



Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Border Protection**

The simplified student visa framework

Information for Education and Migration Agents

On 16 June 2015 the Australian Government announced the introduction of a simplified student visa framework (SSVF) to support Australia's international education sector. Key changes under the SSVF are:

- a reduction in the number of student visa subclasses from eight to two
- the introduction of a single immigration risk framework for all international students.

Subject to the regulatory change process, the SSVF is intended to be implemented from July 2016.

Rationale for change

The SSVF is designed to make the student visa framework simpler to navigate for genuine students, deliver a more targeted approach to immigration integrity and create a level playing field for education providers.

The SSVF in practice

Under the SSVF, it is intended that all education providers registered with the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) will be allocated an immigration risk rating between one (lowest risk) and three (highest risk), based on the immigration risk outcomes of their international students over the previous 12-month period. The same approach will also be used to allocate an immigration risk rating to each country.

The combined immigration risk outcomes of the student's education provider and country of citizenship will be used to guide the level of documentary evidence of financial capacity and English language proficiency that the student will need to provide with their visa application.

Student visa evidentiary requirements

Under the SSVF, students with the lowest immigration risk will generally have streamlined evidentiary requirements.

This means these students will generally not be required to provide evidence of financial and English language capacity with their visa application.

The Department will however retain the discretion to seek this evidence where appropriate.

All students (including where streamlined evidentiary requirements apply) will continue to have to meet all other core student visa criteria, such as the Genuine Temporary Entrant requirement and health and character criteria.

Implications for education and migration agents

The SSVF will support the sustainable growth of the international education sector by ensuring the visa process remains competitive. As a result, the SSVF is expected to have a positive impact for education and migration agents involved in the recruitment of genuine international students.

Determining a student's evidentiary requirements

Under the SSVF, the individual immigration risk ratings of education providers and countries will not be published.

Students and agents will be able to obtain indicative visa evidentiary requirements by accessing a working sample of the online tool on the Department's website from late May 2016.

This timeframe will help agents provide targeted information to students about their visa requirements under the SSVF, before the SSVF commences.

The tool will be fully functional from 1 July 2016 and accessible at any stage of the visa application process, including prior to the submission of a visa application.

Lodging a student visa application under the SSVF

Currently some students and agents are able to lodge student visa applications on the internet while others are required to lodge a paper-based application.

The SSVF will change the way student visa applications are lodged. It is intended that from July 2016 all students will be required to lodge their visa application online.

Agents will be able to access these online services and assist students with their visa applications by creating an account in ImmiAccount.

More information on ImmiAccount is available at:
www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Immi

Next Steps

The Department will provide more detailed information about the operation of the SSVF in April and May 2016.

This information will include further guidance about how student visa applications will be lodged under the SSVF and ImmiAccount arrangements.

Additional information

Further information on the SSVF, including answers to frequently asked questions, is available at:
www.border.gov.au/about/reports-publications/reviews-inquiries/student-visa-programme