



How to use this guide

This guide for international students at Swinburne Sarawak has been written especially for you - new students in Swinburne and students intending to study in Swinburne Sarawak. It contains information on pre-departure checklist, weather information, local language, orientation program, clubs and societies, cultural induction, shopping, food, leisure & adventure, visa regulations, visa & passport renewal, visa renewal & cancellation, banking arrangement, employment, counseling & student development, home stay program, buddy program, emergency & useful telephone numbers and addresses of relevant embassies and high commissions in Malaysia.

This guide has been written and given to you to help you adjust to a new environment and make your stay in Swinburne Sarawak a pleasant experience. Please take time to read and understand the information given.

Further advice and resources

If you find any difficulty in getting around or settling down, it might be helpful for you to seek the assistance of our staff from the Student Operations. Talk to your lecturers or make use of the free and confidential services within Swinburne Sarawak and learn how to adjust to your situation. Seek appropriate guidance and assistance early.



Pre-Departure Checklist

Before you plan your studies in Malaysia, here is a list of essential items and important things to bring or remember:

- Bring along your offer letter for immigration purpose to apply for a student visa (or entry clearance).
- Check that you have a valid passport (check that it is not just about to expire).
- If you are taking prescribed medicines, bring along a letter from your doctor explaining what they are for.
- Your airline ticket
- Your international driver's license if appropriate.
- Enough money (equivalent to RM500.00) for your basic needs during the first week and to open a bank account.
- You do not need to bring along your beddings or cooking utensils. You can purchase them upon your arrival.
- It is advisable that you make arrangement for your accommodation prior to your departure. You need to fill in accommodation booking form and make the payment (refer to accommodation guide on the website).
- You will need to fill in the arrival form stating your time and date of arrival so that airport pick up can be arranged for you upon arrival.



Getting a taxi

If you have not made any arrangement for airport pick up, you can take a taxi.

Taxi fares from the airport to Swinburne are in the range of RM20.00 – RM25.00.

There is a counter at the airport (located in front of the arrival hall) where coupons are sold for taxi service. Fares are standard.

However, the counter will be closed at midnight and if you arrive after midnight, you are to take a taxi from outside the arrival corridor. You will need to pay surcharge after mid night which is double the normal fares.

Taxi fares from the Swinburne to the city are in the range of RM10.00 – RM15.00.

You are advised NOT to take rides from strangers.

Weather information

Malaysia is a tropical country and it is generally warm throughout the year with temperatures ranging from 21 degrees to 32 degrees Celcius in the lowlands. However this can be as low as 16 degrees Celcius in the highlands. On a rainy day thunder and lightning often accompany the heavy downpour which normally lasts for an hour or two. The high humidity level at 80% throughout the year favours light and sweat-absorbent material like cotton for daily dressing.

Generally, Malaysia has two distinct seasons. The dry season occurs during the south-west monsoon May till September. The north-west monsoon brings the rainy season to the country during mid- November till March.



Currency

The Malaysian currency is the Ringgit or RM. The Ringgit comes in denominations of RM1, RM2, RM5, RM10, RM50, RM100. Coins are in 5 sen, 10 sen, 20 sen and 50 sen.

Malaysian Culture and Language

Malaysia is a country with multi cultures and multi ethnic groups. There are three predominant ethnic groups: Malays, Indians and Chinese along with other thnics: Orang Asli, Ibans, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, Kedazan Dusuns and others.

You will discover a wide range of customs and practices:

- Introductions are normally acknowledged with a handshake. In the Muslim culture, handshakes are generally exchanged between people of the same gender.
- The right hand is used when eating with the fingers and when giving or receiving objects.
- The right fore finger is not used for pointing at places, objects or persons. The thumb of the right hand with the four fingers folded under is the preferred usage.
- Public behaviour is especially important in Malaysian culture. Most Malaysians refrain from displaying affection (i.e. embracing or kissing in public). As a visitor it is appropriate for you to do the same.

The national language is the Malay language. English is used as a second language.



Some common words, phrases and expressions to help you get started:

Selamat datang ke Malaysia

Welcome to Malaysia

Apa khabar?

How are you?

Khabar baik.

I am fine.

Berapa harga ini?

How much is this?

