



Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Border Protection**

The simplified student visa framework

General information for students

On 1 July 2016, Australia will make a number of changes to its student visa processes. These changes include the introduction of a simplified student visa framework (SSVF).

Under the SSVF:

- all international students will now apply for a single Student visa (subclass 500), regardless of their chosen course of study
- all international students will generally be required to apply for their student visa online
- a new immigration risk framework will be used to guide the evidence of English language and financial capacity that a student needs to provide with their visa application.

Why the Australian Government is making these changes

The SSVF will support the sustainable growth of Australia's international education sector by making the process of applying for a student visa simpler to navigate for genuine students, delivering a more targeted approach to immigration integrity and reducing red tape for business.

Key requirements for the Student visa (subclass 500)

Genuine Temporary Entrant (GTE) requirement

The GTE requirement applies to all student visa applicants and considers whether the individual circumstances of the student indicate that their intention is for a temporary stay in Australia. A genuineness assessment is made by taking into account a number of personal factors relating to the student, such as their immigration history, circumstances that might encourage the student to return to their home country and conditions that might encourage them to remain in Australia.

Enrolment in a registered course of study

International students must generally be enrolled in a registered course of study and provide a Confirmation of Enrolment when they lodge their student visa application.

Exceptions to this requirement apply to Foreign Affairs and Defence sponsored students (Letter of Support from Foreign Affairs and Defence); secondary exchange students (an Acceptance Advice of Secondary Exchange Students form); and postgraduate research students required to remain in Australia for marking of their thesis.

Financial capacity and English language proficiency

All international students are required to have sufficient funds to cover their course fees and living costs in Australia. While student visa holders are able to work a specified number of hours in Australia, they should not rely on working to cover their tuition and living costs.

As part of the visa application process, the Department may require students to provide evidence of their financial capacity and English language proficiency. This will be guided by the immigration risk outcomes associated with the student's country of citizenship and intended education provider.

Where the Department's online client service tool indicates that documentary evidence of financial and English language capacity is required, it is important for applicants to attach these documents to their visa application prior to lodgement. Failure to do so may result in visa refusal.

For more information regarding financial and English language requirements refer to fact sheets *Financial capacity requirements* and *English language requirements*.

Health and character

International students are required to be of good character and will generally need to undertake a health examination as part of their student visa application. Students must also obtain Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) before a student visa can be granted.

How to lodge a student visa application

Applications for a Student visa (subclass 500) should generally be lodged online. Further information will be available at: www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud.

How long it takes to process a student visa application

The Department aims to finalise 75 per cent of complete student visa applications within one month of lodgement.

To reduce visa processing times, students are strongly encouraged to submit all required documents with their visa applications. Failure to submit all required documents may lead to processing delays or visa refusal.

Impact of the SSVF on existing student visa holders

The SSVF only applies to student visa applications lodged from 1 July 2016 and will not affect the visas of existing student visa holders.

Family members of existing student visa holders (subclasses 570–576) will need to apply for a subclass 500 visa if they do not currently hold a student visa and wish to join their family member in Australia.

Impact on Temporary Graduate (subclass 485)

The eligibility criteria for the Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visa will not change. For more information, refer to fact sheet *Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visa* at www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/45temp-graduate485.