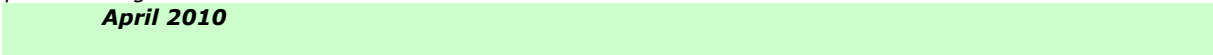


# **Pre-Departure Advice for Postgraduate, Research and Students with Families**

*The contents of this guide were written and created by ISANA members Chandra Rao and Desma Smith with funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.*

*The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. This report does not purport to be legal advice and is provided as a general guide only. Some information may become superseded through changes to the law. Users/readers should seek advice from a legal practitioner in relation to any particular legal issues.*

**April 2010**



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## Section 1: Enrolling as a postgraduate student

### Information of value to your journey

Postgraduate studies in Australia can be completed by coursework, or by research which requires an ability to structure your time differently. Higher degree students are often mature-age or very experienced in the demands of tertiary study, but may find travel, language, or an unfamiliar culture adds unexpected stresses. Some may also be dealing with the demands of having a family either travelling with them to Australia, or being separated from them while they remain in their home country. Postgraduate students may have many of the same decisions that other international students will have when coming to study in Australia, but will also need to consider other issues when choosing to bring family, decide on a research supervisor, or structure their time and life around the demands of higher degree study. Research students may find themselves part of a team which depends on their input, or may have to motivate themselves to complete portions of their studies at various times.

Australian higher education institutions will provide you with information specific to their requirements, and it is important that you take the time to read their advice. This guide is intended to assist you in finding your way through the information provided, the expectations there will be upon you, and the decisions you might make in advance that may assist you to settle into your study demands as quickly as possible.

Australian Education International has funded the development of this guide to draw your attention to reliable and specific sources of information. When your situation requires you to focus your attention on any particular topic, you are strongly advised to read about and use those links to further your understanding and to help you make a well informed decision.

One of the links you will find recommended throughout this guide is commonly called *the [Rainbow Guide](#)*. The rainbow guide is made up of best-practice examples of information currently provided to international students by education providers, brought together into one document to inspire and assist all Australian institutions when developing their own pre-departure, arrival and orientation information. Further information was added by accommodation providers, police, fire and ambulance services, and other community groups who have experience in the concerns and issues international student deal with.

**Important note:** Although the rainbow guide is publicly available for all to view, students should access these materials for their awareness only. The information that your chosen institution will provide will be specific to the conditions of study and services available at **your institution**, and **will include important local information and services both on and off-campus.**

## **Choosing an institution**

Many postgraduate research students remain at the university where they completed their undergraduate degree but there are plenty of reasons to make a change. When comparing research programs and institutions it may help to consider the following factors:

- reputation in your field
- general research focus, research investment and prestige
- quality of laboratories, equipment and other facilities
- availability of grants and industry projects for research students
- supervisors you would like to work with
- your chances of securing a scholarship
- convenient location (close to family, cost of living, etc.).

Some say prestige and academic reputation have little effect on the quality of your program, but the networks you make and the reputation your degree carries in your field could make a big difference after graduation.

(From the Good Universities Guide online and in print;  
<http://www.gooduniguide.com.au/Postgraduate-Students/Research-Degrees/>)

## **Applying for your course**

Entrance into an Australian institution for postgraduate study is determined by the entrance requirements set by individual providers. As well as the satisfactory completion of at least one degree at undergraduate level, your institution may take research ability or relevant work experience into consideration (Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL). Before you apply for your postgraduate course, it is important that you do a thorough research of the course you wish to pursue and the entry requirements, including pre-requisites, cross-credits, English proficiency requirements and pathways. Your institutions prospectus will have comprehensive information on this.

For a step-by-step breakdown of the process: see Appendix B1 & B2 of this guide.

## **Masters by coursework**

Choosing your course and institution for postgraduate coursework will be similar to choosing an undergraduate degree. Education providers will list

the courses available in their prospectus, and include application forms and information on dates of commencement and periods of study.

Scholarships and funding grants for coursework degrees are not common, but would be indicated in the prospectus if there are any available.

### **Timeframes and funding**

A Masters by research degree typically takes between one and two years to complete. If you have the advantage of a scholarship most scholarships generally provide funding for up to two years. For further information on scholarships and funding your studies check with your education provider for their available funding grants and see the postgraduate section of the Good Universities Guide in print or online at;

<http://www.gooduniguide.com.au/Postgraduate-Students/Research-Degrees/>

### **Scholarships**

International students interested in undertaking a research degree in Australia may also be eligible for an Endeavour Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) which covers tuition fees and health cover costs for research students as well as health cover costs for their dependents. For more information visit the [IPRS](#) section of the Going to Uni website. Students should also look at the Endeavour Awards website to determine their eligibility for [Endeavour Postgraduate Awards](#) available to international students.

Students can also use the [JASON postgraduate scholarship search engine](#). Scholarships in the database apply to Australian students wishing to study at home or abroad, and to international students wishing to study in Australia.

Universities and other government schemes often fund conference attendance, field work and similar expenses. Industry-based projects or partnerships generally include a (comparatively) generous scholarship or stipend for the research student on successful application. Other students may need to apply for scholarships separately to their degree application. For a PhD there is no set timeframe, with students often taking anywhere from two to seven years to complete their thesis. However, some funding will only fund four years of study and international students will be limited by visa restrictions requiring full time study in Australia.

