



Applying for a student visa

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You should read this information form if you are:

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

Student (temporary) visa

From 1 July 2001 the student visa class comprises seven subclasses.

Each subclass is based on the education sector of your principal course of study.

The subclasses and the prescribed courses for each subclass are:

- **Independent ELICOS sector** (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) (subclass 570)
Non-award ELICOS taken 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 sector** (subclass 571)
Primary school; secondary school including junior and senior secondary; approved secondary exchange programs.
- **Vocational education and training sector** (subclass 572)
Certificate I, II, III, and IV; Diploma; Advanced diploma.
- **Higher education sector** (subclass 573)
Bachelor degree; Graduate certificate; Graduate diploma.
- **Masters and doctorate sector** (subclass 574)
Masters degree; Doctoral degree.
- **Non-award foundation studies/other sector** (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 sponsored sector** (subclass 576)
Full-time courses of all types undertaken by AusAID or Defence students sponsored by the Australian Government.

If you are applying for a student visa, you should select the subclass on the application form applicable to your proposed principal course of study.

Package courses

If you wish to apply for a package course comprising an enabling course (e.g. a pre-requisite English language tuition, foundation or bridging course) followed by the principal course (e.g. 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 can provide confirmation of enrolment for both courses.

Detailed information on applying for, and being granted, a student visa is available in the series of **Temporary Entry: Overseas Students booklets** on each subclass that are available on the Internet site of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) at: www.immi.gov.au, or may be purchased from DIMA offices in and outside Australia.

Acceptable courses

To be eligible for the grant of a student 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 (eCoE) 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 an AusAID or Defence sponsored student, a letter from these agencies indicating their support of your study in Australia is required. If you are a secondary school exchange student participating in a secondary exchange program, a completed *Acceptance Advice of Secondary Exchange Student (AASES)* form is required.

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 at: <http://cricos.detya.gov.au>

If you are an AusAID or Defence sponsored student, or 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.

Requirements for the grant of a student visa

To be granted a student visa, you must provide evidence that satisfies the **assessment factors** applicable to you. Assessment factors include your financial ability, English 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 assessment factors. The Assessment Levels are prescribed according to your country of nationality and the education sector of your study. Assessment Level 5 has the most stringent requirements.

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.

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Assessment factors

The assessment factors of financial ability, English proficiency, compliance with visa conditions and any other relevant matters include:

- your capacity to cover the extent of the cost of air fares, course tuition fees and other expenses associated with your education and stay in Australia as prescribed for your Assessment Level;
- your capacity to support any family unit members (whether or not visa applicants) for the duration of your stay in Australia;
- your level of English language proficiency in relation to that required for your Assessment Level;
- the situation in your home country e.g. 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 e.g. 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.

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); and
- you have no outstanding debts to the Commonwealth of Australia, or have made arrangements acceptable to the Minister to repay such a debt.

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 (eCoE) certificate issued by your education provider **after** you lodge your application if you are requested by the Australian mission to do so.

If you are applying outside Australia in Assessment Level 1 or 2, or in Australia under any Assessment Level, an electronic confirmation of enrolment (eCoE) 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 or Independent ELICOS 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.
- You are subject to a 'no further stay' condition if you are in Assessment Level 3, 4 or 5 and your overall study intentions in Australia are 10 months or less in duration. This means that you must leave Australia before your student visa expires and you may not lodge a valid visa application in Australia, other than for a Protection Visa or a Student Visa with Permission to Work. If you are sponsored by the Commonwealth of Australia or an Australian State or Territory government, or the government of your home country, you may be subject to a 'no further stay' condition irrespective of your Assessment Level and the duration of your proposed study. In this case, you may not lodge a valid application in Australia other than for a Protection Visa, or a Student Visa with Permission to Work, or a further student visa that is supported by the relevant government agency that is sponsoring you.
- 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 (eCoE) certificate by your new education provider.

Detailed information on student visa conditions is available in each one of the series of **Temporary Entry: Overseas Students booklets**.

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

Permission to work

Permission to work is not given in your 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 are undertaking a Masters or Doctorate course under subclass 574, they are permitted to work unlimited hours.

Employment in Australia is not guaranteed. You should not expect to fund your studies and living costs in Australia through part-time employment.

Members of the family unit

A member of the family unit is your spouse or a dependent child of yours or of your spouse who is unmarried and has not turned 18.

Members of your family unit may apply for student visas 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 was not your spouse or child at the time you lodged your application but has since become your spouse or child.

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.

How to lodge your application

You may lodge your application by post or in person. You should lodge your application by post if possible. Complete application form 157A *Application for a student (temporary) visa* and lodge it with your supporting documentation at an appropriate Australian overseas mission if you are applying overseas, or at a DIMA office before your current visa expires if you are entitled to apply in Australia.

Electronic lodgement

Some persons in Australia are eligible to lodge an application for a student visa electronically through their university. Persons who are enrolled with a university that is participating in the electronic lodgement scheme may lodge an application to study in the Higher Education or Masters and Doctorate sectors. Only Assessment Level 1 and 2 applicants may apply electronically for a first student visa. Applications for a further student visa may be lodged by applicants of any Assessment Level. Information on how to lodge a student visa electronically is available from participating universities. Information on participating universities can be found on DIMA's web site.

Electronic student visa

Some persons outside Australia are eligible to apply directly through DIMA's web site for an electronic student visa in the higher education sector (subclass 573). Eligibility is restricted to US Study Abroad, Norwegian and Swedish students over 18 years of age. There is no limit on the duration of study for Norwegian and Swedish students. US Study Abroad students are allowed up to 12 months' study. Applications must be lodged not more than 3 months before commencement of the selected course of study.

Applications should be made at DIMA's web site using Form 157E *Application for an electronic student (temporary) visa*.]

Electronic communications

Electronic communications, unless adequately encrypted, are not secure and may be viewed by others or interfered with. If you agree to DIMA communicating with you by electronic means, the details you provide will only be used for the purpose for which you have provided them.

Application charge

You are required to pay the non-refundable 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 DIMA office or Australian overseas mission. The charge is also listed in form 990i *Charges* which is available in the Forms section of DIMA's website. You should not send cash through the post to pay your visa application charge.

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*.

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The documentation required may vary depending on your Assessment Level and the visa subclass you are applying to study under. To find out what documents you need to provide refer to the **Temporary Entry: Overseas Students booklet** 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 if they can 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 at: www.health.gov.au/oshc

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 re-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).

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.

DIMA 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.

Home page

www.immi.gov.au