

# PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE

## EXCHANGE & STUDY ABROAD



**BEFORE LEAVING HOME  
AND READY TO EXPLORE**

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## 1. Pre-departure checklist

Welcome to the RMIT Vietnam family! We've prepared this guide to assist you with your transition to Vietnam and to RMIT International University Vietnam. Please read it carefully and make sure you complete all the steps in the pre-departure checklist - it will make your transition MUCH smoother. Please contact Tess (tuyen.van@rmit.edu.vn) from the International Unit at Saigon South campus with any questions if you cannot find the answer in this guide.

Before you leave home:

- Return your Offer Acceptance Form
- Provide the documentation for your Vietnam visa
- Organise travel insurance
- Return your Arrival Service Form
- Organize your accommodation
- Make copies of all important documents to bring in your hand luggage
  - Letter of offer from RMIT Vietnam
  - Passport
  - Other formal identification
  - International driver's license or driver's license from your home country



## 2. Visas

### 2.1 Apply for a new visa

If you are **currently living in your home country**, and have already enrolled to study at RMIT Vietnam, this section is for you.

**Step 1** Provide **supporting documents** via email by scanned files:

- » A copy of your passport
- » Letter of offer from RMIT Vietnam
- » Receipt of tuition fee payment for RMIT Vietnam.

**Step 2** RMIT Vietnam will send you the **soft copy the approval correspondence** from the Vietnamese Immigration Department.

**Step 3** **Collect your visa** at the Vietnamese Embassy in your home country and pay:

- » 3-month single entry visa: US\$ 35
- » 3-month multiple entry visa: US\$ 60

**Note:**

*In case there is no Vietnamese government office in your country, you will show the approval correspondence to Customs on your arrival to collect your visa and pay the same fee as above. [www.vietnamvisaexpert.com](http://www.vietnamvisaexpert.com)*

### 2.2 Extension of Stay Permit/ Renewal Procedure

If you are currently living in Vietnam, and are currently studying or have enrolled to study at RMIT Vietnam, AND if you would like RMIT Vietnam to sponsor your visa extension, this section is for you.

- » Please **use form N5** as attached and **fill in part 1 and 3**.
- » **Submit the form** together with your passport to the Student Services Helpdesk **14 days** prior to the expiry date of your current visa.
- » During (or before) your semester break, you are required to **pay the tuition fees for the forthcoming semester**. Please contact Student Billing at [student.billing@rmit.edu.vn](mailto:student.billing@rmit.edu.vn) to know the exact amount you'll have to pay.
- » **You are responsible for the visa fee** (payable in Vietnam Dong with the exchange rate at the time of settling the payment). This fee is to be paid to the Student Services Helpdesk when you submit your passport. A receipt issued by the Immigration Office will be returned to you upon your approval.

<b>Extension of stay permit</b>	US\$ 10
<b>New visa with 3-month single entry</b>	US\$ 35
<b>New visa with 3-month multiple entry</b>	US\$ 60

### 2.3 Overdue visa

Did you let your visa expire? Oops! If it's only by 3 days or less, you should be fine. You just need to proceed with the visa renewal procedure and a new visa should be granted.

If it's been longer than 3 days since the visa expiry date, you are required to write an explanation letter (link to the file) as well as the required documents for a normal visa renewal. You will also be required to go to the Immigration Office with RMIT Vietnam Student Officer to submit the visa application.

**Fine for overdue visa:** VND 500,000 - VND 5,000,000 (≈ US\$ 25 - US\$ 250)  
(subject to conditions of the case).

## 3. Immigration and Customs in Vietnam

On arrival in Vietnam, **you must complete white and blue duplicate arrival-departure forms**. Usually you'll get these forms on the plane on your flight to Vietnam, but if not, you can find them in the immigration lounge at the airport. Immigration will take the white copy, and the blue copy must be kept with your passport **at all times**. Hotels, guest houses and private hosts are required by law to register overnight guests with the local police and these blue forms are essential for this purpose.