Many scholarships, such as Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA), pay students an annual stipend for the first three years of their study, with a six-month extension available to students whose research has been delayed by circumstances beyond their control. To find out more about funding for research degrees see your education provider or the links above.

(Adapted from the Good Universities Guide online and in print;  
<http://www.gooduniguide.com.au/Postgraduate-Students/Research-Degrees/>)

## **Know your course requirements**

Postgraduate studies by coursework information should be clearly laid out in the student handbook or prospectus. Most institutions will have a Research Services office who specialise in assisting students studying by research.

The Research Services office should provide information on your institution's postgraduate candidate management plan. This management plan should include details of your **research time-line and activities (including publication), intellectual justification of the project, a review of literature, methodology, etc.** You need this information to accurately plan your study in terms of timelines and budget. You should obtain the timelines for the following:

- total number of months required for study (full time if holding a Student Visa)
- deadline for final chapter submission
- thesis completion
- submission of completion.

Based on these timelines, you may need to apply for a visa extension later.

## **Starting your course**

To begin with...

### *Arrive Early*

Australian education providers will provide an International Student Orientation before the commencement of classes and often before commencing local students attend an orientation.

It is a requirement of the ESOS (Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000) that you as a student should be well equipped to achieve the best possible success in your studies. If you read through the pre-departure, arrival, and orientation manuals which the institution provides for you, you will see that there is a lot of information for you to understand and consider as you move through your studies. Although the manual will outline what you need to know, it is impossible to understand and recall everything. Once you are concentrating on your studies, you will feel less stressed if you are already comfortable with the institution, its staff and its services. The orientation program or welcome events are designed to provide you with a practical introduction to the institution.

The Pre-departure information sent to you may outline a specific Orientation Program where new higher degree and research students

have an opportunity to meet with other international research students and supervisors to share their research projects and interests with one another. You should register your arrival at both the Research (PhD and Masters by research) and International Offices, as soon as you arrive. Both offices will have important information to provide to you.

It could be confusing to discover how many sessions may be available to newly commencing students. The following list may be some of the sessions offered to you:

- international student orientation/welcome or festival
- Faculty orientation
- Postgraduate orientation
- Research student orientation, and more;

Make contact with the International Student Support Office, the Research Office and your Supervisor as early as you can to ask for advice on the most important sessions for you.

Orientation sessions for Research and postgraduate students should include specific information about:

- Credit Transfer
- Research Ethics
- Research and Higher Degree Policy
- Work integrated programs
- Funding or scholarship opportunities
- Advice and Academic Skills information on writing a thesis or mini thesis and structuring your research time
- Editorial support and Publishing

**Note:** *Academic skills advisers also run some group sessions on specific topics of value throughout each semester. Watch for their list of programs.*

Arriving early to attend orientation gives you the chance to:

- See and talk to the most important people you will need to know at the institution such as:
  - International Student Support Office staff and their duties
  - Postgraduate Course Advisor
  - ESL Advisor (English as a Second Language)
  - Student Services staff
  - Religious/Cultural/Ministry staff
  - Accommodation/Homestay Coordinator
  - Counsellors
- Enrol early which will help you to get your student card early. You will need your student card to open bank accounts, borrow books from the library, and more.
- Meet and get advice from your Research Supervisor.
- Meet representatives of Student Associations, Clubs, and Mentors
- Find your way around the campus and familiarise yourself with the:

- Library
- Computer rooms and facilities
- Recreation and eating areas
- Clubs and Associations
- Classrooms
- Meet other international students who may share your classes, share your concerns or fears.
- Knowing another face on campus as you become more comfortable with the routines can really help you avoid any feelings of isolation.
- Find your way around the public transport/ city/ to and from your accommodation.
- Find out about Parking permits
- Feel as though you already know some of the things local students know before you get to meet them at orientation activities later.

### **Semester timetable**

You can usually start either program in first or second semester but check with your preferred institution to make sure you know any expected semester timetables that may apply to you. You may be able to take a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during your program but again this will vary and **international students may be restricted by visa conditions.**

### **Family and religious celebrations**

Australia is a multicultural nation and we acknowledge the importance of people of all faiths being able to practice their religion, undertake religious practices and participate in their religious celebrations. We also acknowledge the importance of family celebrations to a student's happiness and well-being. However, attendance at such activities, especially if it means returning to your home country cannot be used as an excuse for not meeting the requirements of your visa and your course.

Missing classes, or large periods of thesis work time can mean facing severe difficulties later in your studies. Arriving late for the start of a semester or short-term course can place a great deal of strain upon a student that can severely exceed any benefits they experience by remaining with their family during that period. This can make satisfactory progress for a coursework degree very difficult to achieve and puts timely completion of a thesis at risk. (see Section 2: visa requirements and conditions).

### **Religious faith and practice in Australia**

There is a wide variety of religious beliefs and practices in Australia. International students studying in Australia are encouraged to continue their religious practices while they are studying in Australia. Links to



worshipping religious communities are also encouraged as an extra source of support for the student.

If information about where to find a particular place of worship is not provided during orientation or in the written material provided by the education provider, students should seek this information from the International Student Advisor or contact person at their education provider.

