



COVID-19 - International Education Agent and Provider Update

Last updated: 1 May 2020

- Information about Australia's response to COVID-19 and the global impact on the education sector.
- For overall updates visit www.australia.gov.au for student specific visit studyinaustralia.gov.au/English/resource-hub
- Please forward feedback and additional links to: studyinaustralia@austrade.gov.au
- Thank you to Australian Government and State and Territory agencies and for their contribution to this resource.

LATEST NEWS	COVID-19 GLOBAL HEALTH UPDATE	BUSINESS SUPPORT & INFORMATION	STUDENT SUPPORT & INFORMATION	EDUCATION DELIVERY
TRAVEL	WELLBEING	SECTOR RESPONSES	STUDENT KEY MESSAGES	CONTACTS

Austrade is committed to ensuring all international students, education providers, agents and the broader sector are informed and supported during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Working with other government agencies and state and territory partners, we are an aggregator of information.

ISSUE / LINK	KEY UPDATE / RESOURCE
<u>LATEST NEWS</u>	
See links below for details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government releases a snapshot of health and wellbeing support, financial assistance and information sources available to international students. Download. • Australian Government launches COVIDSafe App. • TEQSA starts a new weekly webinar series discussing online learning • Updated country by country COVID-19 Austrade Market Reports. • ACT government provides \$450,000 more support for international students and temporary visa holders. • Victorian Government announces a \$45 million International Student Emergency Relief Fund. • Study NSW Partner Project grants are open for applications. • NSW Government \$73 million funding boost to support mental wellness during COVID-19 pandemic. • Australian Homestay Network establishes International Student Support Network to support vulnerable international students.
www.australia.gov.au	For the latest government announcements visit the online Australian Government hub - providing the most up-to-date news, updates and advice from across Australia.
<u>COVID-19 GLOBAL HEALTH UPDATE</u>	
Your Health	Advice on keeping yourself and the community safe. Australian Government launched a new voluntary app, COVIDSafe App, to help stop the spread of coronavirus. The app is now available from the Apple App Store and Google Play .
Current Statistics	Visit the Australian Department of Health Coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert website for daily reports on COVID-19 case numbers and the current situation .
Global Statistics	Daily status updates on the progression of COVID-19 globally from the World Health Organisation.
Infection control training	Thirty-minute online training session for workers, covering the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19.
Social Distancing & Self-isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on social distancing and self-isolation.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All travelers arriving in Australia are required to undertake their mandatory 14 day self-isolation at designated facilities. Public gatherings limited to two people, excluding householders. Visit State and Territory websites for further enforcement information.
BUSINESS SUPPORT & INFORMATION	
Australian Government Economic Response	<p>For information about the Australian Government’s Economic Response to the Coronavirus, visit The Treasury website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The \$130 billion JobKeeper payment to help keep more Australians in jobs and support businesses. Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme to support up to \$40 billion of lending to SMEs (including sole traders and not-for-profits). JobKeeper Payment — Information for employees factsheet and FAQs.
Export Market Development Grants (EMDG)	The Australian Government will inject an extra \$49.8 million into the Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) program in 2019-20, allowing exporters and tourism businesses to access additional reimbursements for marketing costs.
Higher Education Relief Package	The Australian Government announced a new Higher Education Relief Package , including guarantee funding in 2020 at current levels, discounted online courses fee for first six months from 1 May 2020, a six-month exemption from loan fees under FEE-HELP and VET Student Loans, and regulatory fee relief for tertiary and international education providers. For more information visit Higher education relief package - Frequently Asked Questions .
COVID-19 Export Capital Facility	The Australian Government has established a \$500 million COVID-19 Export Capital Facility , to be administered by Export Finance Australia, to assist previously profitable Australian exporters whose businesses have been impacted by COVID-19. Exporters will be able to access loans from \$250,000 to \$50 million under the Facility.
State Government Support	Australian Capital Territory / New South Wales / Northern Territory / Queensland / South Australia / Tasmania / Victoria / Western Australia .
Safe Work Practices	Ensuring the health and safety of workers and others at the workplace during COVID-19.
Employer Obligations	To find out about your obligations as an employer, please see the guidance provided by the Fair Work Ombudsman .
Apprentices and Trainee Support	The Australian Government is supporting small businesses to retain their apprentices and trainees through a wage subsidy.
VISA CONDITIONS	
Visa regulation	Visit the Department of Home Affairs website to keep updated on all developments.
Temporary visa holder arrangements for international students during COVID-19 – as at 30 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International students who have been in Australia longer than 12 months will be able to access their Australian superannuation. Students unable to return to Australia to continue their studies may have their study deferred. This will not affect their visa status. Students offshore and studying online with an Australian education provider do not need a visa. Education providers can issue a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and enrol students to study online.
Further changes to student visa work condition to help boost frontline health efforts to tackle coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International students studying relevant medical courses will be exempt from the usual 40-hour per fortnight work limit, if they are working in support of coronavirus health efforts and at the direction of the relevant health authority. International students currently working for registered disability service providers will also be exempt.
EDUCATION DELIVERY	
Education Department Regulations	Regulatory information for universities VET, ELICOS and higher education providers.
ASQA Compliance Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASQA issues ‘Guide to provider default obligations under the ESOS Act’ and publishes FAQs in relation to compliance arrangements to guide providers’ operations during COVID-19. ASQA publishes distance learning guidance for providers offering distance learning options.
ASQA Fees and Charges Relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASQA announces details of fee waivers and reimbursements and publishes FAQs.

