



You should read this information form if you are:

- outside Australia and intend to apply for a visa to study in Australia; or
- a student visa holder in Australia intending to enrol in a course of study; or
- a student visa holder intending to apply for permission to work; or
- a student visa holder intending to change education provider during the first year of your principal course or to change from one education sector to another; or
- a visitor, working holiday-maker or other temporary visa holder intending to extend your stay in Australia to undertake full-time study in a registered course.

Student visas – general information

The Student (Temporary) (Class TU) visa comprises 8 subclasses. Subclasses 570-576 are based on the education sector of your principal course.

The subclasses and the prescribed courses for each subclass are:

- **Independent ELICOS** (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) (subclass 570)
ELICOS (non-award and Certificate IV) as a stand-alone course. Students undertaking ELICOS as a pre-requisite to another course must apply for a visa under the subclass appropriate to the principal course.
- **Schools** (subclass 571)
Primary school; secondary school including junior and senior secondary; approved secondary exchange programs.
- **Vocational education and training** (subclass 572)
Certificate I, II, III, and IV; diploma; advanced diploma.
- **Higher education** (subclass 573)
Bachelor degree; associate degree; graduate certificate; graduate diploma; masters by coursework.
- **Postgraduate research** (subclass 574)
Masters by research degree; Doctoral degree.
- **Non-award** (subclass 575)
Enabling course; non-award foundation studies; other full-time courses or components of courses not leading to an Australian award.
- **AusAID or Defence** (subclass 576)
Full-time courses of all types undertaken by AusAID or Defence students sponsored by the Australian Government.

A further subclass of student visa, the Student Guardian (subclass 580) visa, provides for certain persons to reside with a student in Australia, where that student requires a guardian. Application for a student guardian visa should be made on form 157G *Application for a student guardian visa*. Further information on applying for a student guardian visa can be found in the information form 1234i *Applying for a student guardian visa* and on the Department's website www.immi.gov.au/study/index.htm

Applying online

The Department offers a number of convenient internet services for student visa applicants. For more information, go to the Department's website www.immi.gov.au/e_visa/students.htm. For general information on lodging your visa application, see 'How to lodge your application' on page 3.

Package courses

If you wish to apply for a package of courses comprising an enabling course (eg. a prerequisite English language tuition, foundation or bridging course) followed by the principal course (eg. a Bachelor degree), you should apply under the visa subclass applicable to the principal course.

You can be granted a student visa to cover the total of the proposed package only if you provide confirmation of enrolment for all courses. For additional information, see 'Offer of a place in a course and confirmation of enrolment' on page 2.

Detailed information on applying for and being granted a student visa is available on the Department's website www.immi.gov.au/study/index.htm

Acceptable courses

To be eligible for the grant of a student (subclass 570-576) visa, you must be **accepted for full-time study** in a **registered course** or part of a registered course.

Acceptance for full-time study is evidenced by an electronic confirmation of enrolment certificate or 'offer of a place in a course' letter issued by the registered provider offering you a place (more about this is in 'Offer of a place in a course and confirmation of enrolment' on page 2). If you are sponsored by AusAID or Defence, a letter from these agencies indicating their support of your study in Australia is required. If you are a secondary school exchange student, you must provide a completed *Acceptance Advice of Secondary Exchange Student (AASES)* form.

A registered course is an education or training course offered by an Australian education provider registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to offer courses to overseas students. Details of registered courses and education providers are available on the internet <http://cricos.dest.gov.au>

If you are sponsored by AusAID or Defence, or are a secondary school exchange student, you are not required to enrol in a registered course in order to be granted a student visa. However, you must be enrolled in a full-time course of study or training.

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Requirements for the grant of a student (subclass 570-576) visa

To be granted a student (subclass 570-576) visa, you must meet key requirements. These include your financial capacity, English language proficiency, likely compliance with the conditions of your visa and any other matters considered relevant to assessing your application.

There are 5 Assessment Levels for these evidentiary requirements. The Assessment Levels are prescribed according to the passport you hold and the education sector of your principal course. Assessment Level 5 has the most stringent requirements.

Information on Assessment Levels can be found on the Department's website and in the information form 1219i *Overseas Student Program – Assessment Levels*.

To be granted a student visa, you must also satisfy the **general requirements** that are applicable to all student visa applicants. General requirements include you being of good character and sound health, and having acceptable health insurance and no outstanding debts to the Commonwealth of Australia.