The following is a short list of web sites of some of the major religions:

Buddhist	<a href="http://www.buddhanet.net">www.buddhanet.net</a>
Christian Anglican	<a href="http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au">www.melbourne.anglican.com.au</a>
Catholic	<a href="http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au">www.melbourne.catholic.org.au</a>
Hindu	<a href="http://www.hinducouncil.com.au">www.hinducouncil.com.au</a>
Islamic	<a href="http://www.icv.org.au">www.icv.org.au</a>
Jewish	<a href="http://www.jewishaustralia.com.au">www.jewishaustralia.com.au</a>
Sikh	<a href="http://www.gurudwara.net">www.gurudwara.net</a>

## **Study practices as a postgraduate student**

When you enrol for postgraduate studies, you will already have done your undergraduate studies and had experience as a university student. However, postgraduate study is a very different experience and may pose special challenges for international students:

- Working independently may mean you feel isolated at times.
- You require good time management and organisational skills from the beginning.
- You need to establish a manageable topic.
- You need to negotiate a working relationship with your supervisor(s).
- Researching and writing **always** take longer than you think.

As a postgraduate student, most universities would expect you to show initiative and independence. It is important to get to know your supervisor at an early stage, their style of working with students and their level of support. The supervisors are expected to offer their expertise at various stages of the actual study/research, organising your work, whenever problems arise concerning research questions, theoretical and methodological issues, the structure of the dissertation, line of argumentation, secondary literature etc.

It is important for you to create a network with students working in the same or related fields.

Some universities may require postgraduate students to be involved in:

- Tutoring (certain number of hours)
- Presenting seminars
- Mentoring other students
- Attending conferences and presenting their research

It is important that you know the requirements and expectations of your institution before you start your studies. You can obtain information on these requirements from the Office of Postgraduate/Higher-degree studies or your Supervisor. Watch student notice boards, especially in higher degree lounges or gathering areas for workshops, seminars or topics of interest or help to your studies.

While research degrees involve a great deal of self-directed study, you won't be expected to name your thesis topic and then seclude yourself in the library or lab for the next few years to figure it all out by yourself. There will be proposals to write, seminars to attend, supervisors to meet with, and conferences to present at. Some programs are quite structured and many research students find themselves working as part of a larger team or lab. These are general guidelines, but remember that every university and department is different. Talk to potential supervisors or students from their department to get a better idea of what your research experience might be like.

### **Completion of studies**

As your thesis takes shape your Supervisor/s will provide feedback and advice on further editions until you all feel that you have achieved a final submission.

When your supervisor/s believes that your work is ready to be submitted and examined;

- You will need to have your thesis bound for submission.
- Your Research Services Office will provide advice and contacts for this process.
- Binding is usually at the student's expense.
- Several examiners who are experienced in your field of study will be allocated and may be situated anywhere around the world.
- This process could take several months before you will hear anything about their assessments.
- If this process continues beyond the length of your current visa, it is possible to apply for a temporary extension to your visa length.

## Section 2: Government requirements and you

### Valid passport

It is an Australian Government requirement that all international students and their dependants must maintain a valid passport. If you hold an expired passport while in Australia, you are in violation of your status. Passports should be valid for at least six months when applying for admission to Australia. However, given the length of your study period, it is advisable that you renew your passport well before it is due to expire so that it will cover the period that you will be in Australia. If your passport expires whilst you are studying, it will cause unnecessary distraction and expenses. However, if you do need to renew your passport while you are in Australia, please contact your country's embassy/consulate in Australia for information about the passport renewal process. A list of overseas embassies can be found at: [http://www.acacia-au.com/overseas\\_embassy\\_in\\_australia](http://www.acacia-au.com/overseas_embassy_in_australia)

### Student visa and your study

Most international students wanting to study in Australia require a student visa. Some other visa holders are also eligible to study as international students in Australia. Many students apply for a visa themselves on-line or via the Australian Diplomatic Mission in their country.

- The visa application process can be complicated and for students from some countries it may be better to submit an application with the assistance of an accredited education agent due to their familiarity and experience in the field. You should check with your chosen education provider in Australia for their accredited agents in your country.
- The education provider and the course you apply for must be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), and the CRICOS codes will be included in your Letter of Offer. [www.cricos.deewr.gov.au](http://www.cricos.deewr.gov.au)
- The length of your course may also determine the type of student visa you'll get. If your studies involve less than 15 hours per week, or take less than 3 months, you may need to enter on a visitor visa instead – and that will limit your ability to work while studying. This may affect research students doing only their testing, or a portion of their studies on-shore in Australia.

Ensure you **allow enough time** for processing between lodging your application and the start of your academic program, as it can be a lengthy process depending on your country of origin.

There are several categories of student visa including primary, secondary, higher education (including Masters by coursework), postgraduate by

research, and vocational/training and non-award courses. And a separate visa sub-class for ELICOS (English Language courses). Applications for more than one visa sub-class for a student can be 'packaged' and granted based on the sector of your principal course of study.