TEQSA latest advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEQSA publishes a suite of online learning resources for providers to assist the sector's transition to online learning. • TEQSA issues Online delivery – key considerations for providers in changes to the mode of delivery. • TEQSA starts a new weekly webinar series discussing online learning, in collaboration with RMIT Online.
Tuition Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tuition Protection Service (TPS) is mindful that international students and education providers are impacted by the restrictions on travel and other social distancing measures. Contact them with your concerns.
PRISMS and Travel	If you have students who are affected by restrictions due to COVID-19, you may need to defer these students within PRISMS.
Virtual and Online Delivery Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austrade with the Department of Education Skills and Employment has prepared a guide to online delivery, with a focus on China. • Austrade has launched a ‘Study with Australia’ pilot, in partnership with FutureLearn, to promote an Australian higher education showcase of online courses. • My Skills homepage has been updated to cater to the growing demand for online training, making it easier to find VET courses online or find training providers who offer online training. • The China Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE) under the Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE) has announced that Chinese students overseas will not be penalized for any delay, inconsistency or online courses taken during the COVID-19 pandemic period. • Coursera, edX & FutureLearn offering free online courses to millions of students. • IELTS launches IELTS Indicator, a new online English language test for students and is available in countries where IELTS testing has been suspended due to COVID-19.
State by State Education Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Capital Territory • New South Wales • Northern Territory • Queensland • South Australia • Tasmania • Victoria • Western Australia
STUDENT SUPPORT INFORMATION	
COVID-19 International Student Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated website for Australia's international students providing central information from other Government agencies. Topics include education, health, visas & travel, assistance and other resources. • Australian Government releases a snapshot of health and wellbeing support, financial assistance and information sources available to international students and COVID-19 Student Support Directory listing numerous support and financial packages being offered by Institutions around Australia.
COVID-19 Information – translations	A list of resources about COVID-19 in Arabic, Vietnamese, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Persian, Italian, Korean, Greek, Chin Hakka, Hazaragi, Kurdish and Spanish. The resources include fact sheets, guidelines and other publications.
International Student FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions and advice for international students, created by the Department of Education Skills and Employment.
International Student Work Rights	Find out about international students' workplace entitlements, rights and obligations and regular updates on workplace entitlements and obligations during the COVID-19 crisis at Fair Work Ombudsman's website.
Student Hotline	The Australian Government has provided a dedicated email and hotline for international students - international.students@dese.gov.au or call 1300 981 621 (8am to 8pm AEDST Monday to Friday - calls within Australia only).
Council of International Students Australia (CISA)	The Council of International Students Australia represents international students studying at the undergraduate, postgraduate, private college, TAFE, English language intensive courses for overseas students (ELICOS) and foundation courses.

