

Living & Working in Vietnam



A guide for
expat staff
at RMIT Vietnam

DISCLAIMER

The content for this document has been collected from a number of websites and articles currently published on the internet for the purpose of providing relevant and useful information to new international employees joining the organisation.

ABOUT VIETNAM

This guide is intended to fill in some of the gaps in your knowledge about the country and matters of daily life so to help you prepare as best you can for moving to Vietnam for work at RMIT Vietnam. In this guide, we have tried to build on the experiences of those who have gone before you to cover common matters that expatriate staff have faced.

Vietnam

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the ninth most-populous country in the world, with a population of about 95 million. It is located on the easternmost edge of the Indochina Peninsula, with land borders with Cambodia, Laos and China. Vietnam has two very different major cities – the national capital of Hanoi in the north and the commercial centre of Ho Chi Minh City in the south. Other significant cities include the port city of Haiphong in the north and the coastal city of Da Nang in the central part of the country.

RMIT Vietnam has campuses in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang.

Hanoi

Hanoi is steeped in history – a history of imperial rule and of conquer and occupation. It was the most important political centre for eight centuries until 1802, when it was overtaken by the imperial capital of Hue. Hanoi became the administrative centre of the France's colonial rule of Indochina and later fell to Japanese occupation. It later became the national capital of a unified Vietnam following North Vietnam's victory in the Vietnam War. According to the CIA World Factbook, Hanoi is estimated to be home to about 3.6 million people. The city is located on the banks of the Red River. The city has many scenic lakes, the most famous of which is Hoan Kiem Lake. It is a popular destination for its unique neighbourhoods, such as the Old Quarter and French Quarter, and an array of unique colonial-era buildings & museums, such as the National Museum of Vietnamese History, Vietnam National Museum, Ho Chi Minh Museum & Hoa Lo Prison.

Da Nang

Da Nang is the commercial and educational centre of Central Vietnam, as well as the largest city in the region. As a fast-developing city, Da Nang is a bridge of economic, cultural, political and social characteristics between Central Vietnam and the Central Highlands. Da Nang has an international airport with many direct flights, a deep-sea port and connections to the

national North – South railway system. The inner city traffic system has been renovated and upgraded to create a new look for Da Nang.

The surrounding area is known for its natural wonders, most notably the stretch of beaches offering pristine sand and gentle waters. The city itself has its share of sights, and is close to the charms of Hoi An and the former imperial capital of Hue.

Ho Chi Minh City

Formerly known as Saigon, this fast-moving, ever-growing modern city is the economic centre of Vietnam. According to the CIA World Factbook, it has a population estimated at about 7.3 million people – and almost just as many motorbikes! In January 2017, Ho Chi Minh City (commonly referred to as 'HCMC') was named the world's second-most dynamic city in the 2017 JLL City Momentum Index. Open 24/7, Ho Chi Minh City is packed with cafes, restaurants and bars serving food and drinks from all around the world. The traffic is dizzying, with motorbikes weaving in and out of traffic. From the street, you get a good glimpse of the old and the new – glass skyscrapers going up amidst colonial-style buildings and quiet Chinese pagodas. Among the architectural attractions are the Fine Arts Museum, the Opera House, French colonial-style hotels, museums and galleries, and Ben Thanh Market.

You can find helpful introductory information about Vietnam and its cities through the following sources:

- [Wikipedia](#)
- [ECA reports](#)
- [CIA The World Factbook](#)
- [City Pass Guide - ebook](#)
- [Lonely Planet](#)
- [Rough Guides](#)

People

Vietnamese people treasure family and community. Big smiles and an eagerness to offer help to strangers are what you can expect to receive in Vietnam. Meeting up with friends, whether at luxurious restaurants or at one of the many street vendors, is a norm that dominates social life for Vietnamese people, irrespective of age.

There is much diversity throughout the Vietnamese population. Like most countries, you will notice striking differences in attitudes and appearances between the urbanites of the big cities and people from country areas. And, of course, any exploration of the diversity among Vietnam's people is not complete without visiting the hill tribe cultures of ethnic minorities in the mountains of the northern and central highlands.

Climate

Hanoi has a humid subtropical climate with four distinct seasons. Summers are hot and humid. The hottest months are May to September, with highs of 33-40 degrees Celsius during the day and lows of around 25 degrees Celsius at night. Winters are comparatively cold. The coolest months are December to March, with highs of around 20 degrees Celsius and lows of 13-15 degrees Celsius at night. You have to be prepared, though, for the occasional chilly day. Temperatures can drop to below 10 degrees. The wettest months are May to September, with daily afternoon/evening downpours common.

Da Nang's weather is a combination of climatic features of northern and southern Vietnam, with the northern having the more distinct influence. There are two seasons: the wet season lasting from August to December and the dry from January to July. Cold spells occasionally occur in winter, and are not severe and short.

Ho Chi Minh City has a tropical climate with two seasons: one wet and one dry. Most days have high temperatures ranging between 30 degrees Celsius and 37 degrees Celsius. The hottest days are in April and May, with the coolest falling in December to March. In the wet season, which is May to October, it rains heavily most days for around an hour in the afternoon.

Language

Vietnamese is the main language of Vietnam. Chinese and English are the other most-common spoken languages, but not everyone can speak them. Chinese is spoken mostly in the Chinatown areas of major cities, such as in District 5 in Ho Chi Minh City. English is used more widely now. If you go shopping in big shopping malls and department stores, the staff will be able to communicate to you in English. However, at smaller- to medium-sized shops and stores along the street, staff often speak little English. Therefore, you should equip yourself with some basic Vietnamese language and use your body language to communicate to the Vietnamese people.

For all new staff joining RMIT who would like to learn how to speak Vietnamese, you are welcome to attend free Vietnamese language lessons provided by the University. If your partner/spouse wants to join, a fee will apply. For more information about the RMIT language lessons, contact the HR Department. [Overview about Learning Vietnamese Language at RMIT](#)

Cost of living and currency

The cost of living in Vietnam is relatively cheap. According to the 2016 Mercer Cost of Living Index, Vietnam is ranked 88th out of 209 countries in terms of living expenses, including accommodation costs. The currency conversion is typically: 1 USD = 22,700 VND. Check [xe.com](#) or at a bank for a more up-to-date exchange rate. For information about living costs in Vietnam, visit <http://alittleadrift.com/cost-of-living/vietnam/>.

Some foreigners can, initially, find it difficult to properly identify certain notes in Vietnamese dong. Depending on where you come from, it can be hard to get used to seeing so many zeros. Also, the pale colours can make it hard to quickly identify the correct amounts – especially when you're rushing to pay a driver in the back of a dimly lit taxi at night! In such instances, it can help to spend some time preparing the amounts you will have to pay.

Vietnamese bank note



10.000 VND ≈ 50 Cents



20.000 VND ≈ \$1



50.000 VND ≈ \$2.50



100.000 VND ≈ \$5



200.000 VND ≈ \$10



500.000 VND ≈ \$25

Postal service companies

Postal service in Vietnam, both incoming and outgoing, is generally fast and reliable. You can send packages and mail by visiting any of post office in Vietnam. Here are some of the reliable postal services operating in Vietnam.

Local postal companies:

- [24/7 Express](#)
- [VN Post](#)
- [Viettel Post](#)
- [Skypost](#)

International postal companies:

- [Fedex](#)
- [DHL](#)

Public holidays

For an updated list of Vietnamese public holidays please click on the following link

Online newspapers and other news sources

- [Saigoneer](#)
- [Word Hanoi](#)
- [Word HCMC](#)
- [Word Vietnam](#)
- [Oi Vietnam](#)
- [Expat Woman](#)
- [AsiaLife Magazine](#)
- [City Pass Guide](#)

ARRIVING IN VIETNAM

Relocating to a new country has its challenges. The HR Department at RMIT will assist you with the process of relocating to Vietnam.. This section covers: information on work permit and visa process; flights, arrival at the airport in Vietnam; and navigating your way from the airport to your accommodation.

