



Agent Digest – Student Visa Program



Visa application

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 you continue to submit complete applications at least **six weeks prior** to course commencement to help minimise delays in processing student visas.

Subsequent entrant dependent student visa application delays

Where family members intend to join students in Australia within 12 months of the student's arrival, strong consideration should be given to including family members as 'accompanying' dependents in the initial primary student visa application.

Lodging a student visa application listing family members as 'un-accompanying' dependents and then lodging a subsequent entrant dependent visa application soon after can lead to processing delays because applications by primary student visa applicants take priority.

We request agents inform clients there may be lengthy delays between lodgement and finalisation for subsequent entrant dependent student visa applications and there is no facility to expedite visa processing time for applicants. If this is likely to be of concern, clients are encouraged to lodge a single student visa application including family members as accompanying dependents.

Attach documents upfront

The Department can make a decision on a student visa application with the information provided, there is no requirement to request more information. Student visa applicants subject to regular evidence requirements must attach evidence of financial capacity, including evidence of genuine access to those funds. Evidence of English proficiency or being exempt must also be included with the application. Failure to provide these documents may lead to a visa refusal.

Agents should ensure genuine temporary entrant (GTE) statements provide sufficient information and supporting documents. The applicant should explain any gaps in study or employment and, where relevant, address the reasons for study in an unrelated field to previous study or employment. The applicant must explain how completing the study will help them fulfil their future plans. The GTE statement must reflect the student's circumstances. Generic statements will not be weighed heavily in the GTE assessment.

Tips

If you receive a 'Request for Information' from the Department, you must upload the documents to the application in ImmiAccount. Do not email the documents or contact the Department to advise they have been uploaded. Emailing the Department in these circumstances is unnecessary and can delay visa processing.

Ensure all Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) reference numbers are listed in the application form and a copy of the CoE/s are uploaded into ImmiAccount. Failure to do so could result in the visa being granted for the period associated with the one CoE provided.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

The Department has noticed an increase in student visa applicants entering the incorrect start and/or end date of their OSHC policy in the application form. It is important to note, 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.

More information

All agents can access LEGEND.com by subscription. This resource includes migration legislation as well as the procedural guidelines applied by our officers when they assess applications.

The [Department's website](#) also provides information about the program including [statistics](#), visa requirements, global processing time and an explanation of all the conditions applicable to a student visa holder.

The Department does not provide status updates on applications. All non-citizens applying for visas to enter Australia are considered on an individual basis against legal requirements set out in Australia's migration legislation. This often includes requirements all applicants undertake and meet, where relevant, mandatory health, character and security checks that are undertaken by other agencies. The timing for the completion of these checks varies from one case to another, depending on individual circumstances.

Reminder

If you have a client who changes their course or education provider prior to their student visa being finalised, the new CoE will need to be uploaded in ImmiAccount. Emailing or posting these documents to the Department can cause processing delays.

If you have a client who changes their course to the same or higher Australian Qualification Framework level, or education provider after their student visa has been granted, the new CoE does not need to be emailed, posted or dropped off to the Department. We receive this information electronically from the Department of Education and Training.

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's 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 of the affected 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