

GEN Short Exchange

Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA

Frequently Asked Questions ...

What is the Global Education Network (GEN)?

The Global Education Network (GEN) is an organisation founded by Box Hill Institute and SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary, Canada in 2001. Kirkwood Community College in Iowa, USA, and ITE, Singapore, have also joined the GEN partnership to provide international experiences for their students. Through this network of vocational colleges similar to Box Hill Institute we are able to offer international travel and study opportunities to our enrolled students. Box Hill Institute students can travel to the GEN partner colleges to live, study and explore a new international environment for up to six months. Box Hill Institute also hosts international students for up to six months under the Global Education Network agreement. More information about the Global Education Network is available at: <http://www.globaledunetwork.org>

What happens on the Short Exchange?

A short exchange is generally 3 weeks duration. It offers you a variety of experiences — cultural or tourism opportunities, exposure to international industry through pre-arranged excursions and tours, and an opportunity to spend time in a classroom at the host college to understand different international teaching and learning styles and sometimes different curriculum. Short exchanges are busy, interesting and exhausting! They are often the inspiration for further international travel planning and experiences for Box Hill Institute students.

Is a Short Exchange program right for me?

- Am I adaptable?
- Am I flexible?
- Can I deal with uncertainty?
- Am I resourceful?
- Am I interested in meeting new people?
- Am I interested in other cultures?
- Am I open-minded?
- Am I physically fit and healthy?
- Do I have clear and realistic goals/objectives for this experience?

If you have answered **yes** to these questions, then participating in a short exchange program may be right for you!

It is important for you to take responsibility for the success of your participation. Having realistic expectations play a big part in how enjoyable this experience will be.

I'm an International student at Box Hill Institute – can I still apply?

Eligible applicants from Box Hill Institute must be 18+ years of age and Permanent Residents of Australia or Australian citizens. The aim of the program is to give local students an opportunity for an international exchange opportunity.

Is there any funding available to assist with the costs?

Box Hill Institute will provide a travel scholarship which also includes travel insurance for students participating in the three week exchange program. The students are then responsible for all other associated costs. The actual costs of a short exchange will depend on the type of accommodation, meals, entertainment activities, passport and travel insurance you select. Estimates are available at information sessions or you may like to discuss your personal situation with the Student Mobility staff.

Who else is going to be there?

There may be a group of students from ITE in Singapore at Kirkwood Community College at the same time as the Box Hill group. Each college sends a faculty or staff member as a “mentor” for the group of students. Some of the students may be doing the same training that you are so they will

participate in the same program. You will get to meet other visiting students on some of the tourism or cultural visits.

Prior to departure from Melbourne, you will have a number of opportunities to meet with the other students (and staff) from Box Hill Institute travelling to Cedar Rapids. We will also have a Facebook page available for you to share information with the other students prior to and during the program.

Where is everyone staying?

Students stay in hotel accommodation in Cedar Rapids for most of the program. The group will stay at the Double Tree Hotel in Downtown Cedar Rapids, a short drive to Kirkwood Community College. The link to the site is <http://doubletree3.hilton.com/en/hotels/iowa/doubletree-by-hilton-hotel-cedar-rapids-convention-complex-CIDCCDT/index.html>. Transport from the hotel to KCC is usually provided by the college and breakfast included in the accommodation costs.

There may also be 2-3 nights accommodation in Chicago if that location is scheduled as part of the trip. All Box Hill Institute students will stay at the same location together. Students are unable to make their own accommodation arrangements to stay with friends, relatives or with other providers. Accommodation arrangements will be confirmed closer to the departure date. Reservations will be made for the Box Hill Institute group by the Student Mobility office liaising with Kirkwood Community College to ensure we receive the most competitive price available.

When will I get to meet everyone?

The Box Hill Institute group will get to know each other during the pre-departure sessions arranged before travel. These are usually held over two/three evenings. Some groups like to arrange an additional get together, for example, have a meal together prior to departure.

Students from the other visiting colleges, for example, ITE in Singapore will have different flight arrival times into Cedar Rapids. We expect that groups will arrive on the Saturday prior to the program, and will complete a day of orientation before the classes commence. The orientation will ensure you know your way around the local area, have had a quick look around the downtown area, and can buy or order food and coffee! You will also know where to come for your first class.

Can I book my own flight and accommodation?

Students applying for scholarship assistance and joining the Box Hill Institute team will travel on the same flights. The group will stay in the same accommodation which will be used by the other colleges participating in the program. There are no exceptions to this arrangement.

Travel and accommodation bookings will be coordinated for the group through the Student Mobility office.

