

## Academics

As I am a BTM student, I chose to take courses relevant to my program while at Monash University. At Monash courses/classes, as we know them as uOttawa, are referred to as “units”; and by “course” people are referring to your program/degree.

During my exchange, I was required to take courses totalling 30 ECTs. At Monash this meant 4 units/courses. At uOttawa, 30 ECTs are 5 courses. Therefore, classes at Monash have a heavier workload especially in assignments and projects.

## My Weekly Schedule

29/07/2024 - 04/08/2024					
	29/7 (Mon)	30/7 (Tue)	31/7 (Wed)	1/8 (Thu)	2/8 (Fri)
8:00 AM					
9:00 AM					
10:00 AM					
11:00 AM					
12:00 PM					
1:00 PM					
2:00 PM					
3:00 PM					
4:00 PM					
5:00 PM					
6:00 PM					
7:00 PM					
8:00 PM					
9:00 PM					

Green: lecture/workshop; blue: tutorial/applied; purple: studio. Note that there’s no real difference between a studio and an applied session. **This weekly view excludes FIT 3138’s lecture which was asynchronous and pre-recorded.**

## Courses/Units

### FIT 3138 – Real time enterprise systems (flexible)

Lecture: Asynchronous lectures (2 hours) (online-only) (pre-recorded)

Applied/Studio: 1 session per week (2 hours) (optional)

### **FIT 2094 – Databases**

Lecture:

- Pre-workshop textbook reading/quizzes (1-2 hours) (mandatory) (not graded)
- 1 workshop/lecture per week (2 hours) (in-person) (recorded)

Applied/Studio: 1 session per week (2 hours) (mandatory)

### **FIT 3179 – Data visualisation**

Lecture:

- 2-4 pre-workshop videos (20-30 minutes)
- 1 workshop/lecture per week (2 hours) (in-person) (not recorded)

Applied/Studio: 1 session per week (2 hours) (mandatory)

### **BEX 3411 – Building start-ups with impact**

Lecture: 1 workshop per week (3 hours) (in-person) (not recorded)

### **Additional unit/course information**

**Hurdle:** Be sure to understand the meaning of [hurdle](#) components, for example in-semester task hurdles, exams hurdles. Passing all hurdles are mandatory, in order to pass a unit/course. Some units have no hurdle requirements.

**Late submissions:** Assignment deadlines are a bit flexible at Monash University. A 5% penalty is applied for each day late, up to a maximum of 7 days (=35% penalty). Also, students can apply for a 2-day extension for up to 1 assignment per unit, without needing to upload supporting documents.

**In-semester assignments:** I found in-semester assignments (each varying between 20-40% of the total grade) to have a heavier workload than uOttawa. Some of these assignments a part of the in-semester hurdle.

**Final exam:** Monash uses a purpose-built system to proctor final exams. Microphones (of headsets) and cameras must be turned on, and screens must be always shared during exams. You may be required to sit the exam in-person, or from home; both scenarios would use this same web-based software.

**Course/unit selection:** Exchange students choose up to 8 units/courses, selected in the intake application (Monash's MyApp). Actual section and timing selection (and ranking) is done on Allocate+ during preference entry period. Timetables can be modified up to week 2 of studies. Monash Abroad does not allow overloading (i.e. taking more than 4 units/courses).

## The Timeline

### **Monash MyApp (intake application portal):** Mid-March

While uOttawa nominated me, Monash University still required me to apply for my exchange term through this portal. In this application, I had to include my 6-8 preferred units at Monash, which I researched using [Monash's Handbook](#). As most of my units were in the Faculty of IT, they had to be assessed for prerequisites. This would also be a good time to seek approval for those units/courses from Telfer's Exchange Department.

I had to include the following documents:

- Scanned passport
- Official transcript (unofficial transcript won't work)
- A document that matches Monash's required prerequisites with equivalent courses taken at uOttawa

### **On-campus residence application:** Early-April

Monash Abroad did not inform me about the residence application portal's opening date and I ended up applying around April 9<sup>th</sup>. As a result, the rooms filled up quickly and I was waitlisted.

[This link](#) (hoping that it is maintained and updated in future semesters) should be a good reference point for exchange students.

### **Offer letter:** Mid-April

I had to sign my offer letter and purchase my OSHC. Once this is complete and Monash verifies it, they will send the Confirmation of Enrollment (CoE). You must receive your CoE before applying for student visa.

### **Confirmation of Enrollment (CoE) received:** Apr 24, 2024

### **Visa Application date:** May 4, 2024

Most applications are approved instantly or within 10 days. If you have an extensive travel history, visa approvals may get prolonged and you may need to submit additional documentation (such as vaccination records). While applying, choose non-award sector (NOT higher education sector).

### **Pre-arrival orientation webinar:** Jun 5, 2024 (optional, online, recorded)

### **Allocate+ opens:** Jun 10 – 18, 2024

Top 4 out of 8 units (that you chose in MyApp, and is also shown on the offer letter) are allocated to you on Allocate+ starting on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Now is when you rank your preferred section and timing of each course/unit.