Before departure

Passport

Before you enter Vietnam, please ensure that your passport has at least two years'' validity and two pages available

Visa/Temporary Residence Card

RMIT Vietnam will arrange your entry visa. Later, when you arrive in Vietnam, RMIT Vietnam will also arrange a Temporary Resident Card, which will be valid based on the duration of your work permit.

Your entry visa will be collected either at the Vietnamese embassy in your country. The Vietnam Immigration Department also grant e-visa for some selected countries (List of countries and ports that accept e-visa). Initially, this visa will be a one-month, single-entry working visa. During your first month of staying in Vietnam, RMIT will apply for a Temporary Residence Card. This card is valid for the same duration as your work permit. To receive the residence card, you must ensure that your landlord registers your name with local police and gives you the residence log book/'pink book'. You will only be eligible for a temporary resident card if you passport and work permit are valid for more than 12 months.

Work permit

The work permit is the legal document proving that you are legally working at a specific company. The original work permit will be kept by RMIT Vietnam's HR department. A copy will be attached to your labour contract. Normally, a work permit is needed to open a bank account and prove that you are working at a particular company

Your flight

In most cases, the HR Department will arrange a flight for you (and your dependants if applicable) from your home location to Vietnam and the city where you will be based. Your flight will be booked to leave from your nearest international airport in your home country. Where flights of dependants are not covered by RMIT, we can still book and pay in advance by RMIT and deducted from your first month's salary.

You may prefer to book and pay for your own flight in advance of starting work at RMIT. In this case please ensure that you keep all receipts and boarding passes for your flights so that we can reimburse you when you start work at RMIT.

If your flight ticket is provided by RMIT, it will include a 7kg limit for carry-on luggage and a 30kg limit for checked luggage. RMIT will not pay for excess luggage, although HR can support you to book extra luggage allowance. The cost will be paid in advance by RMIT and deducted from your first month's salary.

Luggage

Make sure that you have the following items in your hand luggage:

- Passport
- Valid visa on passport/ Visa Approval Letter/ E-visa Approval Letter
- A copy of work permit
- Personal details and Vietnam contact address
- Key contact name/ phone numbers, address of the hotel in Vietnam, details of the person you will meet on arrival (if any)
- Vietnamese dong or USD dollars (or you can exchange money at the airport)

There are certain items that are prohibited from being brought into Vietnam. To avoid getting caught out at the airport, please click on the link below to find out what you can and cannot bring into Vietnam: <https://www.vietnamonline.com/visa/customs-regulations.html>

For information about what items to pack in your check-in luggage or shipment,

<https://www.vietnamonline.com/visa/customs-regulations.html>

Arrival at the airport

When you arrive in Vietnam you will need to show your passport along with visa or visa approval letter/e-visa approval letter. If your entry visa is provided by RMIT, it will be a working visa (one month with single entry).

You may also wish to have some US dollars on you so that you can pay for the visa on arrival, if that is the option you are going for. Credit cards are not accepted for visa payment, so please remember to bring cash.

Money

If you wish to withdraw money upon you arrival in Vietnam, ATMs are available at the airports. Additional charges apply for overseas withdrawals, so make sure you check the amount carefully before withdrawing money.

Cash, credit cards and debit cards are widely used in Vietnam. Credit/debit cards can be used at medium and large hotels, restaurants and shops, with Visa and Mastercard generally accepted. It is typical to use cash when purchasing items at small shops and supermarkets.

Customs declaration card

If you are expecting a shipment to arrive or unaccompanied luggage from overseas after arriving in Vietnam then you need to ensure that you collect and complete a customs declaration card upon your arrival. You may find that some officials at the immigration/customs desk at the airport will tell you that you don't need this card, but you do. So, please, insist on getting the card. If you do not obtain the card, you may experience difficulty in being able to gain clearance for your shipping luggage or container, if you do not have this card to provide to the authorities.

If you forget to get this customs declaration card, you may be asked to leave the country and travel back in order to receive your shipment or unaccompanied luggage.

Transportation from the airport

Taxi services are available at the airport. In each city, there are trusted taxi companies which use proper meters. Airports are notorious locations for being targeted by dodgy taxi operators. If you don't use a reliable service, meters can end up charging you far above standard amounts. An alternative option is to pre book with ridesharing company Grab. You must have access to wifi/3G and a phone number in order to book Grab. A sim card can be purchased easily at the airport on the way out of the gate. As of April 2018, Uber no longer operates in Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh City (Tan Son Nhat Airport)

- Taxi services

Travel time from the airport to your hotel will vary depending on your arrival time in Vietnam. However, a general rule of thumb in Ho Chi Minh City is that taxi fares going to Districts 1 and 3 should not cost more than 100,000-150,000 VND. Fares for District 7 should not cost more than 200,000-300,000 VND. Mai Linh, Vinasun and Vinataxi taxis are metered and are, generally, trustworthy. With these companies, there is no need to negotiate fares before you trip. Naturally, keep an eye on the meter. If in doubt, start asking questions.

Refer to [recommended taxi companies and directions](#).

- Bus services to city centre

Alternatively, you can get bus 109 from Tan Son Nhat airport to the city center (District 1). The service costs around 20,000 VND. However, if you have lots of luggages, it is recommended that you use a local taxi or Grab service.

Hanoi (Noi Bai International Airport)

- Taxi services

In Hanoi, taxi fares from the airport to the city centre vary from 300,000 - 400,000 VND, depending on the taxi company.

Refer to [recommended taxi companies and directions](#).

- Bus services to city centre

Alternatively, you can get bus 07 to Kim Ma bus station or bus 17 to Long Bien bus station, which costs around 20,000 VND. However, if you have lots of luggage, it is recommended that you use a local taxi or Grab service.

Da Nang (Da Nang International Airport)

- Taxi/ Grab services

In Da Nang, taxi/ Grab fares from the airport to the city centre vary but are relatively cheap. You can also book taxis/ Grab within the airport terminal to take you to your destination.

Refer to [recommended taxi companies and directions](#).

Where to stay when you arrive

Before arriving in Vietnam, you can book your temporary accommodation through online platforms such as [booking.com](#), [Agoda](#), [TripAdvisor](#) or [Airbnb](#). For your reference, please read carefully the reviews of past customers before making the booking through such websites.

If you prefer to pre-arrange your accommodation, make sure that you are aware of the terms and conditions of the agreement. Accommodation providers may charge fees for cancellations or for breaking a lease. You will need to check these fees and charges with each provider, as they are independent of RMIT.

RMIT Vietnam contracts with certain hotels near our campuses as they offer our staff good prices. Our administration staff can help you to book a room/apartment at any of the following hotels. Payment will be arranged between you and the hotel.

Hotels in Ho Chi Minh City

Crystal Palace Hotel

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND1,559,250 (low season) (~ 92.13 AUD)

VND1,732,500 (high season) (~ 102.37 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

4.6 km (15 minutes by taxi).

Note

High quality, comfortable rooms, buffet breakfast included.

Capri By Fraser

Apartment ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND2,210,670 (~127.7 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

4.4 km (15 minutes by taxi).

Note

Good quality, studio deluxe room, breakfast included. studio

Bizu Boutique

Hotel ★★★

Cost per night

VND605,000 (~33 AUD)

VND 940,000 (~52.7AUD)

Distance to RMIT

3.1km (10 minutes by taxi).

Note

Standard single bedroom; deluxe single bedroom.

Ibis Saigon South

Hotel ★★★

Cost per night

VND1,270,000 (~72 AUD)

(VND 934,000 VND ~52.5 AUD if book for 30 days)

Distance to RMIT

4.4km (15 minutes by taxi).

Note

Small rooms, budget hotel but good standard. Close to Crescent Mall, restaurants and shops.

Hotels in Hanoi

Daewoo Hotel

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND2,300,000 (~ 129 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

0.2km (5 minutes of walking).

Note

High quality, comfortable rooms, buffet breakfast included.

Walkable to the campus.

Sunny Hotel

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND 1,100 000 to 1,200,000 (~ 64 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

0.2km (5 minutes of walking).

Note

Standard single bedroom; deluxe single bedroom.