Student Health Care and OSHC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an international student is showing symptoms of COVID-19, they should phone the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 for information and advice. If translating or interpreting services are required, call 131 450. • For most OSHC providers, visits to a GP are covered at 100 per cent of the government-recommended fee (known as the 'MBS'). Seek advice from your OSHC provider and/or the Australian Department of Home Affairs. • The Department of Health has released a OSHC factsheet, alongside a Deed for the Provision of Overseas Student Health Cover and Explanatory Guidelines for consumers.
Accommodation	<p>There is a six-month ban on evictions for both residential and commercial tenants during the COVID-19 pandemic. For advice on rights as a tenant contact the relevant state/territory authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT: Tenants Union ACT • NSW: Fair Trading • NT: Northern Territory Consumer Affairs • Queensland: Residential tenancies Authority • SA: South Australia Consumer and Business Services • Tasmania: Consumer, Building and Occupation Services • Victoria: Consumer Affairs Victoria • WA: Residential Tenancies <p>The Australian Homestay Network established an International Student Support Network to support vulnerable international students experiencing hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis.</p>
Emergency relief	<p>The Australian Government announced 7 million funding to the Red Cross over the next six months to deliver emergency relief and casework support to temporary visa holders who are facing significant vulnerabilities. This funding is part of the \$100 million funding injunction to more than 300 charities and community organisations. International Students and temporary visa holders who need help can email nat_rc_msp@redcross.org.au to register their situation.</p>
State and local government support for international students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Government launched a \$20 million 'Jobs for Canberrans' fund which will give priority to those in most need and are not eligible for the Australian Government's wage subsidy scheme or other support. • ACT government to provide \$450,000 more support for international students and temporary visa holders. • StudyNSW launched International Student Welfare Services Hub. • Study NSW Partner Project grants are open for applications from a consortium of providers and organisations to ensure the benefits reach a broad range of international students. • NT Government launched a \$20 million fund for keeping businesses open and ensuring jobs are available, including workers who are not covered under any JobKeeper payments, like visa holders. • SA Government announced a \$13.8 million International Student Support Package to support the State's international students facing financial hardship. • Queensland Government announces \$2.2 million in funding for counselling, tuition support, laptops, isolation care-packs, pre-prepared meals and other living expense payments to students. • Tasmania Government provides cash payments for temporary visa holders suffering financial hardship as part of a \$3 million COVID-19 support package. • Victorian Government announced a \$45 million International Student Emergency Relief Fund. • Study Melbourne established a 'COVID-19 Support for International Students' hub offers advice, information and links to official sources of information, including a Working for Victoria program. • City of Melbourne calls for increased support for international students during the COVID-19 pandemic – including the establishment of a hardship fund to support students.
TRAVEL	