Festivals

Malaysia is a land of many colourful festivals and celebrations.

New Years Eve is celebrated by the urban community throughout Malaysia with lively parties to usher in the New Year.

Each ethnic group celebrates different festivals:

- Chinese New Year – celebrated on the first day of the Chinese lunar calendar.
- Thaipusam – celebrated by the Hindus on the 10th month of the Hindu calendar
- Wesak Day – celebrated by Buddhists which marks three momentous events in Buddha's life: his birthday, enlightenment and achievement of Nirvana.
- Harvest Festival – celebrated by the Kadazans of Sabah in May with thanksgiving dedicated to the rice gods.
- Gawai – celebrated by the Dayak community of Sarawak from the 1st of June for a month to mark the end of the paddy harvesting season and the beginning of the new planting season.



- Hari Raya Aidil Fitri –celebrated by the muslims signifying the end of the fasting season (Ramadhan).
- Mooncake Festival – also known as mid-autumn festival which falls on the 15th day of the 8th Chinese lunar calendar.
- Deepavali – celebrated on the Hindu month of Kartik in October/November. It is also known as the Festival of Lights.
- Hari Raya Aidil Adha – celebrated by the Muslims on the tenth day of the last month of the Muslim calendar. It marks the conclusion of the annual pilgrimage to the Holy city of Mecca.

Student Orientation Program

The orientation program is to enable new students to get to know other students and staff as well as their new learning environment. The program includes a city tour where new students are taken to places of interest and shown where facilities such as banks and hospitals are located.

Academic Orientation Program

This program is to enable new students to have a better understanding of the course that they are going to undertake.

Clubs and Societies

There are many clubs and societies for students to choose from depending on their interests and what they want to do in their leisure time. During the orientation program, the various clubs and societies will showcase their activities to attract new members. During this time, new students are encouraged to register to join clubs of their choice.



There are 35 clubs in the Swinburne Sarawak, namely:

Akido Club	Photomedia & Design Club
Anime & Manga Society	Ping Pong Club
Badminton Club	Robotics & Automation Club
Basketball Club	Rotaract Club
Bowling Club	Rugby Club
Choir Club	Soo Bahk Do Club
Cookery Club	Hostel Residential Club
CPA Australia Student	International Student Club
Charter	Swimming Club
Dancesport Club	Taekwando Club
Debaters' Club	Tennis Club
Drama Club	Yoga Club
Explorers' Club	Young Entrepreneur's Club
Fishing Club	Hapkido Club
Football Club	Volleyball Club
Japanese Language Club	Red Crescent Society
Leo Club	Wushu Club
Music Club	Green Club



Swinburne Student Council

The Swinburne Sarawak Student Council was established in December 2000. The council is made up of elected student representatives with the following objectives:

- To promote a co-operative spirit and sense of solidarity amongst the council and clubs & societies
- To promote equal opportunity and affirmative action in policies and activities
- To provide a link between the council, students' clubs & societies, the community and the university
- To co-operate with other organizations having the same purpose(s) in whole or in part
- To coordinate student representation on all university's decision-making bodies

Cultural Induction

Cultural induction is part of an orientation program which all new national and international students go through. This is a session on getting to know the local culture while at the same time international students from the various countries share information about their own culture. Through information and knowledge sharing, new students learn to understand and respect the feelings and culture of others. Cultural induction is also about learning to adjust to the new culture of the University and the city.

Communal living in an international environment requires understanding, respect and tolerance of one another. Students need to feel safe and respected. The University organizes various social activities for all students so that they can interact and have fun in or outside campus.



Shopping

There are a number of shopping complexes and malls in Kuching city. The biggest and nearest shopping mall is *The Spring* where you can find almost anything from food, electrical items, computers and accessories, cosmetics, apparel, shoes, bags, belts, and groceries. *The Spring* is just opposite the University on the other side of the main road but traffic is heavy and you are especially advised to cross using the overhead bridge nearby.

Food

Malaysian cuisines are delicious and tasty. You can have Chinese, Malay or Indian food very easily. If you prefer spicy food, you can go for the Indian food. Food are easily available at most eating outlets in town or near the University. Food outlets around the University are within walking distance. You can have your choice of various hawker foods in the University canteen, too.

