

Applying for Your Student Visa: Australia

What is a visa?

A visa is official authorization allowing you to enter a country and travel, work, live, or study there for a specific period of time. Generally, a visa is an elaborate stamp that is sealed onto one of the pages of your passport, but your Australian visa will be linked to your passport number. Visas are issued to American citizens by a foreign country's Embassy or Consulate located in the United States. Every country has its own regulations governing the issuance of visas.

Do I need a visa to go to Australia?

A student visa is required for students who wish to study in Australia. If you are going to Australia for less than 10 months, your visa will be granted for one month past the end date of your study. If you are going for longer than 10 months, your visa will be valid for 2 months after the end date of your study. This information is important for when you book your travel arrangements. Also, your visa requires that you are a full-time student, that you maintain satisfactory grades, and that you have health insurance while in Australia.

What do I need to apply for a visa?

You will need the following to apply for your visa:

- **A valid passport;**
 - ◆ Please see page 1 in the Study Abroad Handbook for information on how to apply for a passport.
 - ◆ Apply early for your passport! It may take 6-8 weeks to process your application.
 - **Four passport sized photographs,** photos must be taken in color, with a white background.
 - **A complete visa application.** Most US passport holders fall under the “Level 1” visa assessment category, which allows you to apply for your visa online. See instructions below.
 - **Confirmation of Enrollment (COE or eCOE),** which will be sent or emailed to you by your host university. On your visa application you will be asked for the number that appears in the upper-right hand corner of the COE.
 - **Visa application fee of \$540 (Australian Dollar, AUD),** as of September 2009. This amount is to be paid by credit card. If you would like to work while in Australia, an additional AUD \$70 is required for the Permit to Work. With this permit you are able to work up to 20 hours a week during the semester, and for un-limited hours during breaks between semesters. Note that you cannot start working until you have started your classes.
 - **Financial requirements,** you must declare on your application that you have enough money to pay for travel, tuition, and living expenses for yourself, your partner and your dependent children for the duration of your stay in Australia. You must have return air fare to Australia, and AUD 12,000 per year for living expenses.
 - **Proof of insurance:** you must provide a receipt or other proof of your Overseas Student Health Cover, which provides medical and hospital insurance while in Australia.
- ▶ **Attention:** This list may not be all-inclusive! Verify this information with the consulate, as the application process can change or may even vary by consulate.
- ▶ **Please note:** You will not receive your COE from your host institution until after you have enrolled in Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). For information visit:
<https://www.oshcworldcare.com.au/Default.aspx>

- ▶ Do not apply for your visa more than three months before your scheduled departure date, since your information may not yet be in the Department of Immigration & Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) database.

How do I obtain a visa?

A. Online

Students from Assessment Level 1 countries apply online for their visa. A credit card is required when applying online

- Access the application form at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/>. Your visa option is “Non-Award”.
- Select “Step 5: How to apply” to begin the process; choose the option for OUTSIDE Australia. You CANNOT apply more than 124 days before your course starts.
- Please read the general information on Student Visas provided on this page and all preceding pages. Click on the link “Online Applications”. Select “New Student Visa” from under “Start an Application: Applicants Outside Australia”.
- Please read the information about applying for a student (temporary) visa for Assessment Level 1 students. Then click “Start your application”
- Please complete the online information as requested. You will be provided with a Transaction Reference Number (TRN). Save this number – you will need it in order to check the status of your e-visa.
- You should receive a confirmation email stating that your visa has been issued. To confirm the status of a student visa, visit the E-Visa portion of the DIMIA website. Scroll down to the subheading “Online Visa Services.” Click on “Online visa enquiry facility.” You will need your date of birth and TRN to check the status of your e-visa.

B. Via mail

You may also apply via mail from the Australian Embassy. Be aware of the following:

- Download the 157A form, complete it and send it along with the COE, passport, and payment.
- Send all documents, including your passport, in a FedEx, US Overnight Mail, or other express mail service that provides a tracking number for your parcel, to the embassy. **Keep a photocopy of all documents, including your passport, for yourself.**
- If there is a fee for your visa, send a money order or certified check--consulates will not accept personal checks.
- Be sure all documents are in order. Missing documents may cause delays in the processing of your application.
- Enclose a *postage paid* FedEx/US Overnight Mail envelope *addressed to yourself*. The consulate will only return your visa and documents if you provide a return envelope.
- Apply early.
- Do not leave the country until you have received your passport and visa.

General tips for applying for a visa:

Foreign embassies and consulates in the US receive hundreds of inquires every day so contacting them can be a trying experience. Have patience. Some consulates only receive visitors or calls during certain hours of the day or on certain days of the week; visit their website to learn their hours or call back at different times of the day. You may find that you are placed on hold or that your call is never forwarded to the appropriate person. Don't be discouraged: be persistent, but polite. Remember that US consulates in foreign countries operate in a similar fashion!

Australian Embassy in the US:

Embassy of Australia: Washington, D.C.

Address: 1601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20036-2273

Phone: (202)797-3000 or 1-888-990-8888 for queries on visas

Website: <http://australia.visahq.com/>