

## MIGRATION AND VISAS

# Student Visa FAQ's (Subclass 500)

This fact sheet will answer some of the most frequently asked questions about the Student (Subclass 500) Visa program.

Please note, this is **general advice only**, and students should seek advice from their education provider and a migration lawyer if they have specific queries or concerns about the Student Visa program and/or their course requirements.

# 1

## What conditions will my student visa have?

The conditions of your student visa will be laid out in the grant letter you'll receive. It's essential that you review the conditions attached to your visa and follow them during your stay.

Below is a list of some conditions that may be included with your visa:

### 1. Work Restrictions (Conditions 8104 and 8105)

- You can't work in Australia before your course of study begins.
- Generally, you can only work up to 40 hours a fortnight whilst you're studying. There are some exceptions to this condition – for example, you can work more than 40 hours a fortnight if:
  - You're studying a master's degree by research or a doctorate degree; or
  - You're on your scheduled course break (i.e. mid-semester break).

### 2. Meet Course Requirements (Condition 8202)

- You must:
  - Be enrolled in a CRICOS registered course. For more details, click [here](#);
  - Stay enrolled in a registered course that is the same Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) level or higher for which your student visa was granted; and
  - Have a satisfactory course attendance and course progress (grades) for each study period as required by your university.

### 3. Limited Study Change

- You can't change your course of study, thesis or research topic without the approval of the Department of Home Affairs.

### 4. Health Insurance

- You must have adequate health insurance for your entire stay in Australia. You can find more information about health insurance requirements [here](#).

### 5. Address

- You must give your education provider your residential address within 7 days of arriving in Australia if you weren't here when your visa was granted.
- If your residential address changes, you must let your education provider know within 7 days of changing it.

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## Can I bring my family to Australia by adding them to my student visa?

Yes, you can bring your partner and/or your dependent children to Australia with your visa. However, there are a few eligibility requirements.

To bring your partner, you must either be:

- Married; or
- In a de facto relationship for at least a year.

If you're unsure whether your relationship is considered de facto or not, you can take our short quiz [here](#) to find out.

To bring your dependent children, they must be:

- Unmarried; and
- Under 18 years of age.

You can include your family in your student visa application, or they can apply at a later time in a separate application to yours as 'subsequent entrants'.

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## Is there any restriction on online / distance learning with a student visa?

Student visas do have restrictions on how many online and/or distance learning units of study you can take. It's important that you check with your education provider to make sure you've enrolled in the right number of on-campus courses for each study period.

Usually, a maximum amount of one-third of your course can be done via distance and/or online learning. But, due to COVID-19, there are currently exemptions to this requirement. Contact your education provider to check what these exemptions are and what they mean for you.

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## I want to change my course – do I need to apply for a new student visa?

If you already have a student visa and want to change courses to a lower Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level course or a non-AQF level course, then you'll need to apply for a new one.

You *don't* need to apply for a new one if you're studying at the same or higher AQF level or changing from an AQF level 10 course (Doctoral degree) to an AQF 9 course (Masters degree).

Some examples of when you **do** need to change your visa include:

- If you're studying a Bachelor of Science (Level 7) and want to change to a Diploma of Accounting (Level 5).
- If you're studying a Certificate IV (AQF level 4) and want to transfer to an English Language Intensive Course (non-AQF course).

An example of when you **don't** need to change your visa is:

- If you're studying a non-AQF course (General English) and want to transfer to an AQF course (Bachelor of Arts).

To find out which AQF level your current course is, click [here](#). If you can't see the course type you're doing, then your course is non-AQF.

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### I need to extend my student visa - what do I do?

Firstly, you'll need to speak to your education provider to get their approval for your continued enrolment. Once you've received this, you'll need to:

- Apply to your university to extend your Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE);
- Apply to extend your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC); and
- Apply for a new Student Visa.

We recommend speaking to your education provider about this process if you have any questions or are unsure about any of these steps.

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### I'm a postgraduate student and I've just submitted my thesis – do I need a new visa?

You'll only need a new visa if your current one is set to expire *before* the examination of your thesis is finalised. If this is the case, you'll need to:

- Request a Confirmation of Marking Thesis (CMT) letter from your education provider; and
- Apply for a new student visa.

Doing this will let you stay in Australia until your thesis examination is complete.



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## I want to stay in Australia for my graduation and to work afterwards - what are my options?

If your student visa is expiring and you want to stay in Australia to attend your graduation ceremony and work in the country, then you'll need to apply for a new visa.

The Temporary Graduate (Subclass 485) Visa is designed specifically for students who have recently finished their studies – it allows students to work and study in Australia for a further 2 – 4 years (depending on their circumstances). We recommend that students review this pathway.

There are three options (streams) to choose from:

- Graduate Work stream (if you have recently graduated with skills and qualifications relevant to specific occupations);
- Post-Study Work stream (if you have recently graduated with a degree from an institution); or
- Second Post-Study work-stream (if you have recently graduated with a degree from a regional institution).

The basic eligibility requirements for a Temporary Graduate (Subclass 485) Visa are that you must:

- Be under 50 years of age;
- Hold an eligible visa;
- Have held a student visa in the last 6 months;
- Have a recent qualification in a registered course;
- Nominate one stream only; and
- Attach specified evidence when you apply.

More information on the eligibility requirements for each type of Temporary Graduate Visa can be found [here](#).

If your visa isn't set to expire until after your graduation ceremony, then you don't need to do anything to attend. But, if you wish to stay and work in Australia afterwards, we recommend applying for the Temporary Graduate (Subclass 485) Visa (if you meet the eligibility requirements).

If your visa is expiring and you only want to stay in Australia for the graduation ceremony, then you can apply for a Visitor (Subclass 485) Visa in the Tourist stream. This visa will allow you to remain in the country as a tourist as opposed to a student.