



9.0 Visa Information for International Students

9.1 Visa and immigration requirements

Raffles College overseas students should be aware that visa and immigration regulations are very complex and vary depending on the nationality of a student and his or her particular individual circumstances. It is recommended that only trained staff in Administration (primarily the Registrar) give advice to students regarding visa and/or immigration regulations. Students are encouraged to visit the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) website (<http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm>) for information.

The following overview from DIAC explains the changes to the Migration Act as follows:

Valid student visa throughout the studies

International students must have a valid student visa for the duration of their studies in Australia. Students will only be issued with a student visa for study in Australia if they seek to undertake a full-time course that is accredited and registered by the Australian Government. Permanent Residents of Australia and citizens of Australia and New Zealand are not permitted to enrol as international students.

Automatic cancellation if not complying with visa conditions

Students must satisfy other visa requirements and comply with a number of visa conditions for attendance and academic performance, which come into effect after they have entered Australia. It is important to comply with these visa conditions to avoid visa cancellation. Conditions of student visa include:

Full-time enrolment

International students on a student visa must enrol in full-time study. At Raffles College, an international student is considered to be a full-time student if enrolment is equal to a standard semester program. Students who require less than a full-time load to complete their course in the final semester or who have special approval from DIAC may be permitted to study on a part-time basis. International students who hold visa types other than student visas, and have approval to enrol in a course, may be permitted to study on part-time basis.

Students must remain with one education provider

Students must remain with the education provider with whom they originally enrolled for at least the first 12 months of their principal course unless they get permission from the DIAC to transfer. A transfer will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. Where a student undertakes a preparatory course prior to commencing their principal course they must complete the preparatory study and 12 months of the principal course before changing provider.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) at all times

International students on student visas must maintain current Overseas Student Health Cover as a condition of their visa. If you let your cover lapse, the DIAC could cancel your student visa. Students from Norway and Sweden are exempt from this condition, as special arrangements have been made between the respective governments. OSHC must be renewed if it expires during the duration of the course either through Raffles College or by the student.

Raffles College offers OSHC from Australian Health Management (ahm). ahm OSHC can be purchased in blocks from 3 months to 6 years. You'll receive a membership card from Raffles College within a few days of starting your ahm OSHC membership. ahm also provides members with a free 24 hour emergency service for medical and legal assistance. The ahm Emergency Service Help line is accessible 24 hours, 7 days a week: call 1800 006 745. Please have your membership card handy when you call.

Please visit the AHM website for more detailed information: www.ahm.com.au/7323/OSHC

Current residential address at all times

Students are required to inform their education provider, within seven days of their arrival in Australia, of their residential address. They are also required to advise their provider, within seven days, of any subsequent change of residential address.

9.2 Permission to work

During the semester students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week on a student visa and during holiday are allowed to work up to 40 hours per week. Students must apply to DIAC to have their visa changed to allow them to work. They can apply on-line to www.immi.gov.au and click on the e-visa icon, but they must have a credit card to pay for this service (currently \$60) otherwise they will need to make an appointment to go in person to the DIAC office. Permission to work student visas will only be issued after the course has commenced, not before the start of teaching. Students must provide evidence of their enrolment. Applications for a Student Visa with Permission to Work are available from Student Services on Level 18.

9.3 Accommodation and welfare arrangements for students under 18 years of age

Students under 18 years of age, at the time of a visa being granted, and who are not living with a parent or guardian or adult person nominated by the parent or guardian, during the period of study, will be required to demonstrate, to Raffles College's satisfaction, that suitable accommodation and welfare arrangements have been made. These students are then provided with a statement signed by a Raffles College representative to present to the Australian diplomatic office when applying for their student visa.



Arrangements for dependants

Students who will be accompanied in Australia by their school age dependants must make schooling and immigration arrangements for those dependants.

9.4 Leave of Absence

International students will only be granted approval to take Leave of Absence under exceptional and compelling circumstances, such as medical or bereavement reasons. All international students requesting Leave of Absence are required to attend an interview with the Registrar. Please be advised that approved Leave of Absence does not guarantee that your student visa will not be cancelled upon leaving the country; therefore check with DIAC before you leave.

If the Leave of Absence is not approved and the student still wants to take a break in studies, they will have to terminate their program and apply for re-admission when they wish to return. The Registrar will inform DIAC of termination of course and, in most cases, the student's visa will be cancelled and the student will be required to re-apply for a student visa before resuming studies.

Please also refer to Section 21 of the Student Rules in Appendix A.

9.5 Raffles College responsibility regarding visa violation

One aspect of the obligations on registered providers is to keep records of each accepted student (Point 21 of the ESOS 2000 Act) and to notify the appropriate agency when students breach their student visa condition. The ESOS (2000) Act, Point 20 says clearly:

'A registered provider must send an accepted student of the provider a written notice if the student has breached a student visa condition relating to attendance or satisfactory academic performance.'

Students will have 20 days from the date of the notification to appeal. See Appendix B: Student Grievance & Appeals Policy.

When a student has been identified as violating visa conditions Raffles College is obliged to report them via the DEST database PRISMS. A notification letter automatically prints off the system for certain violations. A letter is sent both to the student and to DIAC.



9.6 Evidentiary standards to obtain a student visa

All applicants for a student visa must provide certain evidentiary requirements according to the assessed risk level of their country of citizenship. For further information on these conditions visit the DIAC website (www.immi.gov.au/students/students/chooser).

Assessment factors include financial capacity, English language proficiency, potential to breach visa conditions and other relevant matters, which include academic background and relevance of the course to career development.

9.7 DIAC contact information

General

Website: www.immi.gov.au

Telephone: 131 881

Sydney office

Ground Floor

26 Lee Street

Sydney NSW 2000

General facsimile: 02 9032 4096

Counter hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1600 (Wed 0900-1330)

9.8 Other Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) websites

The official Australian Government website for advice on studying in Australia:

www.studyinaustralia.gov.au

The Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) website is the official Australian Government website that lists all Australian education providers to offer courses to people studying in Australia on student visas and the courses offered:

<http://cricos.dest.gov.au/>

Comprehensive information on the ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code 2007 is at:

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/ESOS/Default.htm>