Walkable to the campus

Golden Silk Boutique Hotel

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND1,219,000 (~ 75 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

4.8km (20 minutes by taxi).

Note

Good quality, studio room.

Close to the Old quarter OF Hanoi.

Somerset West Lake Hanoi

Apartment ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND1,559,000 (~ 92 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

2.4km (10 minutes by taxi).

Note

Good quality

Excellent, studio deluxe (single/ double)

Mercure Hanoi La Gare

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND1,975,000 (breakfast included)

(~ 114 AUD)

VND1,843,000 (no breakfast included)

(~ 107 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

3.6km (15 minutes by taxi).

Note

High quality, comfortable rooms.

Excellent and nice.

Hotels in Da Nang

Zen Diamond Suites Hotel

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND1,950,000 (~ 113 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

0.2km (5 minutes of walking).

Note

High quality, comfortable rooms.
Excellent and nice

Monarque Hotel

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND1,820,000 (~ 105 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

4.1km (10 minutes by taxi).

Note

Good quality, nice view

Orange Hotel

Hotel ★★★★★

Cost per night

VND 970,000 (~ 56 AUD)

Distance to RMIT

2.1km (5 minutes by taxi).

Note

Good quality, nice view, good services

In the process of relocating to Vietnam you will, no doubt, wonder what to keep, throw away or bring with you to Vietnam. This section provides advice on what you may want to consider packing in your checked luggage or sending via shipment. It also explores options for shipping your belongings.

WHAT TO BRING

Clothes

Depending on your requirements, choices and sizes may be limited when it comes to buying off the rack. Many shops do cater for tourists, with larger sizes (up to medium) available for purchase. However it can be harder for men to find suitable trousers off the rack. Increasingly, modern and well-known branded shops are available, especially at the new malls in big cities.

There are fabric markets and tailors throughout Vietnam. Establishing relationships with tailors can, however, be a bit confusing at first. Many people bring favourite clothes or catalogues and pictures of clothing to be copied, with the final products achieving varying degrees of success. Ask your colleagues for recommendations of tailors who can achieve the best results.

Underwear of Western style, size and quality are not as readily available as in other countries. But this is changing considerably, with the addition of shops such as Jockey and Triumph. Women's underwear and lingerie in larger sizes are harder to find. 'Larger sizes' means anything above the very slim and small Vietnamese figure (above size 80B, 36 or medium). It would be easier for you to bring your own underwear and sleepwear.

It's important to dress appropriately for the climate. Due to the typically hot and humid conditions, cotton and cotton blends are the most suitable. In Hanoi only, layers of clothing (shirts, light jackets) are needed as the weather turns cooler in November. As the months from December to February can be very cool in Hanoi, jackets and warmer clothing are a must. Sweaters/jumpers can be hard to find in larger sizes.

Although cheap rain ponchos are available locally, good quality wet-weather gear is hard to find. Light wet-weather gear that can be used in hot and humid conditions is the most appropriate. Umbrellas of serviceable quality are easily purchased. Reconsider whether you need to bring leather goods. Due to high humidity, they can go mouldy during the wetter months.

If you plan to get around on a motorbike, you'll need to keep good wet-weather gear in the storage compartment. It is also recommended that you have protective and warm clothing for when riding a motorbike.

If you're a keen swimmer, it's best to bring your own bathing suits. This is especially so if you are larger than a medium size

Children's clothing and items

Many clothes shops cater for children. So it may be best to pack enough clothes for current sizes and then buy more as they grow. You can also have children's clothes made or copied into larger sizes. Rubber boots and rain gear are not readily available.

Baby products and Western-quality disposable diapers are available in supermarkets, with

baby formula in several familiar brands. Bring your preferred baby medications and a children's medical reference book. Baby equipment, including strollers and carriers, are available, though they are more expensive here and not as good quality as in the West. Baby car seats are not available and seat belts in taxis are not reliable.

It is recommended that you bring good-quality wooden and educational toys, as they are not readily available in Vietnam. Bring books, music and DVDs for kids in their own language, if it is other than English.

Shoes

Generally, it can be a challenge to find good shoes in larger Western sizes, for both men and women. Though several shops sell shoes made for the export market, it can be hit and miss as to whether they have your size.

Athletic shoes are available, though you may have difficulty finding ones large enough for your feet. Children's feet can also be hard to fit for width. Plus, leather children's shoes are hard to find.

It is better to bring the shoes that you need and that are comfortable for you, although it is possible to have shoes made locally. Rubber and plastic sandals are readily available. Good walking boots are not easily available. Remember, leather boots may go mouldy during the more humid months.

Toiletries and cosmetics

Many Western brands of shampoos, toothpaste, soap and other toiletries are readily available. If you have special needs, particularly for more natural products or for favourite brands, bring a supply.

Cosmetics are not as readily available, though brands such as Shiseido, MAC and Clinique have stores with more expensively-priced products. Bangkok and Hong Kong have larger selections, if you are planning a trip to either place. It is difficult to find face creams, such as cleansers and moisturisers, that don't contain whiteners, unless you are buying expensive brands such as Clinique. So it may be best to bring your favourite brands.

Women's sanitary products of Western quality are available – a variety of sanitary products. The selection of tampons, however, is more limited, so you may want to bring a supply. Contraception is readily available and a prescription is not normally required.

Kitchen items

On the whole, shopping for kitchenware in Vietnam, particularly HCMC, is relatively easy, with plenty of variety on offer available from either local supermarkets or more specialist kitchenware shops.

It may be worthwhile to ship some of your larger items such as food processor, juicer, blenders etc. Pots and pans of all types are readily available and can range in price from very cheap to very expensive, depending on the brand. Stainless flatware and measuring devices are of mixed quality. Pyrex glassware would certainly be worth shipping. Appliances such as sandwichmakers or low-fat grillers are not yet widely available in shops. Items that can be easily purchased in Vietnam at reasonable prices include attractive ceramic dinnerware, kitchen knives, locally produced crystal and plastic items for food storage.

Food

Vietnam has definitely increased its variety of available food, but there are some items that are difficult to find, particularly if seasonal. For example, dry chicken, beef and vegetable stock is difficult to find in the major supermarkets, but you will be able to locate stock in more gourmet supermarkets and delis such as [Annan Gourmet in Saigon](#). It can be hard to find some of your favourite spices when you need them. Some of the Western-style supermarkets have a good range, but the supply of particular types of spices can seem to be a bit hit and miss.

Health items

Vietnam does not have a large supply of health food shops. Some whole-grain and organic goods are, however, becoming increasingly available in supermarkets. Basic vitamins, such as vitamin C and multivitamins, are available. But, if you regularly use other vitamins and alternative medicines, creams/salves or specialty food stuffs, they will need to be shipped.

Books and resources

The RMIT Vietnam Library has a good collection of books available for borrowing. Teachers share reading materials and participate in a monthly book club.

In general, you will be able to find some English-language bookshops selling both second-hand and new books in the major cities, but the selection and the number of places is limited compared to what you will find in Bangkok, Singapore or Hong Kong.

Western magazines are becoming increasingly available, but the choice remains limited. Travel guides are easily available on the streets.

Consider bringing a limited supply of leisure reading material, in addition to classroom materials and resource books. Professional books, cookbooks (both Vietnamese and Western) and medical reference books are not readily available. Cookbooks are especially useful if you want to teach household staff to learn to make your favourite meals.

Some books are banned in Vietnam, including ones by Vietnamese writers that can be obtained overseas. Do not attempt to bring these into the country, as there may be serious consequences. Your bookseller should be able to advise on these authors.

Multimedia and electronics

Vietnamese laws protect from the importation of subversive items. Videos, DVDs and some books with a religious, erotic or political theme should not be brought into Vietnam, although they regularly are.

We recommend that you bring your laptop with you to Vietnam within your hand luggage although a wide variety of laptops are available to purchase in Vietnam, at competitive prices. Computer equipment, such as flash/memory sticks, computer mouse and headsets, are readily available. There is no duty on your computer, provided it is taken out of the country with you at the termination of employment.

