

ORTWHA's University Open Day Survival Guide

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Chances are if you're in Year 11 or 12 this year, you've already heard our careers team talk to death about it, but it bears repeating: If you're thinking of going to university, or pursue any kind of tertiary education, you need to attend an open day. Multiple even! It's the easiest way to experience the campus, not only in terms of what courses they provide, but also the setting and community. You get the chance to talk to all kinds of students and faculty to see if it's the place for you. This isn't even mentioning the food and fun activities they hold on the day!

That being said, getting to all of this can be an absolute pain. From the crowds and traffic to the tight timetables and sprints across campus, these universities don't make it easy for you to make the most of your day there. Take it from me, someone who not only attended *three* different open days across *four* campuses, but also multiple tours, course seminars, work showcases, and one too many over-priced food stalls. It's a *lot* to juggle. So, whether you've been to one before, or looking to avoid some first time pitfalls, allow me to take you through the dos and don'ts of university open days.

THE IDEAL TRAVEL PACK

- *Backpack/reasonably sized bag*
- *Campus maps (digital or physical)*
- *Packed lunch*
- *Notepad and pen*
- *Digital calendar/event book*
- *Water bottle*
- *Myki/train card*

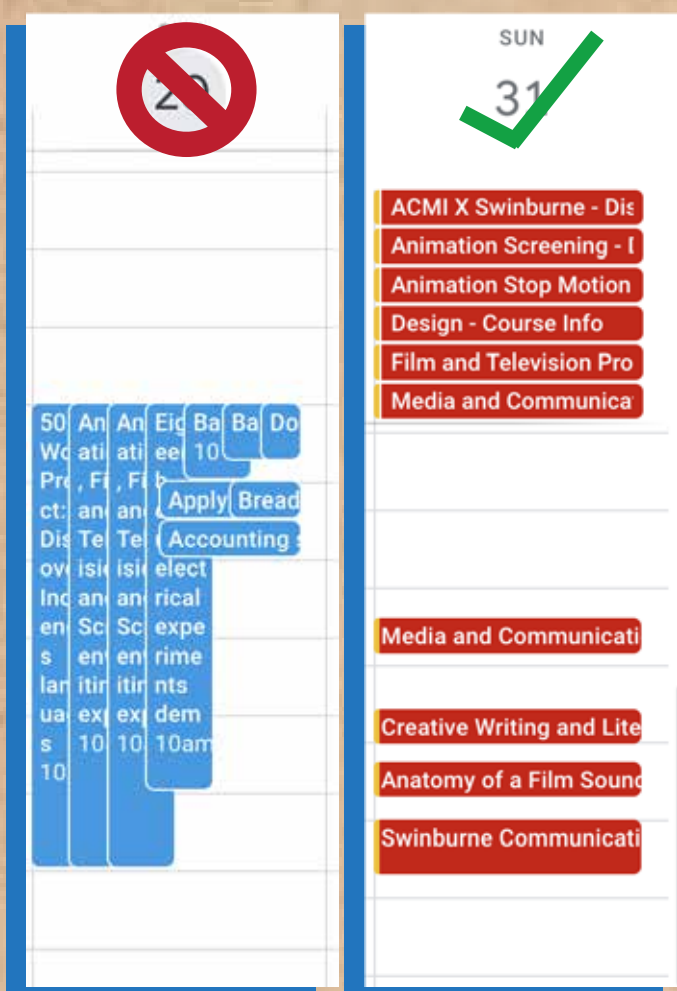


1. Research Universities Online

Fairly obvious, but the first thing you should do is actually look into what universities you plan to attend. Most universities have a wealth of information on their websites, including detailed descriptions of each undergraduate courses they provide on their website, as well as any entry requirements or course fees. Be sure to have a look through some interesting options to help you decide what you'd like to learn about on your open day.

More importantly for this guide, however, is access to Open Day information, including dates and registration. While it may seem pointless, registering gives you access to a full list of the events and activities on offer. Keep in mind that while they'll occur across July through August, some Open Days will overlap with each other. As such, it's worth putting thought into which universities will take the highest priority for your needs, and which have additional events you can attend later in the year.

2. Schedule Your Events in a Calendar



After you've had a look at some of the events on offer, its time to plan out your visits. Some universities allow you to create event timetables to export to your virtual calendar, which can be convenient as it is *messy*. Point of advice, export every event *except* the all-day exhibits, then add them afterwards as either untimed events (like right) or when you think would be convenient for you to drop in and look.

But you might ask, is it really worthwhile setting up a calendar, especially when you're going to be moving around so much and likely changing plans? I don't know why you'd question my infinite wisdom, but yes, it is worthwhile. Last year, I found putting everything in the calendar made me realise that I wouldn't have time to see everything. In saying that, your best option is to select a few key seminars or timely events across the day, leaving room for lunch, a rest, or to explore any all day exhibits.