Muslim students can find *halal* food in food stalls or outlets operated by Malays or Indian muslims while most Chinese food stalls sell *non halal* food. All food sold in food courts in shopping malls are *halal*.

Western and Asian food are also available at *The Spring* and at other places in town. A wide choice of western, oriental and fusion food are available at Kenny Rogers, Star Bucks, Manhattan Fish Market and Secret Recipe – all at *The Spring*.



Illicit Drugs

Malaysia imposes a mandatory death penalty for convicted drug traffickers.

Leisure & Adventure

Students can go to the Star Cineplex and The Riverside Cineplex for movies. There are a number of places for the young people in the city where they can dine or drink. Places like Grappa, SOHO, Mojo, Tom's and Tao are a favourite but prices are rather high.

For those who seek adventure, there are a number of activities available for week-ends or short breaks. National parks like the Bako National Park and Gunung Gading provide discovery and adventure opportunities like jungle trekking or simply smelling the fresh air and admiring nature.

Sematan which is an hour drive from Kuching city is quite popular for scuba diving. During the mid semester break or a long week end, Pulau Sipadan in Sabah is a diving heaven for those who love the under water world and the adventure of scuba diving. Students ought to be aware of the dangers associated with diving.

The Sarawak River Cruise offers packages for parties and other celebrations. Student Services Unit can organize parties for international students on board the cruise.

Student Visa Regulations

Under the Malaysian Government Legislation, the enrollment of international students is governed by the Immigration Regulations 1963.



As an international student you can enter the country on a student pass provided:

1. you have accepted an offer for a full time course of study at a public or private college or university approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs
2. you have the financial capability to meet course fees and living expenses
3. you do not intend to work in Malaysia and you must prepare to leave the country once you complete your studies.

International Deposit

An international deposit is required for the issuance of student visa as required under Regulation 18 of the Immigration Regulations 1963.

Visa Renewal/extension

1. For the purpose of visa renewal or extension, you need to submit your passport and minimum payment of RM60.00 (depending on your country) at least one month before the visa expires, to the officer in charge of international students support services.
2. If you fail to demonstrate your academic capability, you may not be able to have your visa renewed or extended.



Visa Cancellation

1. You are required to cancel your Malaysia student visa when you are in the following situation:
 - You withdraw from the course
 - You wish to transfer to another institution
 - You have completed the course
 - You obtain a work permit
2. Documents necessary for cancellation:
 - Passport
 - Flight itinerary to leave Kuching & Malaysia
 - New Institution/ College Offer Letter (for student transferred to other institution)
 - Completed Swinburne withdrawal and bank details form.

Refund of international deposit is allowed **ONLY** after the student visa cancellation is processed.

Passport Renewal

1. Passport renewal is the responsibility of the passport holder (student). The University will not be subjected to any charges incurred in the procedure.
2. You are advised to renew your passport before your student visa expires. Passport renewal can be done at the Consulate or Embassy in Malaysia.
3. Documents needed for passport renewal:
 - Student Confirmation Letter from University
 - Current passport
 - Fee as imposed by Embassy



Banking Arrangement

1. All banking arrangement with other banks except RHB Simpang Tiga Branch, require the customer to have at least a valid stay/visa for 12 months in Kuching, Sarawak. Therefore, it is not advisable for a student to open a savings account before the student visa is granted.
2. To open an account with RHB Simpang Tiga, you may submit your application and forward it to the bank officer. Upon approval, you may use the services provided.
3. Documents needed for opening a savings account:
 - Student Confirmation Letter from University
 - Passport
 - Minimum amount of RM250.00

Employment

1. Under the new immigration rule & regulation, international students are allowed to work part-time. Part time jobs are only allowed during the semester break. A student can work up to a maximum of 21 hours per week.
2. Requirements to work part-time:
 - Excellent attendance
 - Pass all subjects enrolled in the last semester.
 - Offer Letter by the employer
 - You are a second year student
 - A recommendation from your International Student Executive/Student Services Unit



3. Description of job/ work allowed by the Immigration
 - Fuel/ petrol attendant
 - Waiter/ waitress
 - Sales assistant
 - Shop assistant
4. Requirements to work full-time:
 - Completed course of program
 - Obtained an employment offer letter
 - Work permit issuance and documentation agreed by employer
 - Student visa to be cancelled
5. Industrial Based Learning (IBL)/Internship:
 1. An international student can undertake Industrial Based Learning/Industrial Training/Internship for a duration of 6-12 months.
 2. Students undergoing IBL/Industrial Training/Internship are required to inform the International Student Executive, Student Services Unit for record purposes.

