the University's Student Personal Accident, Public Liability, Professional Indemnity and Medical Malpractice (where applicable) insurances whilst involved in approved placement activities.

For you to be eligible to be covered for university insurance whilst undertaking a placement, you must be a student with an active enrolment status in accordance with the definition provided in the [Admissions, Enrolments and Graduation – Academic Policy](#).

Please be aware that you are not covered by Work Cover Queensland while undertaking your clinical placement. UniSC offers limited student insurance, but additional insurance cover may be required depending on your individual needs. To view the insurance cover available and assist you to make an informed decision regarding your insurance needs, information can be found on the [Insurance Information for Students](#) page.

FACTORS TO REDUCE ACCIDENT RISK

- Identify fatigue and stop for a break
 - **Primary causal factor in 30% of rural incidents.** The sparse roadside environment in rural and remote areas may also lead to a sense of 'monotony' and fatigue-like effects.
- Drive with a peer or colleague
- Focus – distraction reported in 30% of incidents.
- Know your vehicle – driving an unfamiliar vehicle increases risk of incidents
- Drive a familiar route or research the route using local knowledge from your PPE prior to departure
- Be aware that wildlife, livestock, and farm/mining vehicle movements may be unpredictable.
- Keep to sealed roads and take additional caution on roads with uneven surface (ie sealed roads in poor condition) absent road markings, single lane or absent hard shoulder.
- Drive to the road and weather and familiarity conditions rather than the speed limit – ie drive *below* the speed limit if aforementioned factors are in play.
- Be aware of driving distances if they are substantially more than you are used to driving at home (see fatigue above).
- Be aware that your accident risk is higher if you are a young male – take extra caution
- Wear a seatbelt
- Do not drive with alcohol or drugs in your system.

Facts to be aware of

- Most rural crashes occur in daylight (Fri Sat Sun are peak)
- Most involve single vehicle crashes – most of these where the vehicle has left the road.

Adapted from State of the Road [A Fact Sheet of the Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety - Queensland \(CARRS-Q\)](#) April 2021

What to do if you are involved in a traffic incident:

- Refer to the QLD Government Police [What to do in a traffic crash flowchart](#)
- Refer to the QLD Government Police [Traffic Crash FAQs](#)

What should I do if things go wrong?

Despite all the best planning and intentions, sometimes things can go wrong. You may not get along with your supervisor, your accommodation might not be what you expected, you may not be achieving what you wanted from your placement, you might be feeling lonely or missing home, friends, and family. The good news is...

...that problems can usually be sorted out and a successful placement can still be achieved! The first thing to do is sort out what is not going right and the reasons why.

Always try to talk out any problem with the team. They may be able to rectify the situation or have ideas to overcome the issue. It may be a miscommunication, misunderstanding or different interpretation of an event that can be resolved by open and honest discussion. This is good practice for the real world when you graduate.

If this does not work, then you may need to consider who the best person will be. If the problem is work related and you feel comfortable talking to your supervisor about it, then that will most likely be the quickest and easiest solution. If you are not able to speak to your supervisor, you might be able to discuss it with other staff members or your university placement coordinator. Other students who are on placement with you, or who have had similar experiences in the past will generally be able to offer advice.

If you are feeling lonely or things are not going well personally, then contacting family or friends might help. Other support services include your university support/counselling service or national support lines where people are there to listen and help you work out solutions.

Contact numbers and websites for useful placement help and support services are listed on the next page. You can also find very useful contacts and information in the NRHSN's Mental Health Guide 'When the Cowpat Hits the Windmill' which you can find at www.nrhn.org.au/mhg.

OUT OF HOURS ASSISTANCE

If you have an emergency on placement outside of business hours (between 1630hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday, weekends, and during the campus closure – 24th Dec – 4th January) please call SafeUniSC on 07 5430 1168. They will be able to triage your call to the appropriate services. Please do not ring this number for absences from placement.

If you are in a life-threatening emergency, you should call police or ambulance on 000.

SUPPORT/HELP

- *beyondblue* 1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au
- Bush Crisis Line and Support Services 1800 805 391 www.bcl.org.au BCL is a twenty-four hour telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote and rural health practitioners and their families.
- Lifeline 131 114 www.lifeline.org.au
- Mensline 1300 789 978 www.menslineaus.org.au
- Reachout www.reachout.com.au
- Sane 1800 187 263 www.sane.org

Essential placement checklist

GENERAL

- ☐ Have you spoken to your supervisor and discussed both your expectations?
- ☐ Keep updated on the local weather conditions and road closures for your placement area
- ☐ What facilities will be available to you (computer, internet, shops, library etc)?
- ☐ Have you considered applying for a scholarship?
- ☐ How will you keep in touch with friends and family?
- ☐ Have you investigated if your mobile phone provider offers coverage in your placement area?