You can obtain the details of these visa categories from the local Australian embassy in your country or from this website: [www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm)

### **Postgraduate Research Student Visa (Sub-Class 574)**

The Postgraduate Research Student visa is designed for students who want to study a Masters degree by research or a Doctoral degree in Australia. To qualify for a Postgraduate Research Student visa, you must be able to satisfy the basic visa requirements and have a valid offer from a registered education provider.

Successful applicants and holders of a temporary Postgraduate Research Student visa are entitled to stay and study in Australia for the duration of their course. When you are granted a Postgraduate Research Student visa, it will be linked to the passport number used in your application. More information about this visa category can be found at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions-students.htm>

### **Dependant visa**

Most student visas allow you to bring your family members to Australia as your dependants if your situation meets particular conditions such as Assessment Level and the length of your course of study. (see also Section 3: Bringing my family)

Students who bring family members to Australia are entirely responsible for their welfare, including all costs associated with visas, travel, medical, living, and schooling if applicable. Therefore it is important that you consider very carefully all the implications before deciding to bring your family with you.

**Important:** You should declare all family members on your application, **even if they do not plan to travel with you to Australia**. If you do not do this, your family members will **not be eligible** to apply to join you after you have started your course in Australia.

For more information on dependant visas and the application process please contact the Australian embassy in your country or go to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) website: [http://www.immi.gov.au/students/students/bringing\\_family/](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/students/bringing_family/)

Your Assessment Level is determined by your course of study and your nationality. More information on the student visa Assessment Levels, including the most recent Assessment Levels in effect, is available on [Australian immigration website](http://www.immi.gov.au).

## English language criteria

Most universities in Australia require applicants to meet a minimum English language requirement for postgraduate study which will be listed on their website or in written materials. In addition, when students apply for a Student Visa, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) may require additional evidence of English proficiency.

It is important that you access the most current information available from your local Australian Embassy or the Australian immigration website: [http://www.immi.gov.au/students/whats\\_new.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/whats_new.htm)

## Applying for a visa

You must wait until you have an acceptance letter for your course from your education provider before you apply for a visa. But you also need to apply well in advance of leaving. Apply as early as you can. For some Assessment Level countries you will be required to submit documents for a pre-visa assessment first. To check the requirements for your country and visa level before you apply enquire at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/visawizard/>

In order to apply for a visa you will need a **valid passport**, an **electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE)** and any **other documentation** required by the Australian diplomatic post with which you lodge your application.

*You should not pay for your flights before your visa is confirmed.*

## Visa conditions and work rights

If you are granted a visa, you must abide by its conditions and will be notified of any specific conditions applicable to you when your visa is granted.

**Note:** Claiming not to know these conditions or failure to comply with them could result in the cancellation of your visa.

- For a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa conditions and visa conditions for family members please visit <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions.htm>
- Once you have commenced your course, you will have permission to work up to 20 hours per week in Australia during scheduled academic session times.
- Dependent spouses of Master's by Research and Doctorate students can work unlimited hours once you as the student visa holder have started classes.
- **WARNING:** Permission to work does not guarantee employment. You and your spouse will be subject to the same employment field as Australian citizens.

## **Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)**

OSHC is insurance that provides assistance with the costs of medical and hospital care which international students may need while in Australia and is **mandatory for international student visa holders for the full period of their visa grant**. OSHC will also cover the cost of emergency ambulance transport and most prescription drugs (maximum limits apply per year).

### **Note:**

- If your family is accompanying you to Australia, ensure you notify your education provider to obtain family cover for you. Medical assistance and emergency treatment are expensive if you are not insured.
- The Australian Government has currently licensed five health cover providers to offer this product and your education provider may have a preferred provider agreement with one of those insurers.

For further understanding and specifics of the cover go to the providers websites or the Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing website for the OSHC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) page at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/privatehealth-consumers-overseascover.htm>

For more extensive information on:

- Health cover above standard OSHC
- Accessing medical and hospital assistance in Australia
- and a list of FAQ's

Read page 22 of [Section 3: Settling in](#) of *the Rainbow Guide*.

*Your education provider will also provide important local information on health and getting medical assistance in their orientation or arrival sessions and guides.*

## **Your rights and responsibilities as an international student**

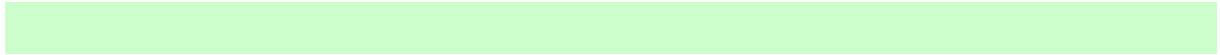
The Australian Government wants overseas students in Australia to have a safe, enjoyable and rewarding place to study. Australia's laws promote quality education and consumer protection for overseas students. These laws are known as the ESOS framework and they include the [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2001](#) and the [National Code, 2007](#). For more information about your rights and responsibilities as an international student studying in Australia, download the factsheet from the Australian Education International website:

[http://aei.gov.au/AEI/ESOS/QuickInfo/ESOS\\_FrameWork\\_pdf.pdf](http://aei.gov.au/AEI/ESOS/QuickInfo/ESOS_FrameWork_pdf.pdf)

## **Complaints and appeals**

Under the ESOS Act, if a student feels they have been treated unfairly, they have the right to lodge a complaint. Education providers who are not

happy with a student's actions must provide a written warning. Students have the right to appeal any decision they have been notified of about their studies. In Australia, it is acceptable to make a complaint or appeal a decision. Students should speak with their student contact officer or Research Office for advice. Your education provider will have complaints and appeals processes that you can access if you feel you have been unfairly treated.



