

Frequently Asked Questions - What documentation is required for student visa applications

Here is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the documentation we require in order to make visa processing as streamlined and as fast as possible.

We would ask that you go through the list to ensure that you and your clients provide us with complete applications as far as possible.

Please note that there will always be special cases where extra documentation is needed, and this can never be foreseen. The list of questions below however, should be used to ensure that the application is submitted complete as far as possible.

General questions

Q: Who is an exchange student?

A: You are an exchange student if you participate in a government-organised secondary exchange program. ONLY those students who are in receipt of an AASES letter can be considered as exchange students. If you hold a CoE, you are not an exchange student.

Q: What is an AASES form?

A: AASES is short for Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students. The AASES form is issued by your education provider if you participate in a government-organised secondary exchange program.

Q: What is a CoE?

A: (e)CoE is short for (electronic) Confirmation of Enrolment. This document is issued by your education provider once you have enrolled in a registered course. A registered course is an education or training course offered by an Australian education provider registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).

Please note that only CRICOS-registered education providers can issue an eCoE.

See: <http://cricos.deewr.gov.au/>

Q: Can I obtain a checklist on what documentation is required?

A: **YES**. Checklists for AASES and CoE student visa applications can be sent on request; they will shortly be available on the Embassy website.

Application Lodgement

Q: Can I complete an older version of student visa application form 157A?

A: **NO**. Older versions of the form are NOT acceptable and you MUST always complete the most up-to-date application form 157A. This can be downloaded here:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/pdf/157a.pdf>

Q: Do I have to pay a fee?

A: **NO** if you will be submitting an AASES (Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students) form with your application

A: **YES** if you will be submitting a CoE (Confirmation of Enrolment) with your student visa application. The current visa application fee (VAC) is € 415,-. This is payable by a Visa or MasterCard – please provide these details in the appropriate section of the application form.

Full details of all fees can be found at:

<http://www.germany.embassy.gov.au/belnl/fees.html>

Please note that the VAC may be subject to change (routinely on 01 January and 01 July each year). Before you lodge your application, you should therefore check on our website first to ensure that you authorise deduction of the correct application charge.

Q: Postage – do I need to pay postage for the return of my passport?

A: **NO.** The Department is promoting label-free travel arrangements. It is no longer required to submit original passports to our office (a clear copy of biodata page of passport suffices). Return postage is therefore not required.

Q: Question 16 (Residential address): Is this my address in my home country or my address in Australia?

A: Please fill in your residential address in your home country.

Q: Questions 23-25: Do I have to complete these if I am under 18 years old?

A: **NO** – you can just leave these questions blank or state “N/A” (not applicable).

Q: Do I have to complete the financial details at question 44-45 of form 157A?

A: **NO** if you will be providing an Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students (AASES) form with your application

A: **YES** if you will be providing a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) with your student visa application.

Please note that **ONLY** those students who are in receipt of an AASES letter can be considered as exchange students. If this question is not answered, there may be a significant delay in the processing of the visa.

Q: If I am under 18 years old, do my parents need to sign my application form?

A: **YES.** If you are under 18 years old, then **BOTH** parents must sign the declarations at **Question 68 and 70** on the application form, as well as signing the general declaration at **Question 78** at the end of the form.

Q: Can someone else lodge my application (e.g. a student visa agency or an exchange organisation?)

A: **YES.** If you are submitting your application via an agency, then Question 76 of the form **MUST** be filled in and the form **MUST** be accompanied by a completed form 956 (for a registered Migration Agent) or form 956A (for an authorised recipient other than a registered Migration Agent).. The form 956 or 956A can be obtained from this link:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/pdf/956.pdf>

<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/pdf/956a.pdf>

If this form is not provided, we cannot give any information about the application to the agency/exchange organisation.

Q: Do I have to send my original passport?

A: **NO** The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship is moving towards “label-free” visa arrangements, whereby electronic visas will be recorded against the passport number of a successful visa applicant. We will need a clear copy of the passport (biodata page) so that we can make sure we get the details correct. A personalised visa grant notification letter/email will be provided for each successful visa applicant. Airline check-in staff and immigration officers have access to our Department’s visa system and can see that a traveller holds a valid visa to enter Australia.

Q: Can I lodge my application before I have received my CoE or AASES form?

A: We advocate that each application be lodged with all documentation. Our service standard is based on applications being lodged 'complete'.

Please note that the published service standard – based on 'complete' applications – is as follows:

- AL1 students 14 days,
- AL2 students 21 days and
- AL3-4 students 90 days

Medical and Health Insurance Requirements

Q: Can I provide any type of health insurance?

A: **NO.** You MUST provide evidence of Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). Any other form of health insurance is not acceptable for student visa application purposes.

The only students who are excluded from the purchase of OSHC are:

- Norwegian students
- Swedish students whose insurance is provided by CSN International (the Swedish National Board of Student Aid) or Kammarkollegiet insurance. If this is the case, relevant evidence must be provided instead of OSHC.

OSHC is usually arranged through the education provider in Australia, and the CoE or AASES form must state that it has been purchased.

- CoE holders: If the CoE does not show that the OSHC has been purchased, then a separate statement must be included to show that the insurance has been paid subsequent to the CoE being issued.

