

Talking with Aussies

STUDENT LIFE - INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

Position Description

Volunteer

Introduction:

Talking with Aussies is a program for international students to meet with local members of the community for language and cultural exchange. Each volunteer is linked with an individual student who they will meet with on a regular basis.

Students:

- Are international students (Undergraduate and Postgraduate) enrolled at the University of Adelaide.
- Have English as a second or subsequent language.
- Have met the university's requirements with regard to the standard of English required for entry to their particular program.
- Come from a large range of language and cultural backgrounds.

Aims:

- To provide students with the opportunity for regular practice of conversational English.
- To provide students with a link with the local community.

Responsibilities:

- To meet with students on a regular basis (approximately one hour per week).
- To foster students' language development for example, in communicating with confidence, pronunciation, and Aussie slang. *This will be of a general nature; the program is not a tutoring or editing service.*
- To engage in a range of conversation topics which may help the student become more familiar with local customs and culture.

Skills and Knowledge:

- An interest in relating to international students
- An awareness of, and sensitivity to, cross-cultural issues
- A good standard of spoken English
- A clear speaking voice and good listening skills

Personal Attributes:

- Ability to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and age groups.
- Capacity to be flexible and respond to students' individual situations
- A patient, friendly manner
- A sensitivity to what others are communicating, verbally and non-verbally
- A respect for others and an ability to judge the appropriate level of formality and involvement appropriate in a given situation
- An ability to set and maintain reasonable boundaries in response to student demands
- An ability to follow through a negotiated commitment

*** NOTE: The program does not run for any particular time span; it is terminated, for a particular pair, by mutual agreement or when either volunteer or student feels it has run its course

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Special Requirements:

- Volunteers need to be aware of, and respect, the vulnerability of students studying in a foreign country without family support.
- Volunteers also need to be aware of their own vulnerability and seek to maintain their own and the student's safety, and perception of safety, at all times. This has implications for such things as the timing and location of meetings. Particularly in the initial stages, these are best held on or near the University campus.
- It is important to avoid giving advice in areas requiring specialist knowledge and involving legal implications (e.g. visa requirements)
- While not employed by the University, volunteers are officially representing the University and so are expected to present and behave in ways which accord with the University's standing in the community

Development:

- Volunteers are provided with an initial, individual introduction to the program.
- Four gatherings of volunteers are held each year during the University breaks.
 - These gatherings provide a guest speaker to inform volunteers about resources and services available at the University or in the community.
 - There is also the opportunity at these gatherings for volunteers to share their experiences, challenges, insights and ideas relating to their work with their students.
 - Volunteers unable to attend these gatherings are encouraged to read the reports sent out by email following the gatherings.
- The coordinator and administrator are available for consultation on specific issues as they arise.

Volunteers' Insurance Cover: Volunteers up to 85 years of age receive cover.

<p>Program Coordinator Jane Turner Goldsmith Student Life – International Student Support twa@adelaide.edu.au</p>	<p>Program Administrator Student Life – International Student Support iss@adelaide.edu.au 8313 4828</p>
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Website: <https://international.adelaide.edu.au/life-on-campus/social-programs-clubs-sports/talking-with-aussies>