



Provider Update – Student Visa Program

Peak processing period

The Department is currently focusing on managing the peak lodgement period. We are expecting a significant increase in student visa applications being lodged and it is important providers ensure Confirmation of Enrolments (CoEs) are issued with sufficient time for the student to lodge their application. During peak periods, the Department notices some CoEs are issued only a short time before course commencement, leaving insufficient time for applications to be lodged and assessed. Providers are encouraged to issue CoEs **more than six weeks** prior to course commencement to allow students to apply for their visa as soon as possible during peak periods. If you are no longer going to accept the student, it is important you cancel the CoE in PRISMS as a visa may be granted if the CoE is valid.

Tips for peak

Students can complete their health exams before lodging their student visa application. More information is available at <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa/health/arranging-the-health-requirement/arranging-a-health-examination>.

Providers must ensure information in PRISMS is up to date, including student contact details.

Principal Executive Officers (PEO), listed in PRISMS, are able to access their education provider report through ImmiAccount. If your PEO does not have access, please contact us at student.visa.programme@homeaffairs.gov.au.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

If a provider is arranging OSHC, remember to cover the students' entire period of stay. Student visas are granted in accordance with the expiry date of the applicant's OSHC and if relevant, welfare arrangements, up to the maximum periods as outlined below:

Duration of course	Duration of visa
10 months or longer and finishing at the end of the Australian academic year (November-December)	The visa will usually be granted to March 15 of the following year.
10 months or longer (finishing January-October)	The visa will usually be granted for two months longer than the duration of your course.
Less than 10 months	The visa will usually be granted for one month longer than the duration of your course.

Entering the incorrect OSHC dates in the application form may result in the visa being granted for a shorter period of time.



Refusals

The Department has noticed an increase in providers requesting reviews of refusal decisions for student visa applicants applying overseas. This is not always possible particularly during peak periods. The following **genuine temporary entrant (GTE)** information may assist with preparing GTE statements.

The GTE requirement is a key legislative provision in the assessment of student visa applications. It ensures the student visa program is used as intended and not as a way for international students to extend residency in Australia.

The Department continues to receive significant numbers of student visa applications that lack robust GTE statements. The statements often centre on generic information, such as “Australia’s education

system is top quality” and general claims the course of study will improve the applicant’s employment circumstances. Such statements are not weighted heavily.

When it comes to GTE, the Student and Graduate Visa Section’s advice is always to work through [Ministerial Direction 69](#). There will be some aspects where the applicant is really strong and others where they are weaker, it is about balance. A really strong application will include a GTE statement addressing each of the factors and include concrete evidence to back up statements. For example, applicants are encouraged to provide evidence or information about:

Previous study – academic transcripts which show qualification/s obtained, name of the education provider/s and duration of study, certificates of attainment.

Current employment – current employer, company address, period of employment and details about the position held. Applicants should include the name and contact details of a person who can verify the terms of employment.

Ties to home country or country of residence – this may include evidence of finances and family or social ties. The applicant needs to show they have significant incentives to return home (or to a third country) once study is complete.

Economic circumstances in home country or country of residence – this can include documents showing employment or business activities for 12 months prior to application lodgement, an employment offer after course completion, income tax return reports or bank statements.

Likely remuneration – remuneration the applicant could expect to receive in their home or a third country, using the qualifications from the proposed course. Statements concerning expectations of significantly improved circumstances and remuneration should demonstrate how this will be achieved against the background of prevailing economic circumstances in the applicant’s home country. Evidence from reputable publications / organisations (including web links) concerning labour market prospects (and remuneration) helps the decision maker establish the veracity of those statements – it adds weight to the applicant’s reasons for studying in Australia and helps to demonstrate study is their primary purpose.