Counseling & Development

Moving to a new country can be a confusing and difficult process, especially when commencing studies at University. Culture shock is not uncommon especially for a student who had just arrived in a different country for the first time. Culture shock can be experienced in different ways and in differing degrees for each person. Some of the symptoms of culture shock can be:

- Feeling lonely
- Feeling isolated
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Hostility towards other cultures



- Depression
- Disorientation

If students experience any of these symptoms, Swinburne Sarawak has a number of programs and services to help make their transition to the country and culture smoother.

There are many people in the University whom you can turn for support. These may include your lecturers, International Student Services Support Officer, counselor or any other member of staff. They will be able to put you in touch with someone who can offer more specialist help if necessary.

Counseling Services

The University Counseling Services is a free and confidential service available to all students and members of the staff.

Counseling offers an opportunity to talk in confidence about issues that concern you. These issues may include anxiety, depression, family concerns, difficulty in adjusting to a new life and environment, study related issues, relationship issues, aggressive and violent behaviour, suicidal tendencies, worries about health etc.

By talking through these issues and difficulties with a counselor, you may understand your situation better and develop alternative ways of dealing with the situation.

We are happy to talk over any issues with you. You can make an appointment to see a counselor or you can walk in and you may be attended to by an available counselor.



Appointment for counseling service

Appointments can be made at the Student Administration Reception counter during the following hours on week-days:
8.30 am – 12.00 noon and 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm

Confidentiality

The counseling service is confidential. This means that anything discussed with the counselor will not be disclosed to any other parties except when a referral is necessary because you may be at risk to yourself or to others. Disclosure and referral may be with or without your consent if there is a good reason to believe that you or others are at risk and you are unable to take responsibility for your actions.

Student Development

The counselors organize and conduct self development programs for all students. These programs include time management, preparation for examination, goal setting and personal grooming.

Homestay Program

Swinburne Sarawak also provides Homestay Program for international students. The Home stay program is aimed at giving an opportunity for international students to experience the life of a local family by staying with the family for short period over week-ends or the mid semester break.

Please contact the Student Services Unit for more information and assistance.



Buddy Program

Swinburne Sarawak understands that crossing borders and cultures to pursue your education can be confusing and challenging. To ease your transition, we introduce you to our Swinburne Sarawak Buddy Program (SSBP), a program in which we pair you with a buddy who will help you in your adjustment to campus and the Malaysian culture during your first semester.

The Buddy Program in Swinburne Sarawak will give new international students a positive start to their studies. We want to involve the students, to give them a sense of belonging and to lay a foundation for academic and social community.

Useful and Important Telephone Numbers

The following telephone numbers may be useful to you:

Central Police Station	082-241 222
Mobile Police Vehicle	082-244 444
Kuching International Airport	082-454 242
Malaysia Airline System [MAS] Office	082-246 622 / 1300 883 000
Taxi Station	082-341 818
Visitors' Information Centre Kuching	082-410 944 / 450 944
Air Asia Office	082-283 222
Sarawak Cultural Village	082-846 411
Emergency (Ambulance/Police)	999
Fire	994



Addresses of relevant foreign embassies & high commissions in Malaysia

Australia

Australian High Commission

<http://www.australia.org.my/>

6 Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, 50450 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 03-21465555 Fax: 03 21415773

Bangladesh

High Commission for the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Block-1, Lorong Damai 7, Jalan Damai,

55000 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 03 21487940 Fax: 03 21413381

Brunei

High Commission of Brunei Darussalam

19th Floor, Menara Tan&Tan, 207 Jalan Tun Razak,

50400 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 0321612800 Fax: 03 21631302

Canada

Canadian High Commission

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/kualalumpur/>

17th Floor, Menara Tan & Tan,

207 Jalan Tun Razak,

50400 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03 2718 3333, Fax: 03 2718 3376