It is wise to bring your photographic equipment, as there are few specialty camera shops. A 'dry box' for storing photographic equipment or cameras can easily be purchased. Without this, the lenses could develop internal mould. Memory cards, film and batteries are readily available. Film processing can be hit and miss, but there are several good digital labs.

Electrical voltage in Vietnam is 220V and European-style plugs (two-prong) are used. Electricity is generally dependable, with the supply having substantially improved in recent years. There are occasional power failures, especially in the summer month. Current fluctuations can shorten the life of your appliances and electronic equipment.

You can use an automatic voltage regulator (AVR) to protect your equipment. As AVRs and transformers are heavy, it is recommended that you do not ship these to Vietnam. Good AVRs and transformers can be purchased for about US\$50. If you have very expensive equipment for which you want maximum protection, an uninterruptible power supply unit (UPS) is also available locally for about US\$300. Adaptor plugs and power boards are readily available in Vietnam. However, they are not of great quality, and often need to be replaced. Electrical appliances from your home or country of residence will work in Vietnam at 220 or 240 volts without an adaptor or at 110V with a voltage adaptor, which can be purchased here.

If you have favourite electrical items, especially kitchen items or audio equipment, consider bringing these items to Vietnam. However, larger appliances, such as refrigerators, cooktops and washers, are typically supplied by your landlord. Microwaves can be supplied in some houses, but are not standard fixtures. Brand-name items can be purchased locally, but these can be expensive. Chinese- or Vietnamese-made items, while less expensive, may be less reliable.

Miscellaneous

For cyclists, it is advisable to bring a small tool kit, including needle-nose pliers and other small wrenches for bicycle repair. Tools are available in Vietnam, but they are of questionable quality. Bikes are available to purchase inexpensively compared to other countries, but are sometimes stolen. So consider this when you are deciding whether or not to bring your own

bike. Bike helmets, especially for children, range in quality depending on where you buy them. Consider bringing a quality air pump that is interchangeable for balls, tyres, et cetera. HCMC has a variety of bike shops offering a range of servicing options as well as bikes and bike gear.

- [saigoncycles](#)
- [saigonbikeshop](#)

OTHER THINGS TO PREPARE

Vaccinations

Moving countries is a good time to check that you and your family members are up to date with the usual vaccinations, such as typhoid, tetanus, hep A and B. Plus, if you are arriving from an area affected by infection, vaccinations are obligatory for yellow fever or cholera. For up to date info check out the link below:

- [Passport health usa.](#)

Driving licence

To obtain a driver's license in Vietnam, you must have a valid visa and a valid driver's license from your home country. You will need it when applying for a licence in Vietnam. RMIT's HR Department can provide advice for you in terms of connecting with an agent who can take you through the licensing process.

If you intend to have ride a motorbike in Vietnam, you may wish to bring a helmet that meets the safety standards of your own country. It can be difficult to find full-face helmets that offer good protection. You will notice many locals wearing very little in terms of serious protection.

Shipping

If you wish to arrange for a shipment of your belongings to be sent to Vietnam, it is wise to arrange for shipping prior to leaving your home country. Transit times will vary depending on where you are relocating from.

You should receive notification of the arrival of your shipment from either your relocation company or from the local port from the company. The relocation company will be able to help you clear the shipment through the port and through customs, or clear it on your behalf. Whether you have to pay additional fees for the handling of the shipment by that company may depend on whether you arranged a full delivery service from your home county.

If you are expecting to receive a shipment or unaccompanied luggage from overseas, you will need to have a customs declaration card. **This should be obtained and stamped at the airport customs hall upon your initial arrival to Vietnam.** If you forget to get this customs declaration card, you will be asked to leave the country and travel back in order to receive the shipment.

The relocation company may be able to arrange a local agent to handle the customs clearance process at an extra cost. This can save you the hassle of attending to the process in person. However, you may be required to complete other legal paperwork to authorise the agent to act on your behalf. This can be a time-consuming process, but potentially less so than handling the customs process yourself. RMIT's HR Department have had experience in helping in such matters.

Shipping agents

The list below are details of popular shipping agents in Vietnam.

- **Crown Relocations:** Ms Tran Ngoc Thanh, Corporate Services.
Tel: + 84 28 3840 4237 - ext: 27.
84 (0) 908 426 427.
Email: ttranngoc@crowneww.com.
- **Santa Fe Relocation:** Ms Diem Nguyen, Sales & Marketing Coordinator.
Mobile: +84 906 911 388.
Email: diem.nguyen@santaferelo.com.
- **AGS Relocations:** Mr Kevin Hamilton.
Tel: +84 (0) 126 44 99 885,
Email: kevin.hamilton@agsfourwinds.com.
Skype: kevinhamilton1975.
- **Saigon Express Agency Limited (SEAL):** Mr David Muller.
Tel: +84 28 3826 8848/49/50.
Mobile: +84 (0) 903 994 617.
Email: sgnexpress@seal.com.vn/ david@seal.com.vn.
- **Asian Tigers.**
Email: info.hcm@asiantigers-vietnam.com.
Relocation Services Hotline
Tel: +84 28 3825 4008.
Moving Services Hotline
Tel: +84 28 3826 7799.

Pets in Vietnam

Bringing pets into Vietnam is relatively straightforward, so long as you have the relevant documentation as required by the Vietnamese Government. If you decide to look after the relocation yourself, you may get conflicting advice from the internet. The rules change periodically, and it will also depend on the country you are relocating the animals from. However, there are plenty of international pet relocation companies whose details are available on the internet.

Bringing a pet with you to Vietnam may also determine the type of accommodation that you live in. Particularly when living in an apartment, you will need to find out if they allow you to keep pets or not. In addition, there are some parts of HCMC which have better facilities for dog. District 7, which is where the university is based, has a wide range of parks and green areas which are ideal for dog walking.

For further information click on the following link below:

- [Pet travel](#)

Vietnam has a wide range of veterinary centres and pets shops that sell wide ranges of food, toys, bedding, medicine etc. Availability of vets and pet shops is greater in HCMC than Hanoi. Below are some links to useful articles regarding pets in Vietnam.

- [Smart expat.com](#)
- [Pet relocation](#)

If you are not intending to bring a pet with you from overseas but are perhaps looking to adopt a dog or cat when you arrive, there are plenty of options:

- [Arcpets](#)
- [Vietnam animal cruelty](#)
- [Saigon pet hospital](#)

LIVING IN VIETNAM

Long-term accommodation

There are many living options available in the big cities of Vietnam, so it is advisable for you to allow time to find the right place. You might be someone who enjoys having amazing views of the city from high up in an apartment tower. Alternatively, you might be someone who would prefer being closer to street level in a more 'local' area.

There are some key things to consider when deciding where to live. Think about what's most important to you. How far do you want to spend in traffic getting to and from work? Are you looking for a good location with proximity to nightlife? Do you want space, good light, a pool or a gym? Do you just want to be away from the noise of the main street? What's non-negotiable for you?

Below, you will find links to information on the different areas, suburbs and districts to live in HCMC, Hanoi and Da Nang:

HCMC

- [Expat arrivals](#)
- [City pass guide](#)
- [Expat woman](#)

Hanoi

- [Peters big adventure](#)
- [Which school advisor](#)
- [Vietnam guide](#)

Da Nang

- [Expatistan](#)
- [Expat](#)
- [Da nang cuisine](#)
- [City pass guide](#)

Accommodation types

Serviced apartments

Serviced apartment accommodation is a popular option for families on the move. Typically, such apartments have their own kitchen and laundry facilities. They come fully equipped with linen, towels, crockery, cutlery and cooking equipment, allowing you to self-cater. There is also a daily or weekly cleaning service, providing for linen and towels to be replaced.

Rates for serviced apartments depend on the standard of the accommodation and location of the apartments. The costs for utilities are, generally, included in your rent.

Note: If you are looking for a serviced apartment in a central location, you may be surprised by how high rates can be and how small some of the apartments are. Some have very little kitchen space or living room space, with little separating the bedroom/sleeping area.