Course options – alternative course options in home country and region (including course content, associated education providers; course duration, costs and evidence that links successful completion to relevant employment outcomes). Alternative course options in Australia (including course content, associated education providers; course duration, costs and how the chosen course of studies/education provider will add value to the applicant’s future compared to other education providers/ courses). Demonstrating a realistic knowledge of the students’ intended course of study and associated education provider (by comparison to others) feeds into the assessment of the applicant’s circumstances and whether the student visa is being used to maintain ongoing residence in Australia.

Course options could be summarised in a table with following headings:

- Education provider
- Course
- Website
- Location
- Cost/duration
- Comments (pros and cons of each education provider / course)

In-person Service Changes

Changes to our client service offices and phone numbers

The Department of Home Affairs is progressively transforming its online channels to allow you to self-serve for the majority of information and services. This is in line with the whole-of-government Digital Transformation Agenda, which ensures all government services are delivered in a simple, clear and easy to use manner that is designed around your needs.



Changes to our client services offices

As we continue to invest in our digital service channels, more people are choosing our online channels first when seeking our services and the number of people visiting our offices across the country has reduced substantially in the past three years.

From late-2018, our Home Affairs' offices will only provide services to people who have a letter from the Department inviting them to attend an appointment in-person. Visa or citizenship enquiries can be resolved more quickly online due to the new website. The vast majority of visa applications will be lodged online or by post. However, we understand there may be complex issues that need attention in-person, and by seeing people by appointment, we can provide a better level of service.

If there is a complex issue, or the Department needs to see someone for biometrics collection or citizenship tests for example, a departmental officer will book them an appointment to either come into the office or discuss by telephone.

Our Australian offices will continue to provide the following services by appointment:

- citizenship tests
- biometrics collection
- interviews for certain visa subclasses
- status resolution.

Changes to our phone numbers

The Department of Home Affairs has introduced a Global Service Centre (GSC) operating from Australia. The GSC has replaced all services previously offered by the London based Europe Service Centre (ESC), the Ottawa based Americas Service Centre (ASC) and the Sydney Service Centre (SSC).

Australian clients can continue to use the 131 881 number

Clients from Europe and the Americas will need to call the GSC on +61 2 6196 0196 (international rates apply). The Department recommends you check your websites, client information and correspondence, promotional or sales material for any old ESC and ASC numbers, and replace them with our new GSC number +61 2 6196 0196.



As a key stakeholder of the Department, it's important you are aware of these changes that will progressively occur during 2018–19. We will continue to keep you informed of changes that will impact you and your clients.

If you have any concerns or would like to provide us with feedback, please fill in our [online form](#), or for more information, visit our website www.homeaffairs.gov.au.

Student visa program mailbox

Providers can continue to contact the Department directly for complex issues and queries in relation to the student visa program through the [student visa programme](#) mailbox. The Student and Graduate Visas

section endeavours to answer all enquiries within 10 business days however, this response period may increase when high volumes of enquiries are received.

To minimise delays, check to see if the information you require is readily available on the Department's website and please refrain from copying multiple mailboxes or individuals. Providers are reminded the Department cannot undertake pre-assessment requests to determine eligibility for a visa type.

Reminder

If providers are issuing new CoEs to students after their visas have been granted, there is no need to notify the Department of the updated CoE as we receive this information electronically via PRISMS. If providers issue new CoEs prior to a visa decision, the applicant will need to upload a copy of the new CoE to their ImmiAccount.

Deferrals

If a student is deferring their studies due to compelling or compassionate circumstances, providers will need to issue the student with a new CoE as soon as they have cancelled the current CoE to ensure the student complies with their visa conditions. Failure to issue a new CoE could result in the student's visa being cancelled without notice if the student is outside Australia.

Key links

Studying in Australia: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/stud>

GTE: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/stud/more/genuine-temporary-entrant>

Ministerial Direction 69: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/StudyinginAustralia/Documents/direction-no-69.pdf>

Statistical reports: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/study-in-australia>

Education provider report: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/busi/visas-and-migration/education-providers/education-provider-report>

Evidence level framework: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/busi/Educ/evidence-framework>

Student & Graduate Visas mailbox: student.visa.programme@homeaffairs.gov.au