Incoming visitors must also fill out duplicate yellow and white customs declaration forms. The yellow copy is to remain with your passport until departure. **Don't lose it!**

### 3.1 Duty-Free

- » Cigarettes: 400g, Cigars: 100g, Tobacco: 100g
- » Liquor: 1.5 litres
- » Perfume and jewellery for personal use
- » Small gift items valued at US\$ 300 or less
- » Personal effects of a reasonable quantity



### 3.2 Materials Under Declaration

- » Foreign currency: in excess of US\$ 7,000
- » Gold and jewellery not for personal use
- » Video tapes, CDs, DVDs
- » CDs and tapes are sometimes retained for screening, and will be returned after a few days.



### 3.3 Banned Materials

Under no circumstances should you bring the following into Vietnam:

- » Weapons, firearms, explosives and inflammable objects
- » Opium and other narcotics
- » Anti-government literature
- » Pornographic literature

### 3.4 Items of high value

Goods of a commercial nature and articles of high value require export permits issued by the customs authorities. Therefore, to these groups of articles, ask the retailer when you buy them for a receipt and declaration that the item may be exported. Antiques, some precious stones, and animals listed in Vietnam's red-book (which is based on the IUCN's red list) ([link to http://www.iucnredlist.org/](http://www.iucnredlist.org/)) may not be brought into or out of the country.

#### **Note:**

*Since customs regulations are subject to change at any time, our brief summary above is used for reference only. RMIT Vietnam cannot be held liable for any costs, damage, delays, or other detrimental events resulting from non-compliance. Always double check with your local embassy or consulate.*

## 4. What to pack

### **Clothing**

- » Summer clothes
- » Sunglasses
- » Pair of sandals, walking shoes

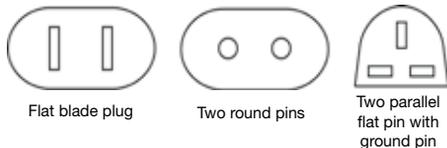
### **Medical supplies**

- » Tube of sunscreen
- » A mosquito and insect repellent
- » Band-Aid

## 5. Electricity

Although it's quite easy to buy adaptors for most countries in Vietnam, it will be more convenient for you to bring at least one from your home country, so that you can charge or use any important devices you need when you first arrive. It's also worth considering a small UPS box (Uninterrupted Power Supply device), to avoid Vietnam's occasional power surges damaging your electronic equipment.

- » 220Volts 50Hertz.
- » Power Outlet: Mostly 2 pronged plugs.



- » You may want to get a combination voltage converter and plug adapter.
- » Power outages can occur depending upon the area you are in. Accommodation with back-up generator power is recommended.

## 6. Weather

- » Ho Chi Minh City is a city of heat and humidity so give yourself time to adjust.
  - o Drink plenty of water
  - o Wear a hat and a light jacket
  - o Wear sunglasses for the bright sun
  - o Powders and antibiotic soap (readily available) prevent prickly heat.
  - o Don't forget an umbrella or a rain coat for the rainy season (April to November)
- » Temperature
  - o Ranging from 23 °C to 35°C
  - o Hottest months: March to May
- » Rain
  - o Most rain falls from April to November
- » Humidity
  - o Ranging from 55% to 80%
  - o Highest humidity: May to December
- » Sudden changes in weather are to be expected.



## 7. Costs and Money Matters

- » The cost of living in Ho Chi Minh City ranges from low to high depending on your lifestyle. You can eat a bowl of soup on the street for US\$ 1 or a European dinner with wine for US\$ 100.
- » The living standards in Ho Chi Minh City are variable in different areas. For example, in the city centre and newly developed areas (District 1, 3, 10, and 7), prices are usually higher than other places (District 4, 6, Binh Thanh, Tan Phu and Tan Binh).

### 7.1 Exchange Rate

The exchange rate (August 2012) is approximately AU\$ 1 = VND 21,872 and US\$ 1 = VND 20,850. Please follow the website to have updated exchange rate [www.vietcomebank.com.vn](http://www.vietcomebank.com.vn)

### 7.2 Bargaining

- » Most things you buy on the street or “wet” market must be bargained for. Foreigners will often be charged a higher rate, but considering the difference in income between you and the vendor, it is understandable - life is too short to worry about a few cents! It is expected that you will bargain and you will look like an easy mark if you don't. However, be good natured about it.
- » If you can, try bringing along a Vietnamese friend when you go shopping for the first time at any place so that he/she can advise you not only where to buy good quality products but also how to purchase them at a reasonable price.