- AASES form holders: Separate evidence of OSHC must be provided in any case.

Current approved OSHC providers are:

- Australian Health Management
- BUPA OSHC
- Medibank Private
- Lysaght Peoplecare Limited (subcontracting to OSHC Worldcare).

For detailed information on how to obtain Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) see:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Overseas+Student+Health+Cover+FAQ-1

Q: Do I need to undergo medical examinations?

A: Usually not. In most cases, medical examinations will no longer be required. However, in certain cases, a medical and/or radiological examination may still be required before a visa can be issued, for instance if you have a certain medical condition, or have spent a certain amount of time in a high risk country, or if you will be entering a health or hospital care environment.

In all cases, it remains the responsibility of the client to check whether or not medical examination results are required in their case and submit them accordingly with their application. For full details, and to check if examination is required please see the following document:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/booklets/1163i.pdf>

Parental Consent/Custody issues for under 18 students

Q: Do I need to send my birth certificate?

A: Only if you are under 18 years old. If a student is under 18 years old, we require a

copy of their birth certificate where the names of both parents are stated, and copies of both parents' passports. Normal copies will suffice unless we explicitly request certified copies or the original from you.

Q: Do my parents need to send their original passports?

A: **NO**. We only require copies of the biodata pages of your parents' passports for signature verification, and only if you are under 18 years old. Normal copies will suffice unless we explicitly request certified copies.

Q: What if only one of my parents has custody?

A: In this case, we require a copy of the custody ruling. **NB: Evidence of the custody ruling must not be older than 1 year**. If documents are older than one year, they must be re-endorsed by the authority that issued them (e.g. by the court that issued the custody ruling).

Q: What if one of my parents is deceased?

A: Please provide a copy of the death certificate.

Q: What if only one parent appears on my birth certificate?

A: In this case, we need written confirmation from the youth welfare office (or equivalent authority), to the effect that this parent has sole custody (in Germany: Bescheinigung ueber die Nichtabgabe von Sorgerechtserklaerungen"). **NB: Evidence of the custody ruling must not be older than 1 year**. If documents are older than 1 year, they must be re-endorsed by the authority that issued them.

Welfare Arrangements for under 18 students

Q: What are welfare arrangements for under 18 students?

A: If you are under 18 years of age, you must have acceptable arrangements for your accommodation, support and general welfare for the duration of your student visa or until you turn 18 (whichever happens first).

You must show that you will either:

- live in Australia with your parent or legal custodian
- live in Australia with a relative* over 21 years of age who is nominated by your parent or legal custodian
- live in Australia under a welfare arrangement that has been approved by your education provider.

*Nominated relatives must be a spouse, child, adopted child, parent, brother, sister or step equivalent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew, or a step-grandparent, step-grandchild, step-aunt, step-uncle, step-niece or step-nephew. Cousins or relatives with a different family relationship to the Student visa applicant than those stated above do not meet requirements to be nominated as a student guardian.

Q: How do I obtain evidence of welfare arrangements?

A: For students under 18, welfare and accommodation is usually arranged by the education provider and evidence thereof is provided either on the AASES form or, if the student is a CoE student, in the form of the Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW).

Please note: The welfare period must be a minimum of the course of study/exchange period plus 7 days at the end of the student's course (or until the student turns 18).

Q: What is a CAAW (welfare letter)?

A: If the holder of a CoE is under 18 years old, then they must also include the education provider's Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW).

When the education provider creates the CoE in their system, this standard welfare letter (CAAW) is automatically available. The CoE must be accompanied by a CAAW. If the education provider is an Australian educational institution which is registered with the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, they will be aware that the CoE and the CAAW are required for students under 18 years of age.

Q: What if I wish to stay with a relative?

A: In addition to all the normal documentation required, you will need to provide:

- Birth certificates of all relevant parties, showing the relationship between student and relative
- Form 157N, nominating the relative concerned
- An Australian Federal Police (AFP) certificate from the relative. There is NO alternative to this document – a local State or Territory police certificate or a child-care registration certificate is NOT sufficient for our purposes. To obtain the AFP certificate, please refer to the information at:

<http://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/police-checks/national-police-checks.aspx>

Here are the links to the relevant forms:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/pdf/157n.pdf>

<http://www.afp.gov.au/~media/afp/pdf/n/national-police-check-application-form.ashx>

Q: What if I wish to stay with family friends?

A: We are still receiving applications from students who wish to stay with family friends while they study in Australia, rather than have welfare and accommodation arranged by the education provider. **Please be advised that this is not possible.**

Students may stay with a nominated relative, but not with a family friend (unless the school provides full welfare confirmation (CAAW)). Full details in relation to welfare and accommodation for under-18 year olds can be found at the following link:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/students/students/571-1/eligibility-student-18.htm>

Q: What is Welfare Condition 8532?

A: All student visas granted to students under 18 are subject to condition 8532. It requires that where an under 18 year old student's welfare arrangements are approved by the education provider, the student must not travel to Australia until the welfare arrangements are due to commence, as per the date nominated by the provider on the CAAW letter, or on the AASES form.

Q: What if I wish to enter Australia before the date my welfare period commences?

A: An under 18 year old student may travel to Australia before this date if they are accompanied by a parent or suitable relative who will provide welfare until the education provider approved welfare arrangements commence.