## Section 3: Your life studying in Australia

### Welfare and support systems

As indicated in Section 1 on the Student's rights and responsibilities, the government requires each education provider to have in place appropriate welfare and support systems for their students. The nature of these systems will vary with age of the students taught, the size of the education provider and the type of courses being offered.

*Make sure you know who provides support at your institution, where to find them and how to contact them, especially in an emergency.*

Australian law regards those 18 years or older as being adults and therefore as independent and able to take responsibility for their own well being and to seek help when they require it. However, this does not mean that support services are not provided for these students. It means that you are expected to ask for the services provided when you require them. Available services are outlined at orientation and in written form in guides and on the institution website.

All education providers should have a comprehensive list of support services. In some institutions support services such as counselling services and accommodation placement services are provided especially for international students. In other institutions these services are provided for all students, Australian and international students at the same office. If you are not sure how to access the support appropriate to your particular problem, ask your International Student Advisor or whoever fills that role at your institution.

You will be able to solve many of the issues that arise through assistance given by your institution but be aware also that the local town council where you live or community groups in the area will also have many services available for locals, immigrants and visitors often at little or no cost.

Most students who study in Australia do not break Australian laws or get into trouble with the Australian police. If, however, you or your family have broken an Australian law and need assistance, an organisation such as International Student Care may be able to assist you. Information about this organization can be found at [internationalstudentcare.com](http://internationalstudentcare.com)

Keep your International Student Advisor or Supervisor informed of any important personal issues that may affect your ability to attend to your study as the institution is required by law to report students who have gone missing from their study obligations. There may be interim processes in place that can assist you not to be affected negatively by the situation you are dealing with.



## Arranging travel

You will need to make your own travel arrangements to Australia. Please try to arrive at least 1-2 weeks before the start of International Student Orientation to allow enough time for settling-in including for your family if they are travelling with you, adjusting to the climate and overcoming jet-lag. [Section 2: Pre-Arrival](#) of the *Rainbow Guide* has sample checklists for 'Before leaving home', and 'Upon arrival'. Your education provider will also provide their advice in their pre-departure guide.

## Documents

You should prepare a folder of **official documents** to bring with you to Australia, including:

- Valid passport with Student Visa
- Offer of a place / admission letter from your education provider
- Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) issued by your education provider
- Receipts of payments (e.g. tuition fees, OSHC, bank statements etc.)
- Insurance policies
- Original or certified copies of your academic transcripts and qualifications
- Other personal identification documents, e.g. birth certificate, ID card, driver's licence
- Medical records and/or prescriptions
- Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) if you are under 18 years of age.

If you are travelling with your family you will need to include their documents as well. **Keep all documents in your carry-on luggage.** In case you lose the originals, make copies that can be left behind with family and sent to you if needed.

## Money

Your pre-arrival information will tell you about local banks, some may have a branch on your campus and even provide facilities to transfer funds into an account before you arrive. Carrying large amounts of cash is not a good idea. Talk to your financial institution in your home country about access to your funds from within Australia, any agreements they may have in place with Australian banks, credit cards and any other access that could assist you.

Further information about Accessing money can be obtained from [Section 2: Pre-Arrival](#), and the Managing finances from [Section 3: Settling in](#), of *the Rainbow Guide* has a large section on Managing Finances, budgeting, and links to Australian financial institutions.

***You should read this section carefully, and discuss the issues raised in this section with the bank or financial institution in your home country before you leave. All banks operate differently and you should be aware of all fees,***

*charges, ease of access to your funds, and safety of the way in which you will access those funds.*

## **Arriving in Australia**

You can familiarise yourself with the following topics in [Section 2: Pre-Arrival](#) of *the Rainbow Guide* in advance and then **be sure to confirm the specific local advice in the pre-arrival and orientation information sent to you by your education provider.**

- What to bring; seasonal considerations and the local climate, clothing, laptops and telephones
- Baggage allowances on flights
- Customs and Quarantine; declaring items and cash on the incoming passenger card
- Immigration at the airport
- Baggage claim
- Detector dogs
- The arrivals hall; meet and greet and transport to your accommodation

## **Working in Australia**

Work for international students is not guaranteed, and may not be easy to find. If you rely on your permission to work to support yourself while studying you may find that the work hours required of an employer may not suit your study hours, the work may be menial, and you are not likely to find work in a study related field. It can also be difficult to find work in your field immediately after graduation, as can be the case with local students as well.

Your education provider should provide an indication of the cost of living in Australia and in particular the city in which you will be studying in their pre-departure advice. Page 49 of [Section 3: Settling in](#), in *the Rainbow Guide* gives a sample budget document and costs to consider.

If you are offered work and you are unsure about your work conditions, wages or the offer that has been made, you can:

- call the Fair Work Infoline on **13 13 94**  
Monday – Friday 8.00am – 6.00pm
- or visit the Fairwork website at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)

The Fair Work Ombudsman's office has specifically developed two valuable documents with advice for international students working in Australia. See: [Do you know your workplace rights?](#) and the [employment checklist](#) for international students to consider important questions before accepting an offer of employment.