### 7.3 Referenced Prices

Supermarkets (Co-op mart, Lotte mart...), restaurants, and most 24/7 minimarts have fixed prices. The products sold at large department stores are also not up for negotiation.

### 7.4 Average Prices

US\$ 1 = VND 20,850

#### **Vietnamese Food:**

1. Baguette (Bánh mì): VND 15,000 - VND 35,000
2. Beef Noodle (Phở bò): VND 25,000 - VND 50,000
3. Black coffee (café đen): VND 15,000 - VND 25,000
4. Coffee with milk: VND 15,000 - VND 25,000
5. A beer bottle: VND 15,000 - VND 25,000
6. A mineral water bottle: VND 7,000 - VND 15,000
7. Lunch/Dinner set: VND 45,000 - VND 70,000

#### **Housing:**

1. In district 1 (Close to downtown)  
Apartment (1 bedroom):  
USD 600 - USD 900
2. In district 7 (Close to RMIT campus)  
Apartment (1 bedroom):  
USD 500 - USD 700

#### **Beauty:**

1. Haircut: VND 30,000 - VND 80,000
2. Meducure & Pedicure:  
VND 30,000 - VND 60,000

#### **Transportation**

You can use **taxi services** are **reliable** as below:

1. **Vinasun Taxi**
  2. **Mailinh Taxi**
- Unit price:  
VND 10,000 - VND 12,000/km



### 7.5 Choice of banks

There are many banks in HCMC, but some are more efficient than others! Vietcombank is recommended as they have many ATM machines throughout the city (listed in Asia Life magazine). ANZ (Australia New Zealand) Bank has more efficient English speaking customer service, but fewer ATMs. Both banks handle international transfers.

### 7.6 ATM machines

There are many throughout the city. They accept transactions for Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Maestro, and Cirrus. Only Vietnamese Dong is given from ATMs. You must go into the bank if you require other currency. There are two ATM machine in our campus.

### 7.7 Credit Cards and Traveller's Checks

Major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard) are accepted at upscale restaurants, hotels and travel agencies. There is usually a 3% fee added. Traveller's checks can be exchanged in the city but rarely outside the city.

### 7.8 Changing Money

Money changers can be found in tourist areas and are usually safe to use but can charge a fee for the transaction.