Houses

Houses are readily available throughout HCMC and viewing can be arranged through an agent. When choosing a house, it is worth negotiating on the monthly rental if you can. Also, be prepared to typically pay for two months rent in advance and another two month rent as the deposit. In certain parts of District 7, you will also be required to pay a 500,000 VND monthly management fee. This covers the maintenance and upkeep of the local infrastructure and parks (as well as bin collection 2-3 times per day).

Apartment complexes

Many modern apartment complexes are designed as more closed off from the general public, with private park space and other amenities linking multiple towers only accessible to residents. Such complexes are often located along major roads and have parking facilities located in the basement levels.

Older apartment blocks are generally tucked away in more 'local' areas. Apartments in such buildings are typically more spacious than serviced apartments and modern ones, with more clearly defined kitchen and living room areas. However, they may have other issues that you should consider beforehand, such as weaker water pressure and, perhaps, less security. Some of the older buildings also have bars across windows and balconies, making them a potential danger to your ability to escape in the case of a fire.

Share arrangements

If you are looking for a house share, there are plenty of adverts on Facebook; particularly if you join some of the online expat Facebook groups. Adverts looking for people to house share are very common.

Real estate agents

There are many agents throughout Vietnam who cater to an expatriate market. Many have websites and advertise their services through expatriate social media pages or dedicated housing pages on Facebook, where they post property information and photos.

When you approach an agent seeking help with finding something to suit you. It is better to be very clear from the start in terms of what your budget is and what your expectations are in terms of how many rooms, apartment or house, etc. The agent will not normally charge for arranging properties for you to look at.

Agents in Hanoi

- **Tan Long Real Estate Agent**
- **Biz House Real Estate**
- **Hanoi Full House**

Agents in Ho Chi Minh City

- **Dat Tien RE (District 7):** Ms Tina.
Phone: +84 (0) 903 375 029/+84 (0) 906 900 649.
Email: ngotien2000@yahoo.com.
- **Hoozing:** Mr Hai Le, Sales Director.
Phone: +84 93 999 1577.
Email: hai.le@hoozing.com.
- **Mex Co. Ltd (all districts):** Ms Thanh Vo.
Phone: +84 (0) 909 078 084.
Email: thanh.mex.vn@gmail.com.
- **Phuc An Agency:** Mr Jeremy Dang.
S37-2 Nguyen Van Linh Sky Garden III, Phu My Hung, Ho Chi Minh City
Phone: +84 (0) 908 303 618.
Email: hoangdang24690@gmail.com.

- **ProHouse:** Ms Anne Phan.
Phone: +84 (0) 908 280 293.
Email: anne.hcmc@gmail.com.
- **TopREAL (districts 1 and 7):** Ms Ha.
Phone: +84 (0) 944 555 526/+84 (0) 932 730 188.
Email: hawoodward@yahoo.co.uk.
- **V-House Real Estate and Tourism (district 7):**
Phone: +84 (28) 5410 6934.
- **Viet Renting (all districts):** Ms Vy Pham.
Phone: +84 (0) 918 049 500.
Email: saigonhouse@hotmail.com.

Agents in Da Nang

- Savills Danang
- Central Vietnam Realty
- House in Danang
- DaNang LandLord

Inspecting and agreeing to rent a property

As is the case elsewhere, it's important to inspect a property before agreeing to rent it. There are some important things to keep in mind when you inspect. If it is possible, it would be worthwhile to inspect during the day and also at night. Otherwise, you may get a nasty surprise when you realise how late and how loud the music plays from a nearby bar! Some areas can be particularly noisy at night, especially near the tourist areas of Ho Chi Minh City.

Make sure there are no building sites nearby. If building construction is going on, it can be very noisy late into the night and early in the morning. There are, for example, no rules around finishing by 7pm.

Be very clear on what is and is not included in the rent. Clarify whether the place will come furnished. There are many 'furnished' apartments, but not all of the furnishings may be to your taste. You may be able to negotiate different furnishings or ask for some things to be removed. If the bed is not up to your standard – as it may not in an older apartment full of old furniture – then ask for a new one to be supplied.

When renting, it is normal for the landlord to require a two-month deposit, as well as the one or two month's rent in VND or USD. Rental listings do not include government rates or management fees. These are usually 10-15 per cent extra. The management fees are dependent on the facilities available in the building and the age of the development.

Utilities are not included in the rental, unless you choose a serviced apartment. Water, electricity and gas are all extra. Deposits are also required for all utilities.

It's important that you discuss the lease terms and conditions before you sign the residential tenancy agreement. Once you do sign an agreement, make sure that the landlord can register you with the local police office. This action must be taken every time you move.

More information about the process of renting a property can be found in this [Renter's Guide](#)

TRANSPORT

At first, you might feel a bit overwhelmed when you see that traffic in the big cities of Vietnam. With motorbikes weaving in and out of traffic, the roads are, indeed, hazardous. Yet many foreigners opt to do as the locals and get around on a motorbike. There are a few reasons for this. The prohibitive cost of buying cars means that having a private car is beyond the reach of most people. Owning a motorbike is, relatively, much cheaper. It is also more convenient for getting around, providing you more independence and taking less time to get through traffic.

Many public transport options are available, including taxi services and public buses. While riding in taxis or buses may be safer than motorbikes, they carry other costs and disincentives that are worth considering when you make your choice of transport. Cars with drivers are available to hire for trips or by the month.

If you plan on driving in Vietnam, whether that be a motorbike or a car, make sure that you bring your existing driver's licence from your home country. You will need this when you go through the process of getting a Vietnamese driving license.

For more information about transportation options in Vietnam, we suggest you visit this [Lonely Planet](#) page.

RMIT bus service

In Ho Chi Minh City, RMIT staff and students have access to a free bus that runs to and from the Saigon South campus. There are three buses from District 1 each day (departure Turtle Lake at 7am, 7.30am and 8am) and one bus from Phu My Hung (8am). Going home, there are four buses to District 1 (4pm, 5.20pm, 6.10pm and 7.15pm) and one bus to Phu My Hung (5.20pm). <https://staff.rmit.edu.vn/news/updated-information-about-sgs-bus-service-march-2018>.

From Phu My Hung to District 1 (eg. for day trips/errands etc), there is a shuttle bus (tickets are 15,000 VND) <http://hello-saigon.com/2012/07/07/city-view-bus-dong-khoi-shuttle-new-schedule/>. A taxi from Phu My Hung to downtown is usually 150,000 - 200,000 VND.

Taxi

There are reliable taxi companies throughout Vietnam. Taxis are easily available and inexpensive compared to Western countries. They can be contacted by telephone (their numbers are

clearly marked on the sides of the car; or see below for listings) or, more routinely, by hailing them on the street. All taxis are metered, but make sure the meter is turned on before you set off. You will get to know where the taxis are parked in your local area fairly quickly. If you find a taxi driver you like and who drives safely, most are more than happy for you to contact them directly for longer rides.

Be aware of fake taxis that look very similar to the reputable taxi brands. To avoid getting into a fake taxi, firstly, check the taxi's brand name and phone number to make sure they look exactly the same. Secondly, check if the driver is displaying his ID badge, if you can see a fare-meter and if the fare meter card is displayed. The issue with fake taxis is that the driver can charge you fares far above standard amounts. If you are unsure about whether you are riding with a reliable operator, keep watching the meter. If the figures rise too quickly, then end the trip. In reliable taxis, it can take quite a while before the figures start to tick upward.

Hanoi

Reliable taxi companies in Hanoi are:

- **Taxi Group:** (024) 38 53 53 53.
- **Mai Linh:** (024) 38 222 666.

Ho Chi Minh City

Reliable taxi companies in Ho Chi Minh City are:

- **Vinasun:** (028) 38 27 27 27.
- **Mai Linh:** (028) 38 38 38 38.
- **Vinataxi:** (028) 38 111 111.

As a general indication, in Ho Chi Minh City a taxi to/from the Saigon South campus to Phu My Hung should be about 50,000-80,000 VND. Meanwhile, a taxi to/from the downtown area of District 1 should be about 150,000-200,000 VND.

Take note, however, that if you catch a taxi to the Saigon South campus from Phu My Hung the taxi driver will add 7,000 VND to the fare to cover the toll bridge, which is located at the front of the campus. Sometimes the driver will add 14,000 VND, if they need to perform a U-turn and go through the bridge twice.

