



Provider Update – Student Visa Program

COVID-19

The Australian Government has announced several policy measures to support Temporary Visa holders (including students). Information on these measures can be found on the Department's dedicated COVID-19 website: <https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

Welfare arrangements for under 18 Student visa holders

Under 18 student visa holders must have adequate welfare arrangements in place while they are in Australia. Whilst the Department understands there may be necessary changes to the welfare arrangements of student visa holders at this time, it is important that Education providers ensure that appropriate welfare arrangements are maintained.

Welfare provisions depend on the following arrangements:

1. Students whose welfare is approved and provided by a parent, legal custodian or relative
 - The nominated guardian must reside in Australia with the student at all times.
 - If the nominated guardian needs to leave Australia, the Department must approve any changes to the welfare arrangements put in place at the time of visa grant. The nominated guardian must provide evidence that there are compelling and compassionate circumstances for travel and that alternative welfare arrangements have been arranged for the student visa holder.
 - To request a change to welfare arrangements, the student should submit Form 157N with supporting documents to the Department.
2. Students whose welfare is arranged by their education provider (through a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare – CAAW)
 - Education Providers should continue to maintain responsibility for student's welfare at this time (under a CAAW agreement).
 - If under this agreement, the student cannot reside in their usual accommodation arrangement, the student can temporarily reside in alternative accommodation, for example, with a relative. Education providers must approve the temporary welfare arrangements. The student does not need to seek approval from the Department. Where the change in address is temporary, providers are not required to update the student's residential address in PRISMS.
 - If students are moved to an alternative accommodation arrangement, it is important that this accommodation is consistent with Standard 5 of the National Code.
 - If a provider suspends or cancels the enrolment of a student, the provider must continue to provide the welfare arrangements for that student until other arrangements for welfare are approved, or until the student departs Australia.
 - If a provider is no longer able to approve a student's welfare arrangements, they must advise the Department through PRISMS within 24 hours.

Student support

International students are required to have the financial capacity to support themselves for the duration of their stay in Australia.

Students in second year and beyond are expected to be able to support themselves through family support and part-time work, but they will also be able to access their Australian superannuation. Students who have held their visa longer than 12 months are now able to access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation tax-free.

More information is available on the Australian Taxation Office [website](#).

Student visa compliance

The Government is taking a flexible approach in relation to student visa conditions where COVID-19 restrictions have prevented conditions being met. Student visa holders will not be in breach of their visa conditions:

- If they have an approved course deferral
- If they are studying online
- If they work more than 40 hrs per fortnight in specific critical services and employment. Note that arrangements for supermarkets expire on 1 May 2020.

Statistical update:

The Department continues to support education providers and partner Government agencies with student data. Below are some frequently requested statistics.

Student visa holders in Australia – comparison 20 March and 20 April 2020

Sector	As at 20 March 2020	As at 20 April 2020	% Change
Foreign Affairs or Defence	4,505	4,388	-2.6%
Higher Education	340,494	328,653	-3.5%
Independent ELICOS	25,419	20,862	-17.9%
Non-Award	8,997	3,835	-57.4%
Postgraduate Research	27,396	26,860	-2.0%
Schools	18,935	17,490	-7.6%
Student (Not Further Specified)	11	11	0.0%
Vocational Education and Training	162,194	158,070	-2.5%
Total	587,951	560,169	-4.7%

Student visa holders by citizenship country – inside and outside Australia – 20 April 2020

Citizenship Country	In Australia	Outside Australia	% Outside Australia
Brazil	19,664	3,009	13.3%
China	109,622	68,685	38.5%
Colombia	18,022	2,024	10.1%
India	105,805	6,848	6.1%
Indonesia	16,439	2,279	12.2%

Citizenship Country	In Australia	Outside Australia	% Outside Australia
South Korea	15,076	3,146	17.3%
Malaysia	18,093	2,301	11.3%
Nepal	55,618	1,742	3.0%
Philippines	17,135	1,157	6.3%
Vietnam	21,369	3,126	12.8%