3. Bring Your Own Lunch

Now look, I've been making a point of getting the most out of your visit to campus, and food is definitely no exception. Many of the universities I've visited offer a wide array of independent food vendors that are at least worth looking into. Hell, one of my favourite moments on my University of Melbourne tour was eating from **Carte Crepes!** But you also have to remember, crepes are not all you're here for; and if you have a whole list of talks or events to get to on the day, it's not a great idea for you to be waiting too long for your food. This is especially the case for food trucks, which often have the largest crowds and preparation time. While the cooks can tell you when your food might be ready, they can't guarantee any specific time while working on fifteen orders at once! I walked in late to one of my panels after waiting for truck food, and believe me, you do not want to be the idiot chomping on overpriced nachos on the floor.



Go somewhere to eat if it's cheap and you have a lot of time between events, otherwise just bring a sandwich for a quick bite.

4. Plan Out Your Public Transport Route

When it comes to each of the major universities, transport can range from being incredibly simple and quick to a task of Sisyphean proportions. I'll say out front that you shouldn't rely on driving to each campus, as getting a parking spot can be an absolute nightmare in the city. Instead, focus all your travel into public transport, and as most of Victoria's universities are traversed through the Flinders train line, you'll be specifically looking into what trams you need to take afterwards. Swinburne, as well as the two Melbourne and RMIT city campuses, aren't direct from the Flinders line.



Before hopping off the platform at Flinders Street, make sure you know the tram number that will take you to your campus, as well as what time they leave and an idea of what direction they'll be going in. This seems like reasonable thinking, but you'd be surprised at the number of times my trips into the city with friends have turned into disasters because none of us looked at a tram schedule.

The main exception to this is Monash's Clayton campus, which I implore you, *make sure you can drive there*. While Monash does offer shuttle buses from Frankston Station and other Monash campuses, its location out in Mornington makes using regular public transport a complete headache. In short, make sure you know what routes you'll be taking, and keep some sort of map on you to ensure you get there on time.

5. Ask Questions!

This is probably the advice you'll see most often when it comes to Open Day guides. And they're absolutely right to include this, especially when it's so *easily* forgotten. Seeing the sights of the campus is nice and all (I won't lie, the architecture at even the worst university campuses are *insane*), but there's absolutely no point if you don't learn what you need to about the place. Whether you're attending a seminar, on a tour, in the weeds of faculty expos, or on the toilet (okay maybe not the toilet), you should be asking people questions. The faculty there will be more than happy to tell you what's what. But if you're anything like the complete sweaty, awkward mess I was last year and have no idea what to ask, here's some starters:

"Hi, can you tell me what this is about?"

"Is there anything you tell me about this course?"

"What do the work requirements/timeline for this subject look like?"

"What would I need to succeed in this course?"

"Are there any scholarships offered from this faculty/college?"

"How does the course structure here work?"

UNIVERSITY HOTSPOTS: University of Melbourne



Open Day on August 20th across all campuses

The Two City Campuses

UniMelb's art-based campus is located near the NGV in Southbank, and is about 20 minutes from the core Parkville campus. If you're interested in courses at both, or just to look at some of the studio facilities, I'd recommend splitting your day up between the two at around lunch.

Best Food Spot at Uni

As stated earlier, *Carte Crepes* is an absolute requirement during any visit to UniMelb. I'd personally recommend getting a Lemon and Sugar crepe for \$3.80, or the Honey, Banana and Cinnamon for \$7.

Public Transport

You're in Melbourne, the big CBD. There's public transport everywhere, from buses to trains and trams. If you need to get to another campus, or need to make your way home, there's plenty of options besides walking (and even then, most things are close enough to do so).

Notable Locations

The Parkville campus is host to a wide array of facilities for sports and recreation, such as the Sports Precinct at Tin Alley. The central University Oval is surrounded by a cavalcade of specialised courts, a sports centre and gym, not to mention their access to various fitness programs. It's also impossible to miss the Old Quadrangle, but make sure to step indoors for a look at one of the University's many gallery spaces!

Libraries

Not including the nearby City Library and State Library Victoria, UniMelb also has the *Baillieu Library* at the Parkville campus, with a wide collection of research books in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Additionally, the *Architecture, Building and Planning Library* is also located in the Melbourne School of Design building at Parkville, along with 10 other libraries off-campus accessible to students.



Accommodation/Student Living Tours

UniMelb provides 3 accommodations on campus, along with an additional 11 colleges; all of which are open for drop in tours for most of the open day. The main difference between the two residences is that the university accommodations are tailored to Melbourne students exclusively as hotel rooms, whereas the colleges have more shared facilities. College-wise, I'd recommend looking into *Ormond College*, which has a wide variety of community facilities and that Hogwarts dining hall you've maybe dreamt about for about \$34,387 annually.