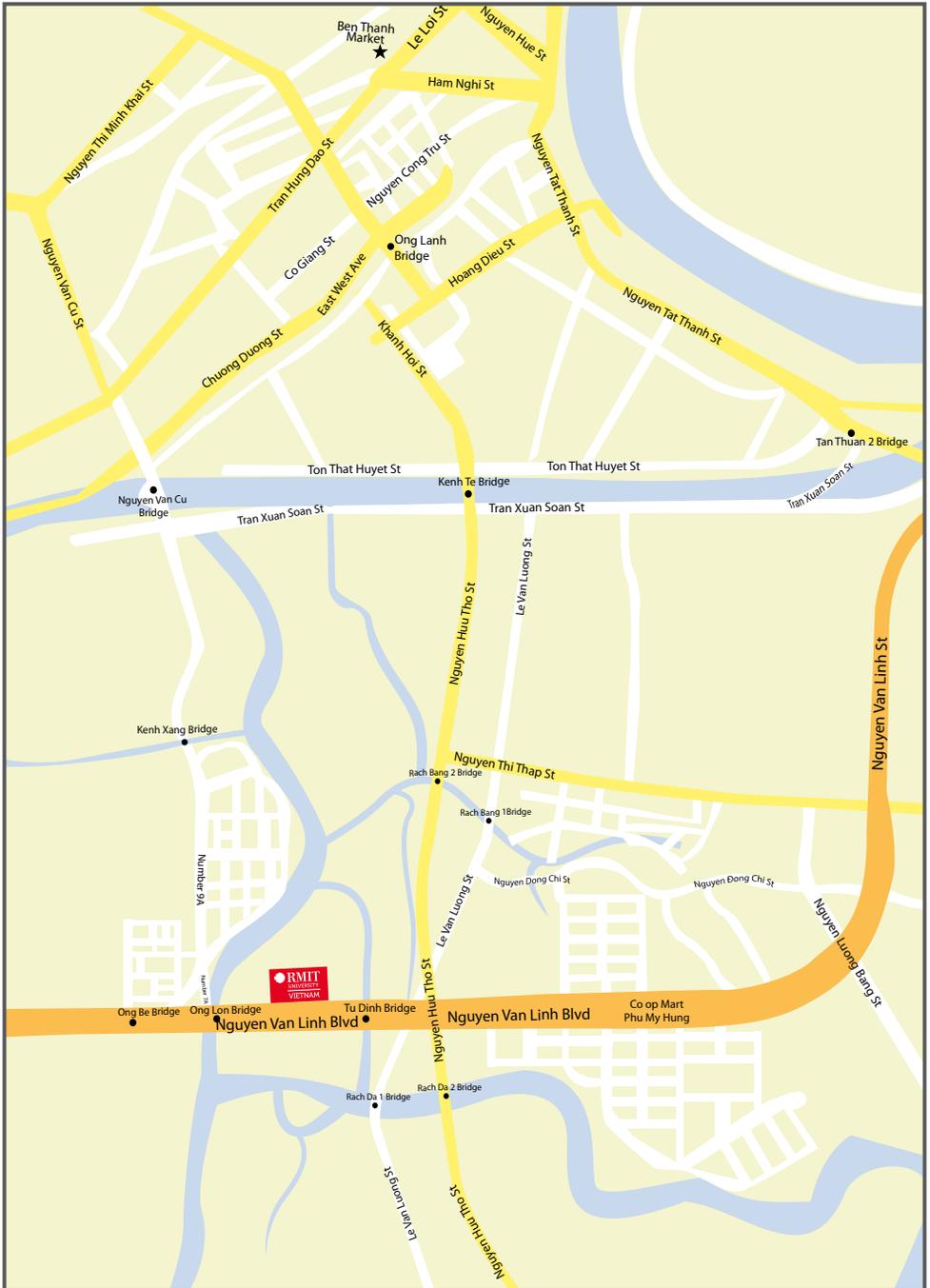
## 8. Emergency Assistance

Please ensure you have the necessary telephone numbers to call in the event of an emergency. Should you require assistance while at your accommodation, please proceed to the reception desk of your hotel or guesthouse.

Department/Unit	Landline/Mobile	Email/Address
Police	(+84 8) 113	
Fire	(+84 8) 114	
Ambulance	(+84 8) 115	
Information	(+84 8) 1080	
The Embassy of France in Ho Chi Minh City	(+84 8) 3520 6800	27 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai Street, D.1
Campus Security	(+84 8) 3776 1368	security@rmit.edu.vn
Health & Safety	(+84 8) 3776 1360	HealthHCMC@rmit.edu.vn
Facilities& Maintenance	(+84 8) 3776 1300	property@rmit.edu.vn
IT Service	(+84 8) 3776 1313	response.centre@rmit.edu.vn
Airport Pickup	(+84 8) 3776 1436	ngoc.chu@rmit.edu.vn
Sport Facility Booking	(+84 8) 3776 1310	sports@rmit.edu.vn
Counselling service	(+84 8) 3776 1300	counsellor@rmit.edu.vn
Students services	(+84 8) 3776 1323	student.services@rmit.edu.vn
Student Advisors	(+84 8) 3776 1306	advisement@rmit.edu.vn
Beanland Library	(+84 8) 3776 1319	library@rmit.edu.vn
International Unit	(+84 8) 3776 1442	international@rmit.edu.vn
RMIT Alumni	(+84 8) 3776 1432	thanh.buiminh@rmit.edu.vn
Learning Skill Unit	(+84 8) 3776 1300	learningskills.sgs@rmit.edu.vn
Student Engagement	(+84 8) 3776 1300	trang.leramviet@rmit.edu.vn
Career Centre	(+84 8) 3776 1362	career.centresgs@rmit.edu.vn

StudyAbroad.com is an excellent source of information on educational opportunities for students to study in other countries. If you want to learn more about Vietnam in terms of culture, academia, or tips from experienced foreigners, please take a look at the following link: <http://www.studyabroad.com/programs/east+and+southeast+asia,vietnam/default.aspx>

# MAP OF SAIGON SOUTH CAMPUS





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