A Box Hill Institute staff member will accompany the group for travel, cultural activities and throughout the academic program.

Can I extend my stay in Cedar Rapids or Chicago after the training program finishes?

All Box Hill Institute participants will return on the designated flight to Melbourne at the conclusion of the program. There are no exceptions to this arrangement.

Do I need a visa?

Students will apply online to enter the US under the Visa Waiver Program for entry of less than 90 days. There is a charge of approximately US\$14 for this application. The address for the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) is <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

The US visa application process will be discussed in detail at the pre-departure sessions.

Please note if you are a permanent resident of Australia, Visa requirements may apply. It is your responsibility to check the Visa requirements based on your individual circumstance

What about Travel Insurance?

All Box Hill Institute students participating in a Student exchange will automatically receive travel insurance. **Students are responsible for the costs of medical treatment resulting from a pre-existing medical condition.** Depending on your own personal travel requirements and circumstances, you may choose to purchase additional travel insurance cover. Travel Insurance will be discussed in detail at the pre-departure sessions.

What will the weather be like?

Autumn (September) Max: 23° C

Autumn (October) Max: 16° C

Will I need text books or any other study materials?

We suggest you take items such as writing materials and paper with you for the program. You may also need to consider taking additional resources if you are completing a project when you are at the host college. This may include reference material or a USB.

Carry-on Baggage Requirements

All passengers flying to and from Australia on international flights are only permitted to carry small quantities of liquids, gels or aerosols in their cabin or carry-on luggage. Small containers of 100 mls (3.5 fl oz) are permitted and must be sealed in a transparent plastic bag. Carry-on and checked in luggage allowances will be discussed at the Pre-departure sessions.

What will I wear in Cedar Rapids/Chicago?

Autumn/Spring — Weather during these in-between seasons can be unpredictable. Bring a warm jacket and clothing that can be layered.

Summer — For the city, pack lightweight clothing with a sweater, raincoat or light topcoat for cooler evening temperatures. Temperatures in the mountains are always a little cooler than in the city.

My personal forecast...lots of layers...clothing that you would wear as a student at Box Hill Institute would be appropriate – jeans and casual tops are acceptable.

Students will be required to wear business clothes when participating in industry visits. Male students could wear a business shirt (tie optional) and jacket if available. Females could wear skirt/pants and jacket for example....think of clothing for an interview for a business position. Depending on your area of training, you may need to pack work clothes and boots so you can do site visits and spend time in workshops. Hospitality students may need to take black pants/white shirt so they can participate in restaurant classes, and commercial cookery students will need their uniforms. We will confirm these requirements with you during the pre-departure program.

Students may take advantage of some of Cedar Rapid's or Chicago's restaurants and choose to bring smart casual or dressier clothes. Some clubs will have a dress code which may not allow denim or some footwear.

An Awards function is planned for the end of the program – students may like to dress for the official Awarding of Certificates.

Should I bring a laptop computer?

If you have a laptop computer, you may like to bring it with you. You may find it useful to complete any project requirements as well as keeping in contact with your family and friends via the internet. There will be opportunities for students to also access computers for classwork, and access to the libraries and their computers at KCC.

What's the cheapest way to keep in contact with home?

Internet or phone cards can be less expensive ways to keep in contact with family and friends at home. There will be opportunities for students to purchase local sim cards for mobiles if required during the orientation part of the program. KCC's libraries offer desktop computers with internet access for email during opening hours.

How big is Cedar Rapids?

The population of Cedar Rapids is 131,127.

What currency is used in Iowa?

Name : US Dollar

Symbol : US\$

Changing Your Money

Changing foreign currency can be done at most banks. There are foreign-exchange booths at Melbourne Airport's (prior to your departure from home) in the international terminal.

Money Tips

Travel and credit cards (particularly Visa and MasterCard) are widely accepted and ATMs all over the country accept credit and Cirrus cards. Confirm the best option for you with your own bank prior to departure.

Emergency contacts

Student Mobility and Scholarship Coordinator
Academic Affairs
Box Hill Institute
Tel: 61 3 9286 9601
Email: gen@boxhill.edu.au

Any useful links?

Box Hill Institute of TAFE	http://www.boxhill.edu.au
Institute of Technical Education	http://www.ite.edu.sg
Kirkwood Community College	http://www.kirkwood.edu
Global Education Network	http://www.globaledunetwork.org/
Tourism in Cedar Rapids	http://www.cedar-rapids.com/about/
World Time Server	http://www.worldtimeserver.com/
Universal Currency Converter	http://www.xe.com/
Smarttraveller	http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au

** If you are a permanent resident of Australia special visa requirements may apply to you.*