Da Nang

Reliable taxi companies in Da Nang are:

- **Vinasun:** (0236) 38 27 27 27.
- **Mai Linh:** (0236) 38 38 38 38.

Ridesharing companies

Grab is the only ridesharing service now available in Vietnam, following Uber's withdrawal from the country in early 2018. Grab is available in the big cities, including Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi, Danang, Dong Nai and VungTau. You can easily download the app onto your phone, with the app being compatible for both Android and IOS. Grab is a reliable company, with many different types of vehicles available, including car, taxi and motorbike.

Grab fares are much cheaper than standard taxis. In Ho Chi Minh City, for example, the cost for a Grab is one-third cheaper than the fare of a Vinasun or Mai Linh taxi, except during peak hours from 7-9am or 5-7pm. Your trip cost will be calculated and displayed on the screen when you enter the pickup location and destination. For payment method, you can either pay in cash or via credit card.

However, we do not recommend that you use Grab late at night, as the company's is not able to track the locations of its taxis and motorbikes like the other reputable taxi companies can. If you do use them at night time, consider going in a group, with two or three more people riding close by. Cases have been reported of drivers taking customers to different locations against their will.

Most Grab drivers speak Vietnamese, especially the motorbike drivers; only a few of them can communicate in English, usually car drivers but very little. You should learn some basic Vietnamese words to communicate to them.

Xe om

Xe om are motorbike taxis. They are the traditional service that dominated the motorbike taxi scene before ridesharing apps took over. You can still find them on the busiest street corners in the big cities. You need to negotiate a set price with the driver before you get on the bike. Foreigners always end up paying more for xe oms than locals. Xe om drivers are, usually, poor. As a result, their motorbikes are typically older models and have seen better days. If you are a foreigner, xe om drivers will try to rip you off. Some people like to build a relationship with their local xe om driver. Once a relationship is built up, there is usually no need to worry about negotiating the costs. Most drivers will have mobile phones. If you have some Vietnamese or they have a little English, you can ring them.

Motorbike

Using a scooter or motorbike is a convenient and cheaper way to get around in Vietnam, although, somewhat dangerous. You must be aged at least 18 to drive a motor vehicle in Vietnam, including motorcycles with a capacity of over 50cc. If you are considering buying a motorbike, new models cost as low as US\$1,000 for a semi-automatic. However, new automatic models from the big brands, such as Honda and Yamaha, typically start around

US\$1,300 to \$1,500. Sales outlets for new and used motorbikes can be found all over the big cities. Purchasing from the big-brand stores means that you will be covered by service guarantees through their extensive network of service locations. Alternatively, you can purchase second-hand through private sellers online. Ask your colleagues for information about the best websites.

The registration of ownership can be challenging for foreigners. You can own the bike, as long as you have your passport and a valid driver's license from your home country in order to purchase. The official stores say that they can arrange the handling of this process. Keep in mind, however, that additional government fees – of a few million VND – apply for the registration of new motorbikes. It is possible to have second-hand bikes registered in your name. Ask a friend to help you, though, in navigating this process

Many expatriates buy motorcycles from people who are leaving the country, as it is sometimes difficult to organise the paperwork for registration for new bikes. Alternatively, motorbikes can be hired. This is a good way to find out whether you want to go ahead and purchase one. Rental is about \$50US per month.

Adjusting to Vietnam's roads can be difficult at first, especially if you're not used to driving on the right-hand side of the road. In your learning period, it helps to take your time and observe how the traffic flows. The speed limits in Vietnam are 30-40 km/h in cities and 40-60 km/h on rural roads.

It is recommended that you purchase insurance and get a valid motorbike license in Vietnam. Otherwise, if you get into an accident and are injured, or if you injure someone else, the insurance company will not cover you.

Motorbike driving licence

It is illegal to drive in Vietnam without a motorbike license. If you do, you will not be covered by insurance in the case of an accident. It is possible to transfer an existing motorbike license from another country. Otherwise, there is a process for obtaining a motorbike license in Vietnam, requiring you to sit a short test and to demonstrate that you can ride a motorbike. Motorbikes under 50cc do not require a license.

RMIT's HR Department can provide you with the information that you need to obtain a driving licence. To go through the process of getting a motorbike driving licence, expatriate staff based in Ho Chi Minh City are recommended to use the following agent:

- **Mr Minh:** phone +84 (0) 93776 2668.
Email: vndriverslicense@gmail.com.

The following documents are required:

- Copy of passport, visa page (valid at least three months) or Temporary Resident Card or work permit, and visa entry stamp page.

- Copy of home country driver's license (if you have one).
- A digital file of your ID picture (frontal, no glasses, no hat, shoulders covered).

Bicycles

Bicycles, either locally made and or made in China or Taiwan, can be purchased in Vietnam. Costs are inexpensive, and there is a large variety to choose from, including mountain bikes, road bikes and models for children.

Public buses

Vietnam has improving public bus systems in its big cities, providing cheap public transport. The networks, however, are not comprehensive. 'Public transport' has traditionally not had the same appeal in Vietnam, compared to the case in other countries. Most people have motorbikes as their primary means of transport.

In Ho Chi Minh City, the ticket price on the local bus system costs about 4,000 VND to 6,000 VND per route, with tickets available for purchase on the bus. Monthly tickets can be purchased at registered booths at main bus stops in District 1.

For interprovincial buses, the ticket price depends on the distance of the route and types of seat chosen. Ask for the price first before you are overcharged. Sleeper buses are popular for longer-haul routes, but the sleeping space may prove a bit too cramped for tall people.

When travelling on public transport in Vietnam, it's important to keep your belongings secure. Pickpockets frequently target buses. Always keep your backpack in front of you and ensure that you properly close your bag.

City View Bus

In Ho Chi Minh City, the City View Bus service is available between District 1 and District 7. It is primarily provided for residents of Phu My Hung who travel to District 1, although you don't need to be a resident of the area to utilise the service. The shuttle bus is clean and more comfortable than the public bus, and costs 15,000 VND for a one-way trip.

Metro train

Metro rail systems are currently being developed in Vietnam's major cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. For information about the Hanoi Metro project, visit its [Wikipedia page here](#). For information about the Ho Chi Minh City Metro project, visit its [Wikipedia page here](#).

BANKING

RMIT staff need to set up local banks. There are quite a few Vietnamese and international banks in Vietnam that you can choose from to do your banking, including HSBC, Standard Chartered and Vietcombank. You can directly contact the representative of the banks (see details below). In most instances, they are willing to come to RMIT to meet with you and set up the account.

Opening a bank account

Your salary will be paid in both VND and USD. Therefore, it is necessary to set up both VND and USD bank accounts. The VND and USD can be opened in the same or a different bank.

Here are the required documents that the bank usually ask for bank account opening:

- A copy of passport bio data page
- A copy of valid visa OR resident card (front and back)
- A copy of visa entry stamp
- A copy of labour contract
- A copy of work permit
- A certificate of employment (RMIT will issue this letter)
- Proof of residence address in Vietnam (i.e. residence logbook)
- Proof of address in home country (i.e. home country driver's license)
- Proof of relationship and same documents above for your spouse/partner (if you open a joint account)

Some banks will accept the delayed submitting of several documents, such as a resident card and labour contract. This can happen when, at the time of opening the bank accounts, you provide the certificate of employment to prove that you will be staying in Vietnam and working for RMIT for a certain period of time.

Bank details

HSBC

Ho Chi Minh City Branch

Ms Ngoc Le - Business Development Manager.

2nd floor, The Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi Street, District 1, HCMC.

Tel: +84 (28) 3544 9000 - Ext: 84031.

Mobile: +84 (0) 972 89 15 89.

Email: ngocbaole@hsbc.com.vn.

Phu My Hung Branch

Broadway B, 102 Nguyen Luong Bang Street, Tan phu Ward, District 7.

Hanoi Branch - Tay Ho Branch

1st Floor, Building 1A, Golden Palace Tower, Block C3 Le Van Luong Street, Trung Hoa Nhan Chinh, Thanh Xuan District, Hanoi.