Evidentiary requirements

Key requirements include:

- your capacity to cover the cost of air fares, course tuition fees and living costs for the duration of your stay in Australia. Your living costs in Australia are set at A\$12,000 pa. The period for which you must provide evidence of funds, the type of funds considered acceptable, and the savings period for funds may vary with your assessment level and education sector of study;
- your capacity to cover the cost of air fares, living costs and school tuition costs for your family unit members for the duration of your stay in Australia. Living costs for family members are set at A\$4,200 for your spouse, A\$2,100 for your first child and A\$1,800 for each child thereafter. School costs are set at A\$8,000 pa. Except in very limited circumstances, you are required to provide this evidence regardless of whether your family members intend to accompany you to Australia;
- your level of English language proficiency in relation to that required for your assessment level and education sector of study. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is the standard used for student visa purposes. Where an IELTS test result is required, you must sit this test prior to making your visa application;
- the situation in your home country eg. personal or financial commitments that may prompt you to return to your home country;
- your academic record and history in the context of the course you intend to study;
- your immigration history eg. previous compliance with immigration laws and whether you have previously applied for entry to Australia;
- whether your proposed course of study is what you might reasonably have chosen given your circumstances; and
- whether your proposed course is consistent with, and appropriate to, your current level of education.

Detailed information on requirements can be found on the Department's website.

General requirements

General requirements you must meet include that:

- you are of good character;
- you are of sound health;
- you have acceptable health insurance through the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for yourself and members of your family unit accompanying you to Australia (see 'Overseas Student Health Cover' on page 4);
- you have no outstanding debts to the Commonwealth of Australia, or have made arrangements acceptable to the Minister to repay such debts;
- where you are under 18 years of age, acceptable arrangements for your accommodation, support and general welfare are in place; and
- if you are in Assessment Level 2, 3, 4 or 5, do not hold a student visa and are applying in Australia, you must provide exceptional reasons to justify the grant of your visa.

Offer of a place in a course and confirmation of enrolment

If you are applying outside Australia and your visa application will be assessed at Assessment Level 3, 4 or 5, you should provide:

- an 'offer of a place in a course' letter from your Australian education provider at the time you lodge your application; and
- an electronic confirmation of enrolment certificate issued by your education provider **after** you lodge your application if you are requested by the Australian overseas mission to do so.

This process allows a preliminary or pre-visa assessment to be made on your application to see if you are genuinely seeking to enter Australia for the purpose of study.

If you are applying outside Australia in Assessment Level 1 or 2, or in Australia in any Assessment Level, an electronic confirmation of enrolment certificate is required **before** you lodge your application and a copy is to be provided with your application.

Student visa conditions

If you are issued a student visa, some conditions will be attached to the grant of the visa. The most common conditions are:

- You must satisfy attendance and/or course requirements and maintain a valid enrolment for your chosen course of study.
- You and members of your family unit must not work unless you have been granted permission to work after commencing study in Australia. If you are an Assessment Level 3, 4 or 5 student who is undertaking a non-award course, your family members cannot be granted permission to work, unless your study is being paid for by the Commonwealth of Australia or an Australian State or Territory government, the government of your home country, or an inter-governmental agency.
- You must maintain your approved Overseas Student Health Cover while in Australia.

¹ Or to engage Australia's protection obligation under the 1951 UN convention relating to the status of refugees.

- If you are an Assessment Level 3, 4 or 5 student whose overall intended period of study is 10 months or less, you will usually be subject to a 'no further stay' condition. This means that after entering Australia, you may not be granted any other visa while you remain in Australia, other than a further student visa with permission to work, or a Graduate – Skilled visa¹. You may be exempt from the mandatory imposition of the 'no further stay' condition if you are an Assessment Level 3 student and can show funds to cover specified tuition, living and school costs for a 12 month period in addition to the period of your intended study in Australia (for further information, see the Department's website).
- A 'no further stay' condition may also be imposed on your visa, regardless of your assessment level or period of study, if the decision maker considers this appropriate.
- If you are sponsored by the Commonwealth of Australia or the government of your home country, you may be subject to a 'no further stay' condition. This means that after entering Australia, you will not be entitled to be granted any other visa while you remain in Australia apart from a further Student visa with Permission to Work, or a further student visa with the consent of your sponsor, or a Protection visa.
- You must remain with the education provider with whom you originally enrolled for the first 12 months of your course, or if the course is less than 12 months, for the duration of the course. If you are undertaking a pre-requisite course, you must remain with the provider of the pre-requisite course for the length of that course, and then with the education provider providing your principal course of study for the first 12 months. Only in exceptional circumstances will you be allowed to change education provider during the period described above.
- You must inform your education provider within 7 days of your arrival in Australia of your current residential address and must advise any changes of address within 7 days. Your provider is required by law to keep your residential address so you can be contacted if you do not satisfy course requirements. If you do not abide by this condition, you may not be aware of any such contact by your provider. This situation may lead to the cancellation of your student visa.
- If you are changing education provider, you must inform your current education provider of your intention within 7 days of the issue of an electronic confirmation of enrolment certificate by your new education provider.
- If you are a student visa holder under 18 years of age, who is neither being accompanied nor staying with a relative who is at least 21 years of age, you must not change your accommodation, support and the general welfare arrangements without the written approval of your education provider. If you wish to change your accommodation and welfare arrangements to live with a parent, a person who has custody of you, or a relative who is already the holder of a student guardian visa, you must lodge form 157N *Nomination of a student guardian* at the nearest office of the Department. Further information can be found on form 1234i *Application for a student guardian visa* or the Department's website.
- You must continue to be a person who would satisfy the primary or secondary criteria, as the case requires, for the grant of the visa.