TRANSPORT

- ☐ Do you know the best transport option to get to your placement? ie. Bus, train, plane or drive your own car?
- ☐ Is your car in a safe condition to drive long distances?
- ☐ Do you have enough confidence and experience to drive long distances and on unsealed roads?
- ☐ How will you get around the community?
- ☐ Are there public transport services? What hours do they operate?
- ☐ How will you get to your workplace?
- ☐ Do you know if a taxi service is available? What is the phone number?
- ☐ Are you better off taking your own transport (car, bike etc)?

COMMUNITY

- ☐ Have you researched the community (geography, demographics, activities, attractions, churches etc)?
- ☐ Have you planned some recreational activities for your spare time?
- ☐ Have you joined a Rural Health Club (eg. TROHPIQ)?

MEALS

- ☐ Are meals provided?
- ☐ Have you advised of any dietary requirements (vegetarian, allergies etc) if meals are provided?
- ☐ Do you have cooking facilities in your accommodation?
- ☐ What shopping facilities are available?

WHAT TO PACK

- ☐ Itinerary
- ☐ Towels, linen, alarm clock, food etc if needed
- ☐ Do you need to take any resources/textbooks with you?
- ☐ Student ID card/badge
- ☐ Mandatory Requirement evidence
- ☐ Professional portfolio (if required)
- ☐ Money - small amount of cash, not only credit/EFTPOS cards
- ☐ Camera - take lots of photos as you are bound to have a ball! Remember that photos in some Indigenous communities may not be welcomed, so be sure to ask permission.

UNIFORM/CLOTHES

- ☐ Do you have a uniform/what is your dress code?
- ☐ What clothing will you require in your spare time? ie consider the weather, activities, special/community events etc.
- ☐ Are your clothes culturally appropriate?

ACCOMMODATION

- ☐ Do you know where your accommodation is located?
- ☐ Do you know the contact details?
- ☐ What facilities does your accommodation have? e.g. fridge, washing machine, cooking utensils, bed linen, TV.

CONTACT DETAILS

- ☐ Do you have contact details for your workplace, accommodation, university placement supervisor, friends and family etc?

ARRIVAL

- ☐ Do you need to notify your workplace of your flight/bus times?
- ☐ Have you organised to be picked up on arrival?
- ☐ Do you know how/where to pick up your accommodation keys?

What communication will I receive while I am on my regional or remote placement?

ALL students who are successful with a rural, remote, or interstate placement must complete the Emergency Contact Protocol form and submit it to the Placement Officer no later than 10 days prior to your placement commencement date.

All email communication with UniSC needs to include the Course Coordinator weekly, so if any concerns do arise, a staff member will be able to address the issue.

Prior to going on a regional or remote placement students need to inform family, friends, workplaces, and any social clubs well in advance of the proposed absence. Once a student has been allocated a rural, remote, or interstate placement no change to placement arrangements or location will be made without documentation to support such a request.

COMMUNICATION WHILST ON PLACEMENT

Students attending a regional, remote, interstate, or overseas placement should be adaptable, flexible, resourceful, and able to tolerate periods of solitude, be self-motivated, and complete their academic work independently. Students need to ensure that their personal information in Student Central is current, including mobile number, personal address and next of kin details.

It is essential that students keep in contact with the designated Course Coordinator and Placement Office at UniSC, for safety and assessment purposes. It is imperative that you notify your Placement Officer of your safe arrival at the placement venue or if at any time you face an unsafe situation.

EDUCATION STUDENTS

Education students on placement will be allocated a UniSC Professional Learning Liaison (PLL) during your PEx. They will be in contact via email in the first instance. Please contact them as the first port of call. If you cannot contact them, please call the placements office.

NURSING STUDENTS

Your Clinical Facilitator will be available via phone or email. You will receive correspondence from your Facilitator prior to placement and they will schedule regular catch up sessions with you, as well as go over strategies to support you remotely while you are on placement.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Australia's Rural and Remote Health: A social justice perspective
- CRANApplus clinical procedures for remote and rural practice
- Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association (CARPA) reference manual
- CARPA standard treatment manual
- Women's business manual
- Bridging cultures in Aboriginal health
- No Shame Job: a health career information guide for Indigenous students
- Opportunities as vast as the landscape: working in rural and remote health