



Changes to Student visa application rules

Understand the new requirements before enrolling in a course, making travel or relocation plans, or applying for a visa.

From 2 October 2026, new rules change who can apply for and be granted a Student visa (subclass 500) or Student Guardian visa (subclass 590) while in Australia, and whether family members can be included.

These changes may affect you if you are:

- applying for a Student visa (subclass 500) or Student Guardian visa (subclass 590) in Australia
- a Student visa holder applying for another Student visa in Australia
- including family members in a Student visa application, or considering whether they can join later.

Applying for a Student visa while in Australia

Most temporary visa holders in Australia will no longer be able to lodge a Student or Student Guardian visa application while in Australia. For a list of affected visas, visit [Subclass 500 Student visa](#).

If you are a current Student visa holder applying for another Student visa, you will also be affected by this new rule, unless an exemption applies.

This includes people who currently hold a Student visa as a dependant and want to apply for a Student visa as the primary applicant.

The changes do not affect your current Student visa.

If the new rules prevent you from applying in Australia, you will need to be outside

Australia when you lodge your application and also when your visa is granted.

Current Student Guardian visa holders can continue to lodge a further Student Guardian visa application while in Australia.

Exemptions for applying for another Student visa in Australia

If you are a Student visa holder, you may be able to apply for another Student visa in Australia if you:

- need up to 12 more months after your original course end date to complete your studies. You must be continuing to study with the same education provider. If you have a package of courses, the course you need more time to complete must be your main course
- are sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) or Defence
- are applying to study for a PhD
- are applying to do primary or secondary school studies
- have completed your main course that has an [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) level and are progressing to a course at a higher AQF level*
- have completed your school studies and are progressing to a course that does not have an AQF level
- have completed a course that does not have an AQF level and you are progressing to a course that does have an AQF level



- cannot continue your course because your education provider has defaulted.

*Note: If you completed a higher education course, your next course must also be a higher education course delivered by a higher education provider.

Including or adding family members (dependants)

Student visa applicants can no longer include family members (partner and/or dependent children) in their Student visa application, unless an exemption applies. This also applies to people lodging an application for a further Student visa.

Current Student visa holders can no longer add family members (subsequent entrants) after their Student visa has been granted.

There are no exemptions to this rule.

Exemptions for including family members at the time of application

You may be able to include family members when you apply for a Student visa if you are:

- studying a PhD
- sponsored by DFAT or Defence
- receiving a foreign government scholarship
- an eligible student from a Pacific country or an ASEAN member country.

If you **already** have family members included in your current Student visa, and are applying in Australia, you may be able to include them in your next Student visa application.

The primary applicant and all family members included in the application must be in the same location when the application is lodged.

Applications lodged before 2 October 2026

Student visa applications lodged before the new rules started, including applications that included family members, will continue to be assessed under the rules that were in place when they were lodged.

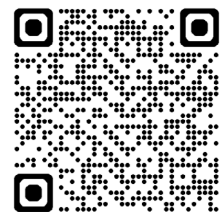
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Find out more

To find out whether the changes affect you, whether an exemption applies and what you need to do, visit [Subclass 500 Student visa](#).



[Subclass 500 Student visa](#)



[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)