

Covid-19 & international students

Student visas

I'm a new student, but overseas. Do I need to apply for a student visa?

We recommend you hold a student visa. This will allow you to enter Australia as quickly as possible once the travel ban is lifted. Otherwise, you may wait several months for your visa to be processed.

Also, you may want to apply for the 485-post study work (485 PSW) visa once you have completed your studies. If you want to count your online study overseas towards meeting the Australian Study Requirement, you must have held a student visa during this time. More information on the 485 PSW visa below.

I'm overseas and my student visa is expiring soon. Do I need to apply for a new student visa?

We recommend you apply for a new student visa. Otherwise, you could experience lengthy delays waiting for your new visa to be processed once the borders open. Also, only online study undertaken overseas while you hold a valid student visa can be counted towards meeting the Australian Study Requirement for the 485 PSW visa.

When should I apply for a new student visa?

You should start gathering your documents 8 weeks before your current student visa expires. This will allow enough time for all the required documents to be sent to you. You should apply as soon as you receive the documents. If possible, you should do this at least 4 weeks before your current student visa expires.

What is form 1545? How do I get one? Will I get a free student visa?

Form 1545 is a document provided by the University confirming that your studies were affected by COVID-19. If the University granted you a reduced study load or a deferment of your studies because of COVID-19, they will provide you with a completed Form 1545 along with your new eCOE.

Enquiries about Form 1545 can be made to student.compliance@sydney.edu.au.

You should submit the Form 1545 with your new student visa application. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) may decide to waive your visa application fee but this is not guaranteed.

How do I apply for a student visa?

All student visa applications can be made online through your [ImmiAccount](#).

Am I still allowed to study online?

The Australian Government has advised that the change in delivery from face-to-face to online will not impact compliance with [visa conditions for international students](#). This means you will not be in breach of your student visa if you are unable to complete 67 percent or more of your studies via face-to-face learning due to the impacts of COVID-19. Students will be advised when this changes.

I'm onshore but I don't want to continue studying online. Can I suspend my studies but remain in Australia?

It is a condition of your student visa that you are enrolled at university. If you suspend your studies your eCOE will be cancelled. To remain lawfully in Australia, you will need to apply for a new visa to allow you to stay. Before you make this decision, contact [our Legal Service](#) for advice.

I'm overseas. Do the work restrictions on my student visa still apply?

Any conditions on your student visa, including any work restrictions, only apply when you are onshore in Australia.

485 Post Study Work (485 PSW) visas

The 485 PSW visa allows international students who have completed eligible courses of study in Australia to remain onshore to get work experience. Usually you must apply for a 485 PSW visa within 6 months of completing your course requirements, and you can only apply for and be granted this visa when you are in Australia.

I've completed my degree, but I'm overseas and affected by the travel ban. Can I still apply?

The Australian Government has announced changes to the 485 PSW visa for students impacted by the travel ban.

If you were offshore for some or all of the period from 1 February 2020 to 19 September 2020, you can:

- apply within 12 months of completing your course requirements
- apply offshore
- be granted the visa offshore

If your visa is granted offshore, you will be able to return to Australia when travel restrictions are lifted. Your visa period will run from your date of entry to Australia.

I was studying online from overseas. Can I still meet the Australian Study Requirement & be eligible for the 485 PSW visa?

The Australian Government has announced that online study undertaken outside Australia as a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions will count towards the Australian Study Requirement for existing and new student visa holders. Provided you held a student visa during that time, you can count this online study from overseas.

When should I apply for the 485 PSW visa?

You are eligible to apply for the 485 PSW visa as soon as you are sent your [completion letter](#) from the University confirming that you have completed your course requirements. If you are a coursework student, this is later than the date on which you submit your last assignment or finish your exams. If you are a higher degree by research (HDR) student this is later than the date on which you submit your thesis or any emendations. For all students, this date is earlier than your graduation date.

You must apply for the 485 PSW within 6 months of the date on your completion letter (or within 12 months if you were offshore from 1 February 2020 to 19 September 2020 and unable to return to Australia). You will need to include your completion letter in your application.

Once you are eligible to apply, you should start gathering the documents you need as they can take some time to obtain.

How do I apply for the 485 PSW visa?

You can apply online through your [ImmiAccount](#).

I've already applied for a new visa and now need to have my health check/do my English language test. But the next appointment is in 2 months. What do I do?

The DHA is aware that there is still a delay in getting health checks and English language tests. If you can't get a booking within the 28 days, book yourself into the next available one and take a screenshot to show that this was the earliest booking. You should send your screenshot to the DHA as proof of the delay.

Bridging visas

Do I need to apply for a bridging visa?

As long as you apply for a new visa before your current visa expires, the DHA should automatically place you on a bridging visa while they process your new visa. If you haven't received a bridging visa within 1 or 2 days of your old visa expiring, you should contact the DHA immediately. Once your new visa is processed, it will be sent to you and your bridging visa will end.

Employment

Only international students in specific areas are still temporarily allowed to work more than 40 hours per fortnight during session. You can only work more hours if:

- You are employed in the health sector, enrolled in a health-related course (such as nursing or medicine) and are directed by a health official to assist in the effort against COVID-19.
- You are employed in aged care by an Approved Provider or Commonwealth-funded aged care service provider, and your employment started before 8 September 2020.
- You are employed by a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme provider, and your employment started before 23 April 2020.

Other information

The University has a [list of frequently asked questions](#) regarding COVID-19 study information and the travel restrictions.

The Australian Government also provides an [information sheet](#) and a contact point to assist international students with questions or concerns relating to their study and COVID-19. Email them at: international.students@dese.gov.au

How to get initial advice from our Legal Service:

[Our Legal Service](#) has registered migration agents (MARNs: 1911813 & 1912229) who can help you if you need migration law advice. We can also help you with any other legal issues you may have. We are currently offering legal/migration appointments by phone or Zoom.

If you are not already a member, first [join SUPRA](#).

Fill in [our contact form](#), or email help@supra.usyd.edu.au. Please attach any documents relevant to your enquiry in your email.

We will be in touch with you via email.

Disclaimer: This information is current as at 24 September 2020 and is intended as a guide to the law as it applies to people who live in or are affected by the law as it applies in NSW. It does not constitute legal advice.

Updated: 24 September 2020