Danang Branch

Indochina Riverside Tower, 74 Bach Dang Street, Hai Chau District, DaNang.

Standard Chartered

Hanoi Branch

Ms Emily (Diem Nguyen) - Business Development Manager, Priority Clients.

Tel: +84 (28) 39 109 713.

Mobile: +84 973 337 895.

E-mail: Diem.Nguyen-Thi-Ngoc@sc.com.

Hanoi Branch

Ms Hoai Pham

Tel: +84 (24) 36960000.

+84 (24) 73000730.

Mobile: +84 (0) 98 529 2206.

Email: HoaiMy.Pham@sc.com.

O18F, Keangnam Hanoi Landmark, E6, Pham Hung Boulevard, Me Tri Ward, Nam Tu Liem District, Hanoi.

Vietcombank

Hanoi Branch - Phu My Hung, District 7 Branch

801 Nguyen Van Linh Boulevard, Tan Phong Ward, District 7.

Tel: +84 (28) 5413 5122 .

+84 (28) 5413 5562.

[ATM Locator](#)

[Map](#)

Hanoi Branch - On Campus Branch (Handi Resco Tower)

521 Kim Ma Street, Ngoc Khanh Ward, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi.

Tel: +84 (24) 3766 5318.

[ATM Locator](#)

Da Nang Branch

140 - 142 Le Loi Street, Hai Chau District, DaNang.

Tel: +84 (23) 6382 211.

[Map](#)

Some staff at Vietcombank may not be fluent in English. In addition, most of their banking related paperwork is in Vietnamese such as statements and notifications from the bank.

In addition to open a Standard Chartered account, you will need to have a valid temporary resident card. Staff who are employed at RMIT for 12 months or less with a visa will be unable to open a Standard Chartered bank account.

SCHOOLS

If you are moving to Vietnam with young children, you will find a number of international schools to choose from. Vietnam's major cities have a selection of American, Australian, Canadian, French and Korean schools, among others.

Hanoi

Please click on the link below for a comprehensive list of Hanoi school options.

[Hanoi's International school database](#)

Ho Chi Minh City

- **American International School**
Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
- **Australian International School**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
264 Mai Chi Tho Street (East West highway), An Phu Ward, District 2, HCMC.
- **British International School**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
District 2 & District 3.
- **Canadian International School**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
07, Road 23, Phu My Hung, Tan Phu Ward, District 7, HCMC.
- **International School Saigon Pearl**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
92 Nguyen Huu Canh Street, Ward 22, Binh Thanh District, HCMC.

- **Kids Club Saigon**
Pre-school.
District 7.
- **Korean International School**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
21 Tan Phu Street, Tan Phu Ward, District 7, HCM.
- **Saigon Kids Early Learning Centre**
Pre-school.
15 Street 12, Perpendicular to Tran Nao Street, District 2, HCMC.
- **Saigon Star International School**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school.
Residential Area No. 5, Thanh My Loi Ward, District 2, HCMC.
- **Singapore International School - KinderWorld International Kindergarten**
Pre-school.
Binh Chanh & Binh Thanh District.
- **Smart kids International Child Care Centre**
Pre-school.
District 2.
- **Stamford Grammar School**
Pre-school.
4bis Phung Khac Khoan Street, Ward Dakao, District 1, HCMC.
- **The ABC International School**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
Binh Chanh District.
- **The Saigon South International School**
Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
78 Nguyen Duc Canh Street, Tan Phong Ward, District 7, HCMC.
- **The American School of Vietnam**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
172-180 Nguyen Van Huong Street, Thao Dien Ward, District 2, HCMC.

- **Renaissance International School Saigon**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
74 Nguyen Thi Thap Street, Binh Thuan Ward, District 7, HCMC.
- **Vinschool - Vinschool Central Park**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
208 Nguyen Huu Canh Street, Ward 22, Binh Thanh District, HCMC.
- **Wellspring Saigon International Bilingual School**
Pre-school, Primary school, Secondary school, High school.
92 Nguyen Huu Canh Street, Ward 22, Binh Thanh District, HCMC.

DOMESTIC HELP

Most expats take advantage of the abundance of domestic help in Vietnam. You can hire nannies and housekeepers through agents. Your friends and colleagues may also have recommendations. If you are on Facebook, there are plenty of groups that you can join, specific to helping people find reliable cleaners and nannies.

Drinking Water

You can have large (20L) containers of water delivered to your place of resident cheaply for around \$2.5 USD per container and another \$2.5 USD for deposit. You should order it at supermarket or directly to the water supplier to avoid getting the fake one. Major water brands in Vietnam include Lavie, Aquafina and Sapuwa. You may want to invest in a water cooler.

Health facilities

List of International and Vietnamese hospitals and clinics in Ho Chi Minh City:

- **Us embassy**

List of International and Vietnamese hospitals and clinics in Hanoi:

- **Vietnam embassy**

List of International and Vietnamese hospitals and clinics in Da Nang:

- **Danang services**

Dentists

A number of dental clinics with English-speaking dentists can be found in the major cities of Vietnam. The detailing of clinics here is certainly not exhaustive or definitive. Thus, the lists should be treated as a starting point in your own research to find a clinic suitable for you.

Hanoi

- Dental departures
- Travelfish

Ho Chi Minh City

- Lan Anh Dentist
- Raffles Medical
- Sakura Dental Clinic
- Starlight Dental Clinic
- West Coast International Dental Clinic

Da Nang City

- Idc danang
- Dental departures
- Danang dentist

Pharmacies

You can find pharmacies located on main streets all over the major cities of Vietnam. There are pharmacies located, also, at the major international hospitals, with these being open 24/7. At the regular pharmacies, however, it can be a little difficult to communicate what types of medicines or items you are looking for, as most staff have little English. It is therefore advisable to either bring the medicine with you, to purchase additional supplies or the empty box, so that the pharmacist knows what you are looking for.

Many medicines are available over the counter with prescription, including contraceptives, antibiotics and painkillers

Emergency and security numbers (Country phone code: +84)

HCMC (phone code: 028)

Police (028) 113 - Fire (028) 114 - Ambulance (028) 115.

Phu My Hung (Dist. 7) Security: (028) 54 113 113/ (028) 54 136 232.

Hanoi (phone code: 024)

Police (024) 113 - Fire (024) 114 - Ambulance (024) 115.

Danang (phone code: 023)

Police (023) 113 - Fire (023) 114 - Ambulance (023) 115.

SHOPPING

You can find a number of traditional markets or large new supermarkets to do your grocery shopping in the big cities.

There are big supermarket chains operating in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, providing an array of imported foods, Vietnamese foodstuffs and fresh vegetables and meats. Also, we have included some specialty stores in the lists below.

Hanoi

- **Lotte Mart**
- **Vinmart**
- **Fivimart**
- **Aeon mart**
- **Big C**

Ho Chi Minh City

- **Annam Gourmet**
Deli-style stores offer a good selection of imported products and a good alcohol range.
- **Big C**
Nguyen Thi Thap Street, District 7 & An Phu, District 2.
- **Central Mart**
These are supermarkets incorporated in apartment buildings, taking advantage of both a local consumer base as well as fitting into a high density design. They are smaller and offer some Australian food and Asian imports, such as Korean BBQ sauces.
- **Co.opmart**
A cooperative which gives customers rebates after registering with it. It has many locations around the city. You won't find many imported foods here, but you can find some housewares and clothing, and main Vietnamese foodstuffs, such as fresh rice noodles;
- **Giant Supermarket**
Crescent Mall, Basement, Nguyen Van Linh Boulevard, District 7.
Offers a wide selection of baked goods, vegetables, fruits, dairy and meat, as well as Vietnamese condiments and ingredients. It also sells homewares, such as dish plates and small appliances. A small liquor store is attached.

- **Lotte Mart**
Nguyen Thi Thap Street, District 7.
- **Mega Market**
Hanoi Highway, An Phu, District 2.
- **Phuong Ha**
58 Ham Nghi Street, District 1, and 48-50 Huynh Thuc Khang, District 1.

