



Provider Update – Student Visa Program

Coronavirus

The Australian Government has announced that all travellers arriving from any part of mainland China, regardless of nationality, will be subject to enhanced border control measures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the Australian community.

The Department has developed Fact sheets containing further information for education providers and students which can be found on the Department's website at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/archive/article?itemId=355>.

Student visas continue to be processed.

Education provider reports – inclusion of onshore refusals in the evidence level

The Department of Home Affairs will be including decisions (grants and refusals) data where the visa applicant is in Australia in the Evidence Level (EL) reports of education providers from March 2020.

In 2018, the Department conducted an appraisal of the SSVF in consultation with education peak bodies and it was agreed that it was appropriate to include visa refusals where the applicant is in Australia in the calculation of ELs. The inclusion of visa refusals where the applicant is in Australia, along with other measures, will better reflect the immigration outcomes of international students studying in Australia

The next EL update in March 2020 will reflect this new calculation of ELs. Old Education Provider risk reports have been phased out, and providers are now unable to view EL reports in ImmiAccount without onshore data.

Commonwealth funded students

Recently we have seen a number of Student visa applications where applicants have incorrectly identified as a commonwealth funded student, which may result in an invalid visa or a cancelled CoE.

The term 'Commonwealth funded' refers to students funded under the Australian Commonwealth Government. For an overview of Commonwealth scholarships, please see: <https://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/education-and-training/scholarships>.

If a student is Commonwealth sponsored, Education Providers should clearly identify this on the scholarship agreement provided to the student and/or on the CoE, to ensure there is no confusion between Commonwealth sponsored and other scholarship types.

As you are aware, recipients of Commonwealth Government funding or scholarships are exempt from the visa application charge. Commonwealth funded students are required to provide a valid Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) with their visa application and when the visa is granted the visa description code in our system auto-cancels the CoE in Prisms to non-ESOS status.

For this reason, Commonwealth funded students will not appear on PRISMS reporting and need to be managed outside of the ESOS Act.

Global Processing Arrangements – temporary visas

Given the growth in student and visitor visa numbers for Indian nationals and the high profile events such as the Cricket World Cup occurring in 2020, the Department will be looking for opportunities to utilise our global footprint and achieve processing efficiency.

From March, the Student Processing Centre in Perth will be assisting New Delhi in a surge capacity, with the processing of student applications lodged by Indian nationals, outside Australia. The two sites will be working in partnership to deliver the India student caseload.

There will be no change to the lodgement or visa decision making process for these applications.

‘Extension Visa’

We have received many enquiries from providers asking about visa extensions. There is no legislative provision for students to ‘extend’ a student visa. Education Providers should avoid referring to a subsequent onshore student visa as an ‘extension’ visa. Applicants must satisfy all criteria for every new visa application as set out in Australian migration regulations.

Cancelled Confirmation of Enrolments (CoEs)

Cancellation of a CoE in PRISMS can occur when a student finishes their course early. Once a CoE is cancelled the student has 28 days to either apply for a new visa, enrol in a new course or depart Australia. The Department will not consider cancellation of the student visa within the first 3 months after the end of their course. Providers should refrain from using the term ‘cancelled’ when advising students about the status of their visa, as this is causing confusion among students.