COVID-19 and the border	For updates to Australia's immigration and border arrangements during the COVID-19 outbreak, including temporary visa FAQs and information in your own language please visit the Department of Home Affairs website .
Coming to Australia	The Australian Government announced on 19 March 2020 a travel ban for all non-residents and non-citizens of Australia effective as of 9:00pm AEDST 20 March 2020. All travellers entering Australia will be required to undertake their mandatory 14 day self-isolation at designed facilities from 28 March 2020.
Leaving Australia	Australian citizens and Australian permanent residents are restricted from travelling overseas from 25 March 2020 at 12:00pm AEDST, with exemptions for certain circumstances. Visit the Department of Home Affairs website for detail.
Consular Support	For consular issues for your staff and students, either in Australia or overseas, visit the DFAT website for Australian embassies and consulates overseas and foreign embassies and consulates in Australia .
WELLBEING	
Mental Health Service and Support	Department of Education support reference for international students affected by COVID-19. The Australian Government announced \$1.1 billion to support more mental health, Medicare and domestic violence services. NSW Government \$73 million funding boost to support mental wellness during COVID-19 pandemic.
Guide to coping with COVID-19	The Australian Psychological Society guide for adults and children in cope with COVID-19 stress or anxiety.
SECTOR RESPONSE	
Education Provider Updates	A list of COVID-19 information pages for Australian universities, TAFEs and government schools.
Higher Education	Support and advice from Independent Tertiary Education Council of Australia for independent higher education providers.
ELICOS	Support and advice from English Australia for the English language teaching industry.
Schools	Support and advice from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Schools Council of Australia – www.isca.edu.au National Catholic Education Commission – www.ncec.catholic.edu.au
VET	Support and advice from Independent Tertiary Education Council of Australia for private VET providers.
Education Agents	Support and advice from the International Student Education Agents Association .
COUNTRY BY COUNTRY	
Regional market update on the impact of COVID-19	Each week Austrade will provide a market update where possible with summaries from post around the globe.
In country support – Austrade's Global Network	Austrade's network of 1,100 staff is committed to helping you through this time. Reach out to your usual contacts if you have any questions. Our global network contact details can be found here .
KEY CONTACTS	
National Coronavirus Information Helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Coronavirus Information Helpline – 1800 020 080 – is available 24/7 for information and advice on COVID-19. Translating assistance when seeking medical advice please call TIS – Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.
National Coronavirus WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date official government information about current and future measures.
Study Australia – shared resource for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.studyinaustralia.gov.au Study in Australia Facebook / Instagram / Weibo / WeChat
State-based International Student Study hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study Canberra ACT - studycbr.com.au Study NSW NSW - study.sydney Study NT NT - studynt.nt.gov.au Study Queensland QLD - studyqueensland.qld.gov.au Study Adelaide SA - studyadelaide.com Study Tasmania TAS - studytasmania.tas.gov.au Study Melbourne VIC - studymelbourne.vic.gov.au Study Perth WA - studyperth.com.au Study Brisbane QLD - https://www.choosebrisbane.com.au/Study

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study Gold Coast QLD - https://www.studygoldcoast.org.au • Study Cairns QLD - https://www.studycairns.com.au
Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment	https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19 .
Australian Department of Home Affairs	Visit the Department of Home Affairs website for updates to Australia's immigration and border arrangements during the COVID-19 outbreak in your own language, including Arabic (عربي) Chinese - Simplified (简体中文) Greek (Ελληνικά) Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) Italian (Italiano) Japanese (日本語) Korean (한국어) Nepali (नेपाली) Persian (فارسی) Portuguese (Português) Spanish (Española) Vietnamese (Tiếng Việt) , and many more.
Commonwealth Ombudsman	The Commonwealth Ombudsman ensures safeguards for the community in its dealings with the Australian Government and have oversight of some private sector organisations.

Key Messages for Australia's International Students

As at 30 April 2020 (new content since last update in green)

- Australia values international students; as described by Mr Dan Tehan, Minister of Education: "You are our friends, our classmates, our colleagues and members of our community".
- Whilst these are difficult times, your education institution and government agencies are here to help. Please remember that you are not alone and the Australian community is here to support you during this time. We are [#InThisTogether](#).
- **We know that there is a lot of information things can be confusing – so we've worked with state and territory governments, institutions and service providers to map all the support in one place- you can [download it here](#).**
- Australia is well placed and prepared to manage during this time, and we are taking collective actions to support public health and our community. The safety of all students and the public is the Government's number one priority.
- **Australia's efforts to manage the spread of COVID-19 are paying off. As part of the next phase in managing and tracking the virus the Australian Government has launched a new [COVIDSafe App](#), that will enable the government to speed up contacting people who may have been exposed to the virus. We encourage all those resident in Australia now to do their part and download the app.**
- This is addition to the Australian government app that connects you to the most up to date information. aus.gov.au/whatsapp.
- Circumstances around the world are changing constantly, so the best way to stay informed is to follow advice from your institution and the official links. Go to Australia.gov.au in the first instance and then to [Study in Australia](#) that aggregates advice relevant to students.