Monash University

Open Day on August 5th at Caulfield and Peninsula, 6th for Clayton, 20th for Parkville

Campuses

Unlike UniMelb, Monash has its campuses in very separate locations. With Clayton as the central hub for the Arts and Sciences, Caulfield's campus is primarily centred around Art and Design, Parkville on Biomed and Health, while Peninsula's is on Nursing, Business and Education.

Libraries

Monash has 8 libraries that are accessible to all students, with the *Matheson Library* for humanities, the *Law Library* and the *Hargrave-Andrew Library* for science and technology being located at the Clayton campus. Not only that, but 2 libraries are located at the institute's Malaysian and Indonesian campuses overseas.



Notable Locations

The highlight of the Peninsula campus is one that many students might be familiar with: the George Jenkins Theatre, a 426-seat hall-host to a variety of plays, events, and presentations (including our Awards Night!). Looking over at Caulfield, the Monash University Museum of Art is host to a wide array of exhibitions, from student works to community collaborations. At Parkville, the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MIPS) is one of the leading pharmacy research institutes in the world, and runs a variety of projects into various areas of medicine. Finally, Clayton's expansive gardens are a beacon of flora that provide a calming walk through nature.



Public Transport

As stated earlier, transport to Monash is a bit tricky. Buses are most common across all campuses, with shuttle buses sent to Clayton between each one. However, it's usually easier to get a train for the Caulfield or Parkville campuses.

Best Food Spot at Uni

Monash has a great variety of restaurants across each of their campuses, from the *Upper Deck Cafe* in Peninsula, to *Sip n' Bite Kebabs* in Caulfield. However, if you're looking for the most bizarre choice for the middle of winter, you can't go wrong for *Neptune's Seafood Catch*. For \$12, you can get yourself a Burger Box with salad, and a lot of strange looks for eating at a Fish and Chips shop in August.

Accommodation/Student Living Tours

Out of all the institutions listed here today, Monash is the most reliant on off-campus accommodation, with only two facilities each at Peninsula and Clayton. These come in the form of the campus's Residential Village and Studio Apartments; the former at Clayton acting as more of a college experience while Peninsula's takes on a shared housing environment. The cheapest standard room option for both hangs around the \$265-280 weekly range. Meanwhile, the studio apartments are all \$333.20 per week. Of course, all bills are covered in the weekly fee across all accommodation options.



Swinburne University of Technology

Open Day on July 30th

Best Food Spots at Uni

Being so close to Glenferrie Rd in Hawthorn, there's certainly a lot of great food spots off campus. That doesn't stop them from having places to eat on campus however, with *Cafe Gomez* being of particular interest. Their food isn't too expensive either, with a large coffee costing \$4.50, or a combo with breakfast for \$8.50.

Campuses

Swinburne's main campus (and the focus of the Open Day) is very much at Hawthorn, however there's two additional campuses in Victoria: Croydon, focused on trades training and youth apprenticeships, and Wantirna, based around practical learning. The institute has also made a home in Malaysia for any students looking to study abroad.

Libraries

Swinburne has 3 libraries across its Hawthorn, Croydon, and Wantirna campuses, each with shared access to a wide, online catalogue. Additionally, they also offer late access to computers through LateLab, with the Hawthorn campus's being available 24/7.



Public Transport

Swinburne is a very special case for public transport, as not only can you get to the campus by bus, train, or tram, but the Glenferrie train station in particular spits you out straight inside the campus. Greatly beneficial for extremely late arrivals.

Recommended Event

Unfortunately, my favourite seminar last year (Anatomy of a Film Soundtrack w Dan Golding) won't see a return this year, but there's still plenty of cool events to see. Such as the School of Design's GradX showcase in AMDC 507/509, featuring what many of the graduating students have been working on in the course and on the job, and the Student Films screenings in 24G103.

Accommodation/Student Living Tours

While not as expansive as other institutions (Hawthorn's campus was once a local TAFE centre after all), Swinburne still offers students accommodation on campus. Starting with college rooms at \$310 a week, while these may be single bedroom living spaces, the cost includes both bills and the social areas of the college. Stepping up from that, the shared apartment facilities have a range of bedroom sizes, with the double-bedroom starting from \$299 per week including bills. Finally, the studio apartments allow you to live by yourself with bathroom and kitchen for \$358 per week.



Final Disclaimer

As of July 26th 2023, the National Tertiary Education Union of Victoria (NTEU Vic) have declared protests for University Open Days, calling out unfair work and pay conditions for staff (especially on Open Days!). These will mainly be from staff at Monash, Melbourne, La Trobe, Victoria, Swinburne, RMIT, and Victoria. As such, please keep in mind that some events may not run ahead as planned, and there'll be some transport congestion.