Reduction of Certain Student Visa Assessment Levels

Reductions in Student visa assessment levels for 38 countries for one or more Student visa subclasses was announced by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship on 16 December 2010. These reductions will take effect on 2 April 2011.


Prospective students and their families, agents and education providers should be aware that these changes will lower the minimum evidentiary requirements needed for the grant of a Student visa for the selected countries and education sectors. **However, the reductions to assessment levels do not change the likelihood of a former student in Australia obtaining permanent residence.**

A Student visa entitles international students to come to Australia on a temporary basis for a specified period to undertake study at an Australian educational institution. While many international students make a decision to apply for permanent residence upon completing their studies, this is an entirely separate process. There is no guarantee that by previously having a Student visa, a person will meet the requirements to be granted permanent residence.

Further information on assessment levels and a full list of assessment levels for different countries in each education sector is available on the department’s website.


Frequently asked Questions

**Q: Which countries and visa subclasses will have their assessment levels lowered?**

A: There are 38 countries that will have their assessment levels lowered across one or more subclasses. The full list of affected countries is available on the department’s website.


**Q: I am an international student studying in Australia. Do these changes affect me? When do these changes take place?**

A: These changes will only affect new Student visa applications made on or after 2 April 2011.

**Q: What does a reduction of assessment levels mean to Student visa applicants?**

A: Students affected by the changes will be required to provide less documentary evidence to support their claims for the grant of a Student visa. These may include evidence of English language proficiency, financial capacity and academic qualifications (more detail is provided in the summary of key requirements for Student visa applicants table). Those who are subject to Assessment Level 1 are eligible to lodge online internet based applications.
### Summary of key requirements for Student visa applicants

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<tr>
<th>Assessment level</th>
<th>Evidence of English language proficiency</th>
<th>Evidence of financial capacity</th>
<th>Academic qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enrolment by education provider</td>
<td>• a declaration that they have sufficient funds to support their entire stay in Australia</td>
<td>Enrolment by education provider</td>
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| 2                | Enrolment by education provider         | • evidence of funds from an acceptable source to pay for their expenses for the first 12 months of their stay  
                          • a declaration that they have sufficient funds to support the remainder of their stay in Australia | Postgraduate research: Undergraduate degree  
                          All other sectors: enrolment by education provider |
| 3                | Independent English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and schools: enrolment by education provider  
                        Vocational Education and Training (VET) and non-award: 5.5 International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or 4.5 IELTS with a preliminary ELICOS course  
                        Higher education and postgraduate research: 6.0 IELTS or 5.0 IELTS with ELICOS course | • evidence of funds from an acceptable source (a money deposit or a loan with an acceptable financial institution) to pay for their expenses for the first 24 months of their stay (or duration of preliminary plus first 12 months of principal course for Postgraduate Research)  
                          • a declaration that they have sufficient funds to support the remainder of their stay in Australia | Schools: Completed year six  
                          VET: Completed year 11  
                          Higher education: Completed year 12 or year 11 and foundation studies or Certificate IV  
                          Postgraduate research: Undergraduate degree |
| 4                | Independent ELICOS: 5.0 IELTS  
                        Schools: If over 16 years, 5.0 IELTS or 4.0 IELTS with preliminary ELICOS  
                        VET and non-award: 5.5 IELTS or 5.0 IELTS with a preliminary ELICOS course | • evidence of funds from an acceptable source (a money deposit or a loan with an acceptable financial institution) to pay for their expenses for the first 36 months of their stay (or duration of preliminary plus first 12 months of principal course for postgraduate research)  
                          • a declaration that they have sufficient funds to support the remainder of their stay in Australia | Schools: Completed year nine  
                          VET: Completed year 12  
                          Higher education: Completed year 12 or year 11 and foundation studies or Certificate IV |
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| Higher education and postgraduate research: 6.0 IELTS or 5.0 IELTS with ELICOS course | • funds must be provided by close relatives only who can demonstrate their income stream  
• if evidence of funds is a money deposit, must show a six months savings history | Postgraduate research: Undergraduate degree |
| 5 | All subclasses: IELTS 7.0 | • evidence of funds (money deposits) to pay for their expenses for the full period of their stay  
• funds must be provided by the applicant  
• evidence of income stream  
• if evidence of funds is a money deposit, must show a five year savings history | Postgraduate research: Undergraduate degree  
All other sectors: Year 12. Evidence of relevance to current or prospective employment |

Note: This table is not intended as a comprehensive list of all requirements of evidence in Schedule 5A to the *Migration Regulations 1994*. For comprehensive information please visit the department’s website. See: [www.immi.gov.au/students/](http://www.immi.gov.au/students/)

Q: Will a reduction of assessment levels mean an easier pathway to gain Australian permanent residence?

A: A Student visa does not confer any automatic right to migrate to Australia. It is important to note that Student visas are aimed at achieving an educational outcome. The skilled migration program is designed to meet the needs of the Australian labour market and strengthen the whole economy.

Requirements for permanent skilled migration will change from time to time and there is no particular course that guarantees a permanent visa.

Students should not make educational choices solely on the basis of hoping to achieve a particular migration outcome, because the skilled migration program will continue to change and adapt to Australia’s economic needs.