



# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

## Guidelines for IFP Students

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The aim of the International Friendship programme is to introduce International Students to local individuals and families for the purpose of developing cross-cultural friendships.

### Why should I become involved

The benefits of joining the IFP are numerous. Making contact with local families gives you a social and cultural outlet that you would normally have in your own country. It can help you to adjust to life in Australia and to broaden your experience. Through the IFP, students get to experience real Aussie lifestyles and culture firsthand. It may also provide you with an opportunity to improve your English or to see parts of the country you would otherwise miss.

Local people join the programme for a variety of reasons. It may be that they have travelled or intend to travel overseas, they may be learning a new language or that they want to expose their children to a different culture. These are some other ways that you can contribute to the friendship.

### How does the IFP work

Once we have received and processed your application we will send you a letter confirming your application and welcoming you to the program. We then search our database to find a local person/family to introduce you to. We call these people 'Friends'. You will then be invited to attend an Introduction Night where you will be introduced to your 'Friend'. Sometimes finding a suitable 'Friend' takes time and we appreciate your patience.

Once you have been introduced it will be up to you and your friend to organise a time and place to meet. Let your family know what your interests and hobbies are and this will help them to plan activities that you will genuinely enjoy together.

Several times during the year, we also organize joint social functions for all members of the IFP. These are a great opportunity to get to know others in the program and to have a great time in our special multicultural community.

### What would I do with my Australian friend

The types of activities you and your friend do will depend on your interests. You may go to their family home for a meal, meet for a coffee, go to the movies, go camping or bushwalking, play a game of sport or attend church together. The options are endless, so be sure to let your friend know what your interests are so that you can choose activities you will both enjoy.

### What is expected of IFP members

Managing the IFP requires considerable time and effort from a lot of people. It is because of this that we expect people joining the program to be committed to making the most of it. As a member we would expect you to:

- try to meet with your friend at least **three** times over a semester

- respond promptly to your friend's attempts to contact you and keep promises to meet. It is OK if you are unable to accept an invitation but it is important to make this clear to your friend and to make alternative arrangements
- respect the culture and beliefs of your friend. Expect and accept that there will be some cultural differences and that some will be easier for you to adjust to than others. Try exploring these differences with your friend as a way of learning about each other and broadening the cross-cultural experience
- not to ask your friend for money or take your serious personal, academic problems to them. Naturally your friend will be concerned about you but there are staff at USQ who are trained to assist you in these ways
- let the IFP Coordinator know if you are having any problems with your friend, if you are no longer interested in being in the program or if you have changed your contact details
- be yourself and have fun!

### **How do I join the IFP**

If you have read through the guidelines thoroughly and would like to be part of the program, please complete and sign the application form available at

<http://www.usq.edu.au/studentservices/international/livexpense/ifp.htm>:

Please note: it is our policy not to process unsigned application forms.