

ACU International

Guide for students with families

acu.edu.au/international

General Information

This following information is provided as a guide to assist international students who are planning to bring their families to Australia.

It is our experience that students planning to study at ACU Australia as an international student require information about accommodation, childcare, schooling and employment for partners. This guide is designed to provide information, links and resources for all these areas.

Only the legal spouse and dependent children (0-18 years) are eligible to apply to enter Australia on student dependent visas. Dependant visas are applied for in your home country. Details of the application process should be obtained at the time of applying for student visas. The International Student Advisers (ISA) at each campus can provide information and support for students wanting to bring their family over on a dependant visa and general family welfare.

For Australia Awardee students, an ISA can assist you if you need to provide a letter of support for issue of dependant visas to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), or if you need confirmation of enrolment (COE) for a school aged child. Information regarding dependant visa conditions and the application process can be found at the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) website.

The cost of supporting a family in Australia is very high and it is important to ensure that you have sufficient funds to support them financially.

You also need to consider how your family will adjust to life in Australia:

- how would the presence of your family impact on your studies?
- how would your family cope with life in Australia?
- can your spouse communicate confidently in English?
- possibly limited employment opportunities for your spouse
- are you the primary carer for your children?
- school or childcare arrangements for your children

You may find it is easier to arrive in Australia first, and to bring your family later, however it is your choice. Some students choose to bring their family with them to avoid visa delays. It is also very important that you declare all family members on your application, even if they do not plan to travel with you to Australia. If you do not do this, your family members will not be eligible for the grant of student visas as your dependants to join you in Australia. Important visa information for bringing your family to Australia can be found on the DIBP website.

By law you must enrol your school age children into school once they reach school starting age.

When choosing a school, many parents ask about:

- the school's curriculum
- extracurricular activities
- the size of individual classes
- the overall size of the school
- whether there is an English as a Second Language (ESL) program offered
- school fees and any additional costs

You should also consider:

- the distance from the school to the University
- the distance of the school from where you plan to live
- how your children will travel to and from the school.

For further information visit the appropriate state website below:

VIC: www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/choosing.aspx

NSW: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools>

ACT: www.det.act.gov.au/information_for/parents_and_school_community

QLD: <https://eqi.com.au/study-options/temporary-residents>

CHILDCARE

Childcare is expensive and can be difficult to secure. You should start researching childcare options before you arrive. It is more difficult to find places for children under 24 months of age. Places for older children (3 – 5 years old) are easier to obtain.

To learn about the availability and suitability of different childcare options, you need to approach childcare centres directly. Most childcare centres have long waiting lists, so you might want to register on several waiting lists. Some centres charge an application fee.

My Child is the Australian Government portal to Childcare. This website will allow you to search for child care centres in your local area and obtain information regarding services, vacancy and fees.

LOCAL COUNCILS

In Australia there are three tiers of government – federal (or national), state, and local. The local government comprises a series of councils or municipalities that provide services and facilities to local residents. It is a good idea to check which council or shire you are living in. You can contact the council for a new resident's information pack, visit a customer service centre, or check online as to what services and resources are available to you as a parent.

To find out what council area you live in, visit the appropriate website below:

VIC: <https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils>

NSW: www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/my-local-council/find-my-council

ACT: www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/246

QLD: www.dilgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory

Councils offer a wide range of information for families, such as:

- community childcare and family day care
- book and toy libraries
- school holiday programs
- parks, gardens, playgrounds, festivals and events
- community-based mothers groups/ supported play groups

State specific Information

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Children in the ACT can start primary school at the beginning of the school year if they are five or turn five on or before 30 April in that year. It is compulsory for children to be enrolled in school from age six. For more information about schooling, refer to the ACT Government Schools websites:

www.det.act.gov.au/school_education

www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/enrolling_in_an_act_public_school

www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/international_students

School Fees

You are responsible for school fees and other costs including school uniforms, books, stationery and excursions. You will need to pay the fee when you accept the position in the school.

The ACT Government tuition and administration fees for the dependants of international students, vary depending on their visa.

The tuition fees for those on a student visa are (based on one academic year):

RATES FOR 2018		
Preschool	K-6	\$3,900
Primary School	Years K-6	\$10,400
High School	Year 7-10	\$13,600
College/ Senior School	Year 11-12	\$15,200

There is also a non-refundable Administration Fee of \$250 which is payable upon application.

Tuition fees at non-government schools vary from school to school.

Your dependants may be exempt from school fees at an ACT Government School if you:

- are a postgraduate research student enrolled in a doctoral (PhD) or Masters by Research degree, and you have a subclass 574 visa; **OR**
- receive a fully-funded award or scholarship from the Australian government.

Contact the ACT Government's International Education Unit to determine if you are eligible for fee exemptions.

Childcare/Preschools

Depending on the childcare centre, they will be able to care for children between the ages of six weeks and five years. Fees associated with childcare can be expensive so it is important to look around. You may wish to also consider [family day care](#) as this can sometimes be less expensive.

Whatever you decide is best for your family, childcare or family day care, be sure to ask what is provided such as do you need to provide nappies, food, prepared bottle, blankets and so on. Every little thing adds up.

Preschool is the year before your child starts primary school. Some child care centres will have a preschool program. The positive of this is that your child can stay in an environment which is familiar to them; however the downside is that you have to pay child care fees, which can be expensive.

A Preschool is a school which conducts an education program to prepare your child for primary school. To attend preschool your child must be four years of age by 30 April in the year they commence preschool. Be sure to check attendance requirements as these vary for each preschool. For more information about ACT preschools visit the [Canberra Public Schools website](#).

On 1 January 2016 the Federal Government implemented legislation which requires a child to be fully immunised if they are to receive government tax benefits for childcare, preschool and school unless they have a medical exemption.

More information about getting immunised in the ACT visit the [ACT Health website](#).

Dependants of international students are not eligible for free vaccinations, however coverage may be available through your OSHC policy. Please enquire with your OSHC provider.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Children in NSW can start Kindergarten (school) at the beginning of the school year if they turn five on or before 31 July in that year. By law, all children must be enrolled in school by their sixth birthday. For more information about schooling, refer to the [NSW Government Schools website](#).

School Fees

You are responsible for school fees and other costs including school uniforms, books, stationery and excursions. You may need to pay for one semester's school fees when you provisionally enrol your children.

The tuition fees to be paid for depends of international students varies depending on the visa subclass the international student holds. For the higher education sector the Education Fee Annual Rate for 2018 is:

RATES FOR 2018

Primary Years	K-6	\$5200
Junior High School	Years 7-10	\$5200
Senior High School	Year 11-12	\$6200

Non-refundable administration fee: \$110

Tuition fees at non-government schools vary from school to school.

Your dependants may be exempt from school fees at a NSW Government School if you:

- are a postgraduate research student enrolled in a doctoral (PhD) or Masters by Research degree; OR
- receive a fully-funded award or scholarship from the Australian government.

Further information can also be found on the [NSW Government Temporary Resident Program Information Sheet](#).

You can also check if you are eligible for fee exemptions with the NSW Government's Temporary Resident Program.

Childcare / Preschools

Before a child is officially required to attend school, there are various options for Childcare and Preschools in NSW.

Preschools in public schools provide educational programs for children one year prior to enrolment in Kindergarten. A child may be eligible for enrolment in preschool from the beginning of the school year if they turn four years on or before 31 July that year. Childcare Centres primarily look after children from birth to 5 years old.

More information on Preschools in public school and Childcare Facilities can be found on the Australian Government [My Child website](#).

Please note that Childcare Centres in NSW are prevented from enrolling children unless immunisation certificates proving that they are fully immunised, or have a specified exemption, are provided at enrolment.

Details on the NSW Immunisation schedule are available from the [Health Department website](#).

QUEENSLAND

A child is considered to be of compulsory school age from 6 years and 6 months until they turn 16, or they complete Year 10 (whichever comes first).

Parents of compulsory-school-aged children must:

- enrol them at a school
- ensure they attend school on every school day, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

For a summary of education facilities in Queensland visit the [QLD Department of Education website](#).

Prep

In 2007 Prep replaced preschool as the first year of school and provides the foundation for your child's education

Children must be 5 by 30 June in the year they enrol. Check when your child can enrol in Prep visit: www.qld.gov.au/education/childcare/prep/pages/enrolment.html

Prep is a full-time program held in primary schools. Children attend Monday-Friday, generally from 9am-3pm.

School Fees

The tuition fee that is charged for dependant children varies according to the level of schooling for which they will be enrolled. You are responsible for school fees and other costs including school uniforms, books, stationery and excursions.

The tuition fees to be paid for depends of international students varies depending on the visa subclass the international student holds.

RATES FOR 2018		
Primary Years	Prep–Year 6	\$262 (p/w)
High School	Years 7–10	\$269 (p/w)
Senior High School	Year 10	\$283 (p/w)
Senior High School	Year 11	\$321 (p/w)
Senior High School	Year 12	\$329 (p/w)

Fees are paid annually in advance.

Application fee: \$253 (all year levels)

For further details refer to <https://eqi.com.au/study-options/fees>

Conditions of fee exemption for dependant students

Dependants of temporary visa holders who are of school age (P-12) are eligible for an exemption from paying international student school tuition fees in Queensland state schools if they meet the **conditions outlined**. The exemption only applies for the duration of the main temporary visa holder's (parents) course of study in Queensland.

Childcare/Kindergarten

Early childhood education and care services enable parents and carers to work, study and take part in community life knowing their child is safe, well cared for and educated by people who share an understanding of their child's learning and development needs.

Childcare Immunisation Requirements

On 1 January 2016 the Federal Government implemented legislation which requires a child to be fully immunised if they are to receive government tax benefits for childcare, preschool and school unless they have a medical exemption.

You may also need to prove that your child's immunisation status is up-to-date before they can enrol or attend an approved early childhood service, under changes to the Public Health Act 2005.

The service can ask you to show an:

- immunisation history statement when first enrolling your child
- updated immunisation history statement when your child passes the 2, 4, 6, 12, 18 months and 4 years.

If your child is not up-to-date, the service can choose to:

- refuse enrolment
- cancel enrolment or refuse attendance
- conditionally accept enrolment or attendance.

For more information about childcare immunisation requirements in QLD, visit the [QLD Government website](#).

VICTORIA

Children must be five years old or turning five before 30 April of that calendar year to be eligible to start school in Victoria. For more information about schooling, refer to the Victorian Government Schools International Student Program website.

School Fees

You are responsible for school fees and other costs including school uniforms, books, stationery and excursions. You may need to pay for one semester's school fees when you provisionally enrol your children.

Victorian Government School annual tuition fees for dependants of overseas students studying in Victoria in 2018 are:

RATES FOR 2018		
Primary Prep	Grade 6	\$9,184
Junior Secondary	Years 7–10	\$12,136
Senior Secondary	Year 11–12	\