Your Education

- Many students in Australia will have moved to online teaching modes, with full support from their institutions. Australia has a long history in successful distance and online education, with some of the world's leading practices developed right here.
- **Australian regulators (TEQSA and ASQA) will be flexible in order to support you to study online either in Australia or offshore. Both regulators are working with your colleges and institutions to continue to enhance online delivery.**
- Australian providers have been highly responsive to the challenges and are working closely with government in implementing required changes.
- Students offshore and studying online with an Australian education provider do not need a visa. Education providers can issue a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and enrol students to study online.
- Australian education providers are taking all the necessary precautions and are being flexible to student circumstances, offering options for deferring enrolments, among other measures.

- If students have questions about enrolment, fees, start dates, attendance or any other issues related to your studies, please contact your education provider in the first instance.
- You can also find updated information from each institution, as well as support services available to international students at the [Study in Australia website](#).

Your Visa

- A guiding principle of the Australian Government is that students should not be impacted adversely by COVID-19. The Government is actively looking at a range of options and measures to ensure that students will not be disadvantaged by COVID-19.
- We understand many students will need to delay their study start dates and take up their Australian education provider's flexible study options, but have questions about their already granted visa.
- Students unable to return to Australia to continue their studies may need to have their study deferred. This will not affect their visa status.
- Students overseas should also only lodge visa applications when they are confident that they can satisfy requirements for a student visa application that may be required for assessment (e.g. Health check, English language testing and evidence of financial capacity).
- Further information on arrangements will be made available as soon as possible. We appreciate your patience during these challenging times.
- To stay up to date with travel and visa matters visit the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).

Your Welfare and Managing Through these Challenging Times

- This is a challenging time for everyone. We know that some international students are struggling to meet their living expenses. Given the global impact of COVID-19 many families and funding sources from student's home countries have also been impacted.
- Students who have been in Australia longer than 12 months will be able to access their Australian superannuation to help support themselves.
- International students studying relevant medical courses will be exempt from the usual 40-hour per fortnight work limit, if they are working in support of coronavirus health efforts and at the direction of the relevant health authority. **International students currently working for registered disability service providers will also be exempt from the 23rd April 2020.**
- We also know that some students may wish to return home but at the moment this may not be possible due to restricted or no flight access or borders closing in other countries.
- Students' first point of call should be their institution, but there are other service providers that can help as well. These include local and national non-government organisations and community services. Students should also contact their Embassy or local Consular Office if you are in need of urgent consular support.
- As Australia instigates stricter social distancing and preventative protocols, some states and territories have closed non-essential services. This means that many students' access to part time work has been cut or reduced. This is an issue for all workers in Australia.
- However, we acknowledge the unique challenges faced by Australia's temporary workforce, including international students, who may have no safety net at this time.
- **All Australian States and Territories have announced programs and packages to support international students and temporary migrants who may be vulnerable at this time. Most recently, the Victorian Government committed \$45 million for student support emergency relief payments.**
- Australia's international education study destination agencies are serving a vital role in supporting international students who are facing hardship at this time. Study destination agencies across Australia are mobilising support, in partnership with Australia's education provided and other key stakeholders.
- The Government has also announced that evictions from rental properties will be put on hold for six months. Tenants and landlords are encouraged to agree on rent relief or temporary amendments to the lease.

- The Australian international education sector is working hard to support the health, wellbeing, and academic success of international students. A key priority is to ensure that international students have information about the support services that are available to them in Australia – locally and nationally.
- International students are encouraged to contact their education providers about the range of support that is available to them at this time.
- Australian universities have established emergency funds and food banks to assist domestic and international students facing hardship because of the loss of their part-time work.
- Other immediate support responses have included referring international students to appropriate agencies including welfare, mental health, and emergency relief. You are not alone, and the Australian community is here to support you.

Your Health

- If an international student is showing symptoms of COVID-19, they should phone the 24/7 National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 regarding their symptoms for information and advice. If translating or interpreting services are required, call 131 450.
- For most OSHC providers, visits to a GP are covered at 100 per cent of the government-recommended fee (known as the 'MBS'). Seek advice from your OSHC provider.
- OSHC providers are very supportive of the challenges facing international students and they encourage you to speak with them to discuss your specific circumstances and needs.
- Australian Government has recently launched a new voluntary app, COVIDSafe App, to help health authorities to notify people exposed to COVID-19 so the health system can protect you, your family and friends. The app is now available from the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).