Detailed information on student visa conditions is available on the Department's website.

Breaching a student visa condition may result in cancellation of your visa.

Permission to work

The Department offers a number of convenient internet services for student visa applicants. If you currently hold a student visa and wish to apply for permission to work, apply online now www.immi.gov.au/e_visa/students.htm

When applying for your initial student visa, you are required to provide evidence of financial capacity to support your period of stay in Australia. Permission to work is intended to provide you with an enriched cultural and social experience in Australia. You should not rely on work to fund your studies.

Permission to work is not given in the initial student visa granted to you or members of your family unit, irrespective of Assessment Level and whether it is granted in or outside Australia. You or members of your family unit can apply for permission to work only after you have arrived in Australia and are able to show that you have commenced your course of study.

If you or your family unit members are granted permission to work, each family member granted this permission will be given a new visa with this permission attached. You will be allowed to work up to 20 hours a week during any week when the course you are studying is in session. No work limits apply to you during recognised periods of vacation offered by your education provider. Family members granted permission to work will be allowed to work up to 20 hours per week throughout the year. If you commence your Masters or Doctorate course your family members can then apply for permission to work unlimited hours.

The limit on work hours is strictly enforced by the Department.

Members of your family unit

A member of the family unit is your spouse or an unmarried dependent child of you or of your spouse who has not turned 18.

Members of your family unit may apply for a student (subclass 570-576) visa to live with you in Australia as your family unit members. They can apply at the same time as you, or after you have arrived in Australia. However, your family members cannot be granted a student visa if your application is processed at Assessment Level 3, 4 or 5 and your proposed course of study is 12 months or less in duration.

All members of your family unit must be declared on your application whether or not they intend to travel to Australia at any time. A member who is not declared will not be eligible for entry to Australia as your family unit member, except for a person who becomes a member after your application was decided. A person who becomes a member after you lodged your application and before it is decided is eligible for entry provided you inform DIMIA in writing of that member's personal particulars and provide evidence of their relationship to you.

Periods of stay granted to members of your family unit will generally be the same as your period of stay. Your family members should ensure they always hold a valid visa while in Australia.

Your spouse will have a condition on their visa that limits their period of study in Australia to a maximum of 3 months. If your spouse wishes to undertake a course of study beyond this period they must apply for a student visa in their own right. This application for change of status from student dependant to student may be made in Australia.

A school-age family unit member (one who has turned 5 but has not turned 18 years of age) who will live with you in Australia is expected to attend school in Australia. You are responsible for their education costs.

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How to lodge your application

If you are applying in Australia you may lodge your application in person or electronically through the Department's website www.immi.gov.au/e_visa/index.htm. If you are applying in person in New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland, you must first telephone 131 881 to obtain an appointment. Complete application form 157A *Application for a student visa* and lodge it with your supporting documentation at an appropriate Australian Government office if you are applying outside Australia, or at any office of the Department before your current visa expires if you are entitled to apply in Australia.

Electronic student visa

Some people outside Australia are eligible to apply via the Department's website for an electronic student visa. Eligibility is restricted to the following:

Within Australia

- a student visa holder seeking permission to work; or
- a student seeking a further student visa; or
- Assessment Level 1 applicant seeking to apply for a student visa (ie. you are in Australia on a visa other than a student visa)

using

- form 157A (Internet) *Application for an electronic student (temporary) visa*; or
- form 157P (Internet) *Application for an student visa with permission to work*.

Outside Australia

All Assessment Level 1 students are eligible to apply for a student visa on the internet www.immi.gov.au/e_visa/students.htm

Assessment Level 2-4 students should also check the Department's website to see if they are eligible.

Lodgment of applications by Chinese students in mainland China or New Zealand

If you hold a Chinese passport in mainland China (ie. excluding Special Administrative Regions) or New Zealand and are applying outside Australia, you **must** either mail your application to:

DIMIA
GPO Box 1393
Adelaide SA 5001

or by courier to:

DIMIA
4th Floor
55 Currie Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Applications lodged at an Australian Embassy in mainland China or New Zealand cannot be accepted.

