



Fact sheet

Student Visa Integrity Measures



On 20 August 2009, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans announced strengthened checking for high-risk segments in the student visa program, especially in relation to markets where there has been high growth. These arrangements build upon existing integrity checking which include targeted interviewing and document checks, and security, character and health checking for all applicants.

These targeted measures aimed at combating fraud and ensuring students have the financial capacity to live and study in Australia include:

- upgrading the interview program to build a strong evidence base around fraud; and
- removing or restricting eVisa access for some agents where there is evidence of fraud or inactivity.

The measures target parts of the student visa caseload in India, Mauritius, Nepal, Brazil, Zimbabwe and Pakistan.

These measures do not target any one market or sector of the Student visa program and that these markets were selected on the basis of risk analysis.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do integrity measures mean for student visa applicants?

A: The Department has always undertaken integrity checks on claims made as part of a Student visa application, including verifying financial, education and English language test documents.

Checks may be undertaken on the supporting documentation provided to ensure the veracity of claims being made, and some applicants may be interviewed by telephone or else called to an Australian Embassy or High Commission for an in person interview.

Applicants who have a genuine intention to study in Australia have nothing to fear from the interview process. There may be a slight increase in processing times as a result of the enhanced integrity measures. Applicants and agents are strongly encouraged to lodge complete applications at least 12 weeks prior to the course start date. Every effort is made to finalise applications within published service level standards.

Q: What do the interviews focus on?

A: The interview is an opportunity for the Department to obtain further information about an applicant's background and circumstances to support their application for a student visa. Interviews focus on applicant's circumstances in their home country, including educational background, any work experience and financial capacity. The interview may also ask some questions about Australia and the proposed course of study. The interview is aimed at verifying the claims made in the application.

The questions being asked are not to test specific knowledge about Australia or life in Australia. Questions asked are reasonable for any person who has made the decision to study abroad to answer.



Q: Will an applicant be refused a visa if they answer a single question “wrong”?

A: There are no wrong answers in the interview. An applicant would not be refused on the basis of the answer to a single question. A decision maker, when making a decision on a visa will take into consideration all the circumstances of the applicant and the answers to all the questions asked, as well as the documentation provided as part of the application.

Q: What is the process for conducting interviews?

A: Applicants who are invited for an in person interview are given, in writing, 7 days notice to come for an interview. Applicants who are interviewed over the phone will generally not have a time pre-arranged, however, if a person is called and the time is not convenient to speak to an officer, a new time will be arranged.

The interview process will generally take up to 30 minutes. An interpreter is provided.

Q: Where will a decision be made on the application after an interview has been completed?

A: Where an application is finalised depends on where the initial application was lodged and is being processed. For example an eVisa application from India will be finalised at the Adelaide Offshore Student Processing Centre, however, a paper application lodged in Port Louis, Mauritius will be finalised in Port Louis.

Q: Can an applicant re-apply after being refused a visa after an interview?

A: An applicant can re-apply for a Student visa, after a refusal of their visa after an interview, but applicants are strongly advised to read the decision record they are provided with after a refusal to understand the reasons for a refusal.

Q: How many agents have been removed from eVisa?

A: To date around 150 agents have had their access to eVisa removed, as a result of unacceptable refusal rates or due to the lodgement of fraudulent documentation.

Q: I am an education provider/agent. How can I assist a student with their application?

A: Agents should lodge complete applications at least 12 weeks prior to their course start date. This will give the department sufficient time to undertake the required verification on documents prior to the proposed start date or to organise an interview if required. Applicants should always be fully aware of the contents of their applications.

Providers should fulfil their obligations under Standard 2 of the National Code by recruiting students in an ethical and responsible manner and provide information that enables students to make informed decisions about studying with the provider in Australia. Registered providers ensure students' qualifications, experience and English language proficiency are appropriate for the course for which enrolment is sought.