China

Embassy of the People's Republic of China

<http://my.china-embassy.org/>

229 Jalan Ampang,

50450 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03 2142 8495 , Fax: 03 2141 4552



Colombia

Embassy of the Republic of Colombia
19A-26-1, Level 26, UOA Centre, 19,
Jalan Pinang,
50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2164 5488, 03 2164 5489

Egypt

Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
28 Lingkungan U Thant, Off Jalan U Thant,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4256 8184, 03 4256 8745

Fiji

High Commission of the Republic of the Fiji Islands
Level 2, Menara Chan, 138 Jalan Ampang,
50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2732 3335, 03 2732 1937, 03 2732 1939

India

Indian High Commission
<http://www.indianhighcommission.com.my/>
2 Jalan Taman Duta, Off Jalan Duta,
50480 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2093 3504, Fax: 03 2093 3507

Indonesia

Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
<http://www.kbrikl.org.my/>
233 Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 242 1354, 03 242 1151, 03 241 5228



Iran

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
1 Lorong U Thant Satu, Off Jalan U Thant,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4251 4824, 03 4251 4830 (Visa Section)

Iraq

Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
2 Jalan Langgak Golf, Off Jalan Tun Razak,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2148 0555, 03 2148 0650, 03 2148 0721

Jordan

Embassy of Jordan
2 Jalan Kedondong, Off Jalan Ampang Hilir,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4252 1268, 03-4252 8549

Kenya

High Commission of Kenya
7A Gerbang Ampang Hilir,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4257 2431

Kuwait

Embassy of the State of Kuwait
229 Jalan Tun Razak,
50400 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2141 0033

Mauritius

High Commission of Mauritius
14th Floor, Bangunan Angkasa Raya, Jalan Ampang
50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2141 1870, 03 2141 1126



Myanmar

Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
10 Jalan Mengkuang, Off Jalan Ru,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4256 0280, 03 4257 0680

Nigeria

High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
85 Jalan Ampang Hilir,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4251 7843, 03 4251 8512

Oman

Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman
6 Jalan Langgak Golf, Off Jalan Tun Razak,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2145 2827, 2145 2829

Pakistan

High Commission for Pakistan
132 Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2161 8877, Fax: 2164 5958

Palestine

Embassy of the State of Palestine
63, Jalan U Thant, 55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 456 8905, 03 456 8906

Saudi Arabia

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
4th Floor, Wisma Chinese Chamber, 258 Jalan Ampang,
50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4257 9825, Fax: 03 4257 8751



Singapore

High Commission of the Republic of Singapore

<http://www.gov.sg/mfa/kl/>

209 Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03 2161 6277, 03 2161 6404, 03 2161 6506

South Africa

High Commission of the Republic of South Africa

<http://www.afrikaselatan.com/>

12 Lorong Titiwangsa 12, Taman Tasik Titiwangsa,

53200 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03 4026 5700, 03 4024 4456

Sri Lanka

High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

116 Jalan Damai, Off Jalan Ampang,

55000 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03 2161 2199, 03 2161 2206

Sudan

Embassy of the Republic of Sudan

1 Persiaran Ampang, Off Jalan Ru,

55000 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 03 4256 9104, 03 421 6054, 4252 5631

Turkey

Embassy of the Republic of Turkey

118 Jalan U Thant, 55000 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03 4257 2225, 03 4257 2226



United Arab Emirates UAE

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
1 Gerbang Ampang Hilir, Off Persiaran Ampang Hilir,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4253 5221, 03 4253 5420

United States of America USA, US, American, Amerika

Embassy of the United States of America
<http://malaysia.usembassy.gov/>
376 Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 2168 5000, Fax: 03 2148 5801

Vietnam

Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
4 Persiaran Stonor, 50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 248 4036 (Visa), 03 248 4534 (Protocol), 03 248 4692
(Commercial)

Yemen

Embassy of the Republic of Yemen
6 Jalan Kedondong, Off Jalan Ampang Hilir,
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03 4251 1793, 03 4252 2481

Zimbabwe

High Commission of the Republic of Zimbabwe
124 Jalan Sembilan, Taman Ampang Utama,
68000 Ampang
Tel: 03 451 6779, 03 451 6782