### **Post-arrival orientation date:** Jul 11, 2024 (mandatory, in-person)

### **Semester teaching period:** Jul 22 - Oct 18, 2024

### **Mid-sem break (more like ¾-sem break):** Sep 23 - 27, 2024

**Swot vac (break before final exams):** Oct 21 - 25, 2024

**Final exams:** Oct 28 - Nov 15, 2024

**Final grades (through My eEquals):** Dec 2, 2024

[This link](#) also covers some key dates for semester 1 (and 2 that I may have missed).

## Arrival Procedures

Monash Abroad offers a free of cost shuttle, that picks a student from the airport and drops them to their accommodations. I could not use this service, as I had made other arrangements to get picked up at the airport.

Monash Abroad suggested that we reach Melbourne by July 8<sup>th</sup>, to settle in before the mandatory orientation on July 11<sup>th</sup>. This orientation familiarized me with admin related things and helped me understand services/opportunities at Monash. Staff were available to help modify class timetables after this orientation. Oh, and they gave us free lunch!

## Costs

### OSHC

I purchased my OSHC through Medibank, for exactly 6 months, costing me \$291.05 AUD. Alternatively, I could have purchased OSHC through Monash University (and its partner) for \$473.

### Transportation

Myki card is required on all public transit in metro and regional Melbourne. As an exchange student, you are eligible to for a 50% fare reduction, known as concession price. Victoria is unique in offering concession pricing to exchange students. As far as I know, other states do not offer concession price to exchange students. You apply for concession through Monash's Web Enrollment System (WES), under 'Application for Transport Concession'.

Public Transit is quite affordable with a single fair between \$1.65 (single zone) and \$2.65 (dual zone), once you have the tertiary student concession. Trains tend to be very punctual on weekdays. On weekends, Train service is significantly reduced and I personally experienced many delays.

I purchased a used bike within 1-2 weeks of my arrival in July 2024. I used it for my 3km commute to Monash Uni's Clayton Campus on most days. I avoided cycling on windy days (which is about 30% of the days). Also, PTV buses have no bike racks unlike Ottawa.

If purchased 3+ weeks in advance, inter-city flights (e.g. MEL -> SYD) can be bought for less than \$200 (return). During mid-sem break, I booked my flight to Sydney only 3 days in advance for \$320, and took the overnight train back for \$78. The overnight train was quite impressive in my opinion, as I had 2 seats to myself and access to a really good café car.

I suggest budgeting at least \$3000 for a return flight to and from Melbourne. I personally, am spending around \$3800 as I chose a multi-city journey (stopping in Asia at the end of my exchange) and opted for extra-baggage (total 40kg) for each flight.

### **Eating and shopping**

Groceries cost me roughly \$70 per week. Coles and Woolworths are the two major grocery chains; they are both comparable to Loblaw's in Canada. Some fruits (e.g. bananas) and soda cost significantly more in Australia, but milk is cheaper. Be on the lookout as both chains offer ½ off specific items each week. Planning this out has saved me a lot of money.

Kmart is another useful store. For me it sits somewhere between Dollarama and Walmart (minus groceries). Clayton Market has some really good discount shops (dollar stores) for household shopping. Also, there's an IKEA close to Monash, but is not accessible through public transit.

When dining out, budget between \$20-35. There is no tipping culture here, and pre-added taxes on menus are a relief. While on-campus, Halls Café and Wholefoods are affordable options, offering healthy options between \$3 and \$9.30. Most other on-campus food options are \$15+.

### **Accommodation**

Most exchange students try to arrange on-campus accommodations. [This site](#) offers dates, price and other information for exchange students. However, Monash Residences have space for less 50% of the incoming exchange students (up to 600-800 students per semester!!).

As it is often challenging to find temporary housing in Clayton, many exchange students without residence offers live in student residences in or around the CBD (for example, the IGLU residence at South Yarra). This option is quite costly, ranging from \$1800-\$2200 per month. Clayton or surrounding suburbs are a bit boring and less transit-friendly, which also makes the CBD a more lucrative housing option.

I was quite fortunate to find a sublease from a Monash student that was going to another country for an exchange. I was able to rent their room in a houseshare. My monthly rent ended up being \$850 AUD (incl. utilities), which was a comparably good deal compared to living on-campus or on student residences. While this was a one-off scenario, it wouldn't hurt to reach out to Monash Abroad and ask them about subleasing from an outgoing local student.

My houseshare was located on close to Westall Station in Clayton South. If successful in search, I would highly recommend living close to either Westall, Clayton or Huntingdale Stations.

### **Visa**

I applied for my student visa on May 4th, 2024. The cost was \$710 AUD.

Unfortunately, the student visa fee has now increased to \$1600 starting in July 2024. You may be able to look into a Working Holiday Visa which allows studies for up to 4 months (my studies and exams were within 4 months) and its cost is unchanged at \$650 AUD, as of November 2024.

## Summary

Melbourne is a beautiful city and the best time for an exchange here would be in Semester 1 (Melbourne's Summer/Fall). There are many music festivals and events on at that time, and arriving in late January would give you time to explore the city before studies begin in late February.

Due to my co-op sequence Monash's semester 2 worked best for me. I landed here in Winter (similar to Canadian cold in November) and will soon depart in the beginning of Summer.