## **Bringing your family**

Before bringing your spouse or children to Australia, you will have to prove to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) that you can support them financially. The cost of supporting a family in Australia is very high including school fees for all school-age dependants. You may have to consider and discuss many issues with your family. (See also this guide Section 2: Dependant Visa information)

## **Issues to consider**

Rather than bringing your family together with you to Australia, some students may find it useful to arrive first, settle into studies, find appropriate accommodation, adjust to living in Australia and then arrange for family to join them.

Before making a decision to bring your family to Australia it is important to consider the following issues:

- The cost of airfares for your family to and from Australia
- Possible higher rent for a larger home
- Limited employment opportunities for your spouse
- Extra costs for food, clothing and other necessities
- The effect on you and your studies if your family is not happy in Australia
- Whether your children will adjust to school in Australia
- Waiting lists for child care centres
- Whether to come alone to Australia first and arrange things for your family or to all come at the same time.

## **Accommodation issues**

Living in suitable accommodation is a vital component of a successful period of study in Australia. While both you and your family, if they are joining you, will want to get your accommodation for as small a cost as possible, there is not always suitable cheap accommodation close to the education provider where you will be attending classes. You will need to be realistic about the amount of money that will be spent in this area. Paying a lower amount for rent will not make up for extra time and money that might be needed to travel to and from classes.

Refer to the estimates of costs of living provided by your education provider as a close guide to what is realistically available. Many providers will provide contact details for a staff member who can advise you in advance of your arrival in Australia. Make sure that you access their advice as early as possible as accommodation close to institutions fills up quickly as the beginning of the academic year in Australia nears, sometimes in December for the commencement of the following year.

**Important note:** Read the advice provided by your education provider and it is wise not to transfer money to secure accommodation in advance

to an individual. You may find something that seems too good to be true compared to most you've looked at. It is highly likely that it is too good to be true, and you may lose any money paid in advance. If in doubt, ask your education provider for local advice or if they know the accommodation that is offering. Page 31 of [Section 3: Settling in](#) of the *Rainbow Guide* also outlines important 'Things to keep in mind when renting'.

## Transport

Your transport options while living and studying in Australia should also be considered. Transport concessions are not available to international students in all States/Territories of Australia, even to your children as students in primary or secondary schools. As well as considering this expense in your budget, you should also consider travel to and from your education institution when choosing accommodation. Your education provider should be able to provide advice on these issues in their area, but accessing this advice and looking at your accommodation options as early as possible will give you the best chance of finding positive outcomes.

## Enrolling children at school

If you would like to bring your children to Australia with you, you must be aware of the following schooling issues:

1. It is an immigration policy that school-age dependants of international students undertake formal schooling while they are in Australia.
2. Children who have their fifth (or sixth) birthday before 1st April of that calendar year are eligible to start school. *You will need to check the starting age for the State/Territory you will be living in.*
3. You will need to provisionally enrol your child in a school before you leave your home country and you will normally have to pay the school fees one semester in advance. The school will issue documents to confirm provisional enrolment which you will need to attach to your Student Visa application as proof the dependant is enrolled.
4. Fees are payable by international students at all State schools unless you:
  - Are in receipt of sponsorship or scholarships from the Australian Government (e.g. the Australian Development Scholarship, IPRS);
  - Hold a higher institution or approved non-government scholarship. These scholarships must be approved by the State/Territory government for the dependants to be exempt from school fees.
5. You will be responsible for school fees and other costs including school uniforms, books, excursions and stationery.

6. When choosing the most appropriate school for your child, it is best to ask questions about the school's curriculum, size, extra-curricular activities and the size of individual classes.
7. You should also take into consideration the distance from the school to your education institution, the suburb in which you intend to live and the method of transport you plan to use.

For further information, please contact:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/OrgContacts.aspx>

## **Childcare facilities and services**

Finding suitable childcare in Australia requires patience and planning. Waiting lists for places in childcare centres may be long.

For school children many schools offer before and after-school care programs (usually 7:30am-8:45am and 3:30pm-6:00pm). Children who need these programs must be registered with the school.

*If you will require childcare, request advice on child care facilities in or near your institution*

## **School holidays**

Be aware that your school-aged or younger children in care may have holiday breaks that could impact on your study time. Local council or community groups where you live may run low-cost holiday programs.

## **Protection of children in Australia**

One of the fundamental principles underlying the [Child Well being and Safety Act, 2005](#) is: "Those who develop and provide services, as well as parents, should give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing". It is due to this desire to protect children in Australian society that those who work with anyone under the age of 18 are usually required to obtain a Working With Children Check which ensures that those who work with your children in both paid and unpaid programs and schools do not have a criminal record or pose a potential risk to the safety and well being of children.

## **Emergencies and how to report a crime**

Australia is a relatively safe country but as in all countries in the world, there are some people, particularly in large cities, who will take advantage if you are not aware. Local knowledge about how to keep safe will be included in your information and orientation sessions. You should always remain as careful as you would in your own culture. If something

doesn't feel comfortable, trust your instincts. If you do need urgent assistance;

- **Dial 000 for emergency** in Australia
- You can also call the [Crimestoppers](#) line to report a crime and remain anonymous if you wish – 1800 333 000 (this is a free call from anywhere in Australia)

In [Section 5: Social and Cultural](#) of *the Rainbow Guide* you can read extensively on the following Safety Areas:

- Home safety
- Sun safety
- Beach safety
- Bush and outback safety
- Storm safety
- Dangerous animals and plants

This information is likely to be specific to the area in which you are living and studying.

Please note the police, fire and ambulance services in Australia are well-trained, helpful and friendly people who will assist you if something bad does happen to you. Speaking to the police will not affect your Student Visa in anyway. No record will stay on police files unless you have committed a crime. Police cannot solve all crimes instantly but if you report a crime such as a burglary, the police will take the situation seriously and do all in their powers to find who did it and place them before the courts.

Other emergency workers such as fire fighters are also well-trained, helpful and interested in matters to do with international students. Representatives from both the police and the fire service are often involved in the orientation activities for international students and/or information days at later stages in your programs of study. Government authorities, the police and emergency service workers all work together with the education and accommodation providers to ensure that international students in Australia are as safe as possible.

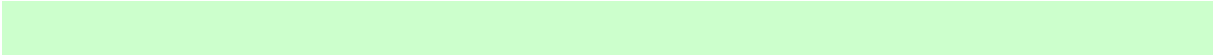
# Appendices

## Appendix A1

### Terms and descriptions used throughout this guide and in the provision of Australian education to overseas students

<b>ESOS</b>	<a href="#">The ESOS Act, 2000</a> governs the provision of Education Services to Overseas Students
<b>National Code</b>	<a href="#">The National Code</a> is an associated part of this Act that most clearly spells out the rights and responsibilities of each participant in relation to engaging with and/or offering Australia's education services.
<b>CRICOS</b>	Under the ESOS Act, education providers and the courses they offer to overseas students must be registered on the <a href="#">Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)</a> .
<b>Education provider</b>	a school, college or institution registered on CRICOS to offer courses to overseas students
<b>DIAC</b>	<a href="#">Department of Immigration and Citizenship</a> The Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides comprehensive information about student visa requirements and the application process, as well as application document checklists to assist you with your application. Visit <a href="http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm">www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm</a> for the latest information.
<b>DFAT</b>	<a href="#">Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</a> As well as links from the DIAC website the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website <a href="http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies">www.dfat.gov.au/embassies</a> has a comprehensive list of Australian embassies, high commissions, consulates and representative offices around the world.
<b>Migration Agents</b>	A migration agent can assist you in submitting your visa application and communicate with DIAC on your behalf, but please note that <b>you do not need to use a migration agent</b> to lodge any kind of visa application.
<b>Education Agents</b>	Education agents promote various Australian education programs and institutions internationally and are a good way for students to apply to study in Australia. Agents are experienced in making international student visa applications and applying for visas. Most speak both English and the local language so this can make the application process a lot simpler and easier for students and parents. Most do not charge for their service as they collect a commission from the institution you choose to attend. However, some agents do charge small amounts or offer additional services for which they charge. You can check with your Australian education provider for contact details of agents they recommend. <b>Please Note:</b> <i>Although able to assist in completing education and visa applications, Education Agents are</i>

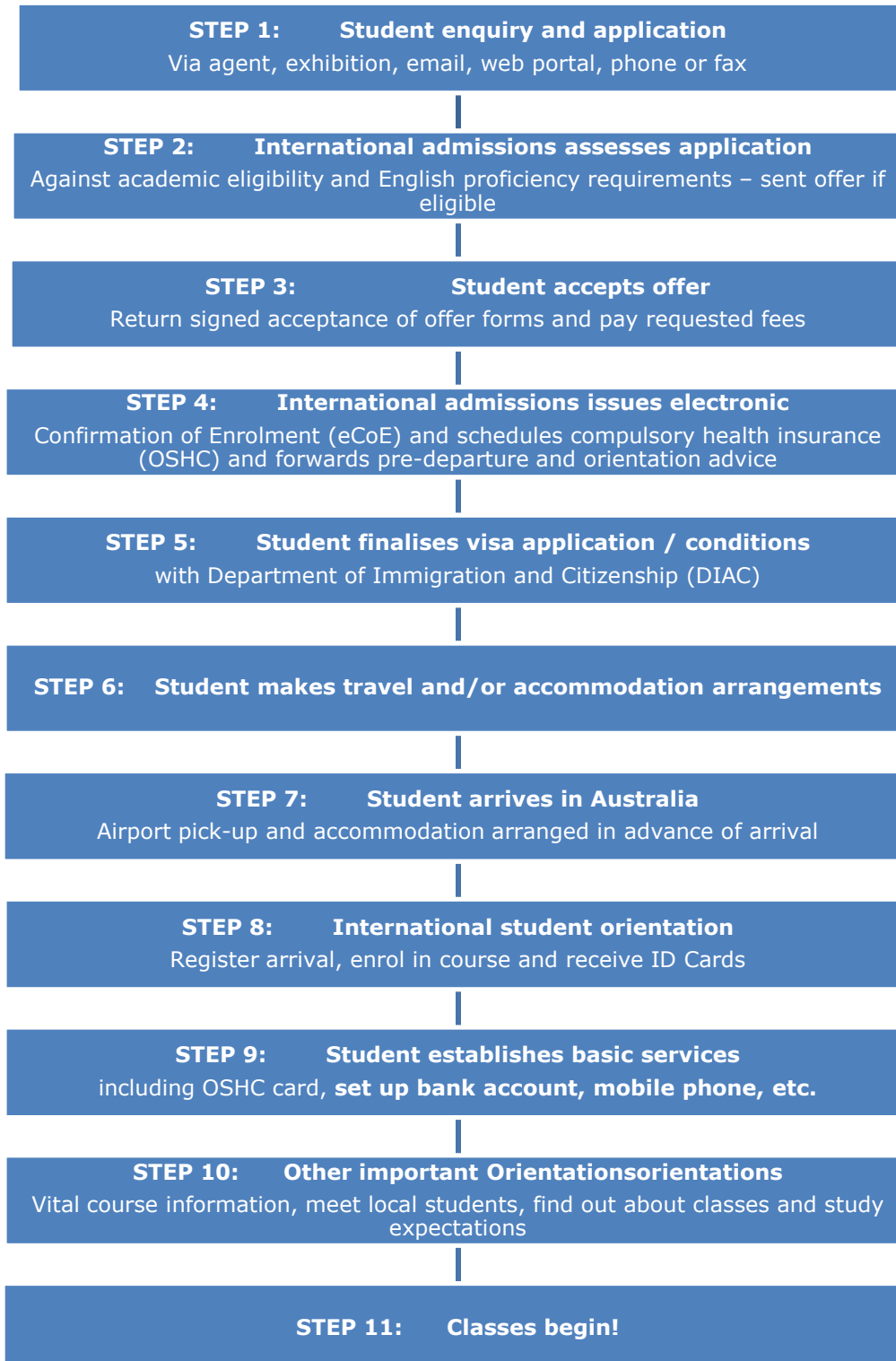
	<i>NOT licensed to provide migration advice.</i>
<b>ESOS Amendment Act, 2010.</b>	<p>ESOS amendment act</p> <p>The <a href="#">ESOS Amendment Act (new subsection 21A)</a> which came into effect Thursday, 3rd June 2010 requires all Australian education providers listed on CRICOS to provide a searchable list of their recruiting agencies (education agents) on their own website.</p> <p>The online location of this information must be readily accessible to students and regulators and must include the agency name, name of principal agent, legal entity and street address.</p>





# Appendix B1

## Application Step-by-Step Process Model



## Appendix B2

### Application Step-by-Step Process Model - Description

For international students planning to study in Australia, the application process involves a number of steps – these steps are fairly standard, no matter whether you are planning to study English or a higher education research degree.

Applying for a course normally requires the following documents:

- Certified copies of an academic history to date, including high school results/Certificates and any studies undertaken after high-school (often called post secondary studies). If applicants have undertaken any post secondary studies they will need to provide their academic transcripts of subjects studied and any Completion or Graduation Certificates with their application.
- Certified copies of English Language proficiency (eg. IELTS, TOEFL or evidence that the medium of instruction in the student's past studies was English). All institutions have individual, specific English Language Proficiency requirements for entry into their courses – these standards vary greatly depending on the course selected.
- A certified copy of your passport and evidence of any Australian visa (if currently in Australia).
- For research degree applicants, a copy of a research proposal will also be required.

Once an application has been received by an education provider, it will be assessed by the admissions office/staff to determine if it meets both the academic and English Language requirements for the selected course. The possible outcomes of the application are:

- A Rejection Letter: which confirms that the application has not met the entry requirements for the selected course.
- A Conditional Letter of Offer: confirms that the applicant is eligible for entry to the selected course, pending the provision of further information to the admissions office. For example, the applicant may be required to provide a Completion/Graduation Certificate if s/he was finishing his/her current studies when s/he applied for his/her course or provide evidence of a IELTS or TOEFL test if s/he is sitting his/her English test after having applied for the selected course. Once the additional documentation has been provided and meets the stated conditions, the applicant will be issued with a Full Letter of Offer
- A Full Letter of Offer: which confirms that the applicant is eligible for direct entry into the selected course.
- A Package Letter of Offer: which confirms that the applicant has a Full Letter of Offer to one course and an additional Conditional

Letter of Offer to a following course. For example, an applicant may receive both a Full Letter of Offer to a Diploma course with a Conditional Letter of Offer to the following Bachelor degree (which is conditional upon successfully completing the Diploma course)

If the applicant has been successful in his/her application, the next step is to formally accept the offer by:

- Signing the Offer Acceptance Form included in the offer
- Paying the tuition fees outlined in the letter of offer – this is generally the amount of one full study period’s tuition fees at that education provider.
- Paying the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) outlined in the letter of offer – unless the applicant has been studying in Australia and has current OSHC accepted by the new education provider.

Once the applicant’s acceptance and payment have been received and confirmed by the education provider, a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) will be issued, which will then be required for a student visa application.

Please note that applicants from Assessment Level 3 or 4 countries, cannot accept their Letter of Offer until they have completed a Pre-Visa Assessment (PVA) in their home country. PVAs are a procedure of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) whereby applicants from these countries who are applying for a student visa offshore can have their genuineness as a student assessed on the basis of a letter of offer before obtaining a CoE from their prospective education provider.