Da Nang

- **Lotte Mart**
- **Big C**
- **Vincom Plaza Da Nang Shopping Mall**
910A Ngo Quyen Street, Son Tra District, Da Nang.
- **Co.opmart Da Nang**
478 Dien Bien Phu, Thanh Khe District, Da Nang.

Book Shops

Major bookstores in Vietnam include **Fahasa Bookstore**, **Phuong Nam Bookstore** and **Ca Chep Bookstore**, with stores located in the big cities. Online sellers include **Tiki** and **Adayroi**. If you're a book lover, it's worth checking out 'Book Street', which is located next at Nguyen Van Binh next to the Notre Dame Cathedral in District 1.

Furniture/homeware Shops

Some of the major furniture and homeware stores located across Vietnam include:

- **Uma Furniture and Decoration**
- **Index Living Mall (Dien May Cho Lon)**
- **JYSK**
- **Decosy**
- **Nha Xinh**
- **Pho Xinh**
- **Adayroi**
- **Lazada**

Electronic devices/mobile phones retailers

Some of the major electronics stores and mobile phone retailers located across Vietnam include:

- [Nguyen Kim](#)
- [Cholon Electronic Supermarket](#)
- [Dien May Xanh](#)
- [The Gioi Di Dong](#)
- [Vien Thong A](#)
- [FPT studio](#)

Support and social groups

You can find various expatriate groups on Facebook. They can be good resources for information. However, with some of the public groups, it is suggested that you take some of the advice with a 'grain of salt', as not all information is correct. Here is a small selection:

- [RMIT Vietnam staff 'hangout' on Facebook](#)
- [Expats in Ho Chi Minh City \(Saigon\)](#)
- [Female Expats and Locals in Ho Chi Minh City](#)

Networking and business groups

- American Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (AMCHAM)
- Australian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (AUSCHAM)
- British Business Group of Vietnam(BBGV)
- Canada-Vietnam Business Association (CVBA)
- European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (EUROCHAM)
- French Council of Commerce and Industry in Vietnam
- InterNations
- Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry in HCM City (KOCHAM)
- SpamCham (parody group for charity - holds networking events and fundraisers)
- Network Girls

RECREATION

If you are looking for a place to do some exercise, here are some options of fitness centres/gyms that you can consider.

RMIT gym

If you are working at our Hanoi or Saigon South campuses, you can access our on-campus recreation centres for free. Fitness classes and yoga classes are available at certain times,

but fees may apply for such classes. For more information, check with the RMIT Sport and Recreation Centre's receptionists. In Hanoi, the fitness centre is located on the fifth floor of the building. At the Saigon South campus, the recreation centre is located in Building 10.

Hanoi

- California Fitness and Yoga Centre
- Elite Fitness Centre
- Star Fitness
- NShape Fitness
- Fit24 - Fitness & Yoga Centre
- R&B Fitness World
- Curves Kim Ma

Ho Chi Minh City

- California Fitness and Yoga Centre
- Elite Fitness Centre
- Star Fitness
- Fit24 - Fitness & Yoga Centre
- Body by Jovie
- Saigon Sport Clubs
- Nutrifort Fitness
- Saigon River Club
- Newlife Gym

Da Nang City

- California Fitness and Yoga Centre

WORKING AT RMIT

Settling into a new job while also trying to adjust to a new life in a new country can be a challenging time. To help adapt to the new work environment, new staff at RMIT Vietnam participate in an official induction session in their first weeks of work. The HR Department is able to help you navigate issues that you're facing.

First day

Before you start work at RMIT, you will receive an email from your direct line manager, confirming what your itinerary will be for the first week or so. Your direct line supervisor will advise you of what time you need to come to work on your first day and which office to come

to. They will also plan meetings for the first few days, so that you can meet your colleagues and other key stakeholders that you will work closely with.

On your first day, you will also attend a HR induction which will provide you with much more information regarding working at RMIT.

Applying for a Temporary resident card

If you have entered Vietnam on a one month visa that RMIT have arranged for you, as soon as you commence work, HR will apply for a temporary resident card on your behalf. For the application you will need to provide HR with your passport, passport photos and proof of temporary residence in Vietnam. The application for the temporary resident card can take up to 10 days and the card will supersede the entry visa.

For employees whose contract duration is 12 months or less, you will not be eligible for a temporary resident card. Instead, following the initial term of your entry visa, HR will apply for a visa renewal to cover the rest of the term of your contract.

Reimbursement of expenses

Depending at what time in the month you start and on how soon you are able to establish bank accounts in Vietnam, you may have to wait a month before you receive your first pay. However, it may be sooner that you are able to receive the reimbursement for the costs that you incurred for the visa and working permit process. So it's important that you take note of the information below. You should ensure that you have access to enough money of your own to enable you to live comfortably for the period before you receive your first payment from RMIT. The reimbursement for the costs that you incurred in the process of getting the visa and work permit is to be paid separately from the salary. Payment will be made into your Vietnam based bank account in VND after about 15 working days from the day that you submit all receipts to the HR Department. It is then scheduled to transfer to your bank account on Thursday or Friday of the week.

Pay date schedule

Monthly salaries and other salary-related payments, such as allowances, deductions and reimbursement, will be paid directly to the employee's nominated bank accounts in Vietnam. The university will process monthly salary payments or deductions by the 25th of each month by bank transfer. If the 25th of the month falls on a weekend or a public holiday, the amount will be transferred to the employees on the weekday before the 25th.

To receive your first payment, you need to ensure that you provide your bank account information to HR by the cut-off date of the month. The cut-off date is calculated as being seven working days prior to the payment date.

LEAVING RMIT AND VIETNAM

Final Salary

For expatriate staff, final salary and any amounts owed can be transferred into an international overseas account. The remittance for this payment will be deducted from the employee's final salary. It is advisable to provide the HR Payroll team with the overseas bank account details well in advance of receiving your final pay.

Severance Pay

At the end of the contract the employer is responsible to give the severance pay to the regular employees that have been worked for 12 months or more. Employees must be in full time employment or part time employment with a contract duration of at least 12 month. A half-month (tax free) salary shall be paid for each working year. Employees who are dismissed will not be entitled to severance pay.

Exit Interview

Your HR Business Partner will conduct an exit interview with you. This is a good opportunity to provide feedback on your experience at RMIT and to make suggestions or raise concerns if you have any.

Clearance Process

Each employee will need to go through a clearance process before leaving RMIT. The clearance process is whereby the employee will need to obtain approval from various departments so ensure that there are no outstanding items held by the employee. Signatures will be required from departments such as Library, IT, Finance and Property. You will be expected to return any computer related equipment that belongs to RMIT, along with company credit card (if applicable), keys and identification cards.

Exit Visa

You will be provided an exit visa one month before your last working day at RMIT. It is a single entry visa with one month validity. Please contact HR directly at hr@rmit.edu.vn about the exit visa process. Required documents will include:

- Original Passport (valid at least 6 months and have at least 2 pages)
- Original Residence Logbook
- Application form (filled and signed)
- Two 2cm x 3cm photos (white background, frontal, ears shown, shoulder covered, no hat, no glasses)

The exit visa process will take 7 working days from the application date which is scheduled every Thursday.

Tax

There is a sliding tax scale in Vietnam, for details see:

- [ECA report \(Tax\)](#)

If you stay in Vietnam for more than 183 days, you are considered a tax resident. We recommend seeking tax/financial advice if you earn income from other sources or countries, with regards to your personal tax obligations in Vietnam and elsewhere

PIT Return

Personal Income Tax (PIT) returns/finalisations are required each year in Vietnam, and the Compensation and Benefits team can help you with this at the appropriate time. If you only earn income from RMIT Vietnam, we can submit your tax return for you. If you earn income from multiple sources, we can provide information relating to your RMIT Vietnam earnings, but you must complete your own tax return.

Taking Money out of Vietnam

There are restrictions on the amount of money you can take out of the country. You can take a maximum of \$5000 out of country for US dollars and other currency in cash. Besides foreign currency, you are allowed to take a maximum 15 million VND out of Vietnam in cash