



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What action are we taking?

From 1 May 2019, the Department will be requesting the provision of evidentiary documentation for English language skills and financial capacity for all Nepalese Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector applicants for a Student visa. This documentation will be required regardless of an applicant's combined evidence level. This means a 'Streamlined' student visa applicant will be required to provide this documentation with their Student visa application. If they do not provide the evidence at lodgement, the Department will request it. However, visa application processing may be delayed as a result.

## Why is this required?

Nepal is currently the third largest source country for international students in Australia, following China and India. At the same time, Nepal is only the 47<sup>th</sup> largest country by population in the world.

While the Student visa program is demand driven and there appears to be strong demand out of Nepal, the Department has a responsibility to students, education providers and the Australian community to ensure that the demand is sustainable and that the international education sector is not exposed to undue risk.

The VET sector is a key driver of international education and provides an important pathway for students to gain qualifications and specific skills across a wide range of industries. The Department acknowledges this position and is undertaking these steps to ensure growth in the sector is sustainable and to protect the welfare of vulnerable students.

## Does this apply regardless of my education provider's evidence level?

Yes. All Nepalese VET sector applicants will be required to provide evidence of English language skills and financial capacity, regardless of which education provider they enrol with.

## How long will this change be in effect?

This requirement will be in place for the foreseeable future, commencing 1 May 2019. The Department will continually monitor and revise these requirements as needed.

## My education provider says I can access streamlined processing arrangements. Does this affect me?

Yes, this requirement applies to all Nepalese VET sector applicants regardless of their education provider's evidence level.

## I'm Nepalese and I study a VET sector course. How does this affect me?

If you apply for a new Student visa in or outside Australia to study or continue studying in the VET sector, these requirements will apply to you.

## I'm Nepalese but studying a Higher Education Sector course. Does this affect me?

No, this change only affects VET sector Student visa applicants.

However, you may still be required to provide these documents as part of your visa application. To check your requirements you can use the [Document Checklist Tool](#) on the Department's website. The visa processing officer may also request additional documentation at any stage and will request this in writing.

### **Will this change affect visa processing times?**

The Department aims to process Student visa applications in time for course commencement if an application is lodged **at least 6 weeks** in advance of course commencement and the application is complete.

Complete means:

- All the questions in the form are answered correctly including questions relating to previous travel, visa refusals and cancellations (for other countries) for both the applicant and their family members.
- The required health and character checks have been completed before the application is lodged, and
- All relevant documentation, including supporting documentation is uploaded at the time the application is lodged

Applications that meet the above requirements should generally not be delayed.

### **Why is this different to the policy arrangements under the Simplified Student Visa Framework?**

The Simplified Student Visa Framework (SSVF) introduced major reforms to the student visa program. The Department is committed to ensuring the stability and integrity of the Student Visa Program following this major reform and continually evaluates the need to make further adjustments to the program.

This change is based on thorough consultation and research and enables the Department to take appropriate action to protect the integrity of the program and the welfare of vulnerable students.

The change in requirements is not designed to adversely affect the visa outcomes of genuine students seeking to obtain a quality education in Australia.

### **I was told I could pay for my study by working in Australia. Is this not correct?**

Unscrupulous individuals may misrepresent the ability of Student visa holders' ability to work in Australia.

International students may work in any capacity permitted by the law. Students may choose to work for a range of positive reasons including an opportunity to gain professional experience in their chosen field, engage more broadly in Australian society and supplement their discretionary income. However, international students are not meant to rely on work in Australia to pay for the costs of their studies. VET sector students are restricted to a maximum of 40 hours work per fortnight while their course is in session and may only work unlimited hours during scheduled course breaks.

It is a requirement that Student visa holders have genuine access to sufficient funds to pay for their study and living expenses whilst in Australia for study.