



Student Visa Program

English Language Requirements changes

As announced in the Migration Strategy released on 11 December 2023, the Australian Government is raising the English language requirements for Student and Temporary Graduate visas.

The English language reforms will support international students and recent graduates to have a positive educational experience in Australia, and give students who earn a degree in Australia an opportunity to contribute to Australia's economic growth.

Students with strong English proficiency are better placed to live independently in Australia and engage with the broader community. They can also better understand their workplace rights, which reduces their risk of exploitation.

These changes apply to all Student and Temporary Graduate visa applications lodged on and after the 23 March 2024.

Student Visas

- The minimum test score for the English proficiency requirement for a Student visa increases from International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 5.5 to 6.0 (or equivalent).
- The minimum score to undertake a packaged English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) course increases from IELTS 4.5 to 5.0 (or equivalent).
- Students undertaking recognised university foundation or pathway programs that deliver reputable English language training require a score of IELTS 5.5 (or equivalent). These recognised courses will be listed on the Department's website.

For students studying English only through ELICOS, there will be no change.

Temporary Graduate visas (TGV)

- The minimum score required for a Temporary Graduate visa increases from IELTS 6.0 to 6.5 (or equivalent as specified on our website), with a minimum score of 5.5 for each component of the test (reading, writing, speaking and listening).
- Passport holders from Hong Kong and British National Overseas (BNO) are not required to meet this increased minimum English language requirement. The settings for this cohort remains at IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent), with a minimum score of 5.0 for each component of the test (reading, writing, speaking and listening).
- The test validity window for all Temporary Graduate visa applications decreases from three years to one year. Applicants must provide evidence that they have completed an English Language test no more than one year immediately before the date of the visa application.

Further information about the changes will be communicated to education providers and potential applicants, including through the Department of Home Affairs website, social media channels and outreach activities.

Section 97 of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)

Further changes are also flagged for the use of Section 97 of the ESOS Act 200 to issue suspension certificates to high-risk education providers. We will provide further details in a provider update tomorrow.