



Student Visa Programme Processing update – January 2017

The Department continues to manage the seasonal increase in applications (known as peak) and have entered into a critical time with the number of students commencing over the next two or three weeks increasing. As such, in addition to my message in December 2016, I wanted to share with providers and other stakeholders, some more information about the delivery of the programme.

Key statistics

Between 1 November 2016 and 31 January 2017, over 101,950 student visa applications were lodged. This is an increase of about 12.4 per cent when compared to the same period in 2015/16 financial year. The increase in the visa programme indicates strong growth in the international education market.

The number of student visas finalised from 1 November 2016 to 31 January 2017 also increased when compared to the same period in the 2015/16 financial year. Over 87,960 student visas were finalised in this period – this is an increase of almost 14 per cent compared to 2015.

The Department aims to process 75 per cent of complete student visa applications within one month. Seventy five per cent of student visa applications made outside of Australia were finalised in 25 days or less. The length of time it can take to process a visa depends on the circumstances of the applicant. To ensure applications can be processed efficiently students and agents should provide all required information and evidence when lodging.

Providers should also ensure that CoEs are issued with sufficient time for the student to lodge their application. During this peak we have noted some CoEs were issued only a short time before course commencement, leaving insufficient time for the applications to be lodged and assessed. Providers are encouraged to include information about the latest practical start date on any CoEs which are issued within six weeks of course commencement. There is no obligation for the Department to seek late arrival letters – if a CoE is valid, the visa may be granted. It is important that the CoE is cancelled in PRISMS if you are no longer going to accept the student.

Other tips for peak

- If a provider or agent is arranging [health insurance](#), they must remember the student needs insurance for their entire period of stay.
- Students can complete their [health examinations](#) before lodging their application.
- Providers must ensure that information in PRISMS is up to date, including student contact details.
- Principal Executive Officers (in PRISMS) are able to access their [immigration risk rating report](#) through a portal in ImmiAccount. If your PEO does not have access, please [contact us](#).

Regards,
Alice Maclean
Director Student and Graduate Visas