Residential address

You must provide the address where you intend to live while your application is being dealt with. Failure to give a residential address will result in your application being invalid. A post office box address will not be accepted as a residential address.

Consent to communicate electronically

The Department may use a range of means to communicate with you. However, electronic means such as fax or e-mail will only be used if you indicate your agreement to receiving communication in this way.

To process your application the Department may need to communicate with you about sensitive information, for example, health, police checks, financial viability and personal relationships. Electronic communications, unless adequately encrypted, are not secure and may be viewed by others or interfered with. If you agree to the Department communicating with you by electronic means, the details you provide will only be used by the Department for the purpose for which you have provided them, unless there is a legal obligation or necessity to use them for another purpose, or you have consented to use for another purpose. They will not be added to any mailing list.

The Australian Government accepts no responsibility for the security or integrity of any information sent to the Department over the internet or by other electronic means.

Visa application charge

You are required to pay the visa application charge, unless you are sponsored by the Commonwealth of Australia or participating in a formal secondary exchange program. Check the amount of this charge with your nearest office of the Department or Australian Government office. The charge is also listed in form 990i *Charges* which is available in the Forms section of the Department's website www.immi.gov.au/allforms/990i.htm

Payment must accompany your application and is generally not refunded if the application is unsuccessful.

To make a payment in Australia, please pay by credit card, debit card or by bank cheque or money order made payable to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. **Please do not pay by cash or personal cheque.**

If you are outside Australia, **before you make your payment**, contact your nearest Australian Government office for information about acceptable methods of payment.

Supporting documents you need to provide with your application

You must provide all of the documentation needed to support your application (certified or notarised copies) **and** declare in your application form that you have attached all the required documents.

'Certified copies' means copies authorised or stamped as being true copies of the originals by a person or agency recognised by the law of your country to perform such functions. If you are in Australia, copies may be certified by a Justice of the Peace, a Commissioner for Declarations or a person before whom a statutory declaration may be made under the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*.

The documentation required may vary depending on your Assessment Level and the education sector of your principal course of study. To find out what documents you need to provide, refer to the Department's website for the subclass applicable to you.

English translations

Documents in languages other than English must be accompanied by an English translation. If you are applying in Australia, the translator must be accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) translators are NAATI-accredited.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

Generally, you must have acceptable health insurance cover by paying the OSHC for yourself and accompanying family unit members. Norwegian students with Norwegian National Insurance Scheme cover and Swedish students with international cover arranged through the National Board of Student Aid (CSN) are covered and do not need to take up OSHC.

To arrange your OSHC, you can:

- ask your education provider to organise your health insurance cover on your behalf; or
- if your education provider cannot assist you, select an approved OSHC provider yourself and pay the insurance. You must provide the office processing your visa with a receipt of payment of the OSHC fee or other evidence that you are covered by OSHC before your student visa can be granted.

Information about OSHC providers can be found on the internet www.health.gov.au/privatehealth/consumers/oshc.htm

Re-entry to Australia

A student visa permits multiple entries to Australia. If you or members of your family unit are planning to leave and return to Australia during the period of your study, you and your family members should ensure that you re-enter Australia before the expiry of your visa. If you seek to re-enter Australia after your student visa has expired, you will need to apply for a new student visa overseas, pay the visa application charge and meet current visa requirements.

Applications for a further student visa in Australia

If you wish to extend your stay in Australia to complete your current course or to enrol in a new course, you should apply for a new student visa before your current student visa or another visa you hold expires. You may not be granted a new student visa if you hold a student visa with a 'no further stay' condition (see 'Student visa conditions' on page 2).

Transitional arrangements

Transitional arrangements apply to some existing student visa holders who are applying in Australia for a further student visa to complete a course commenced under pre-July 2001 arrangements. Information on transitional arrangements can be found on the Department's website.

Withdrawal of application

You can withdraw your application in writing at any time before a decision is made. Any charges that you paid at the time you lodged your application are usually non-refundable.

If you applied for a student visa in Australia, you were most likely granted a Bridging Visa at the time you made your application. If you withdraw your application, that Bridging Visa will cease to be in effect 28 days after the date of withdrawal. As a result, you will become an unlawful non-citizen 28 days after the withdrawal if you have not departed Australia within that time and you do not hold another valid visa.

Review rights

If you apply for a student visa in Australia and you are refused the visa, you may apply for a review of the decision. You will be notified of your review rights in writing and the time limits for lodging such an appeal.

Home page **www.immi.gov.au**

DIMIA enquiry line

Telephone **131 881** for the cost of a local call (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). This number is available only in Australia. If you are outside Australia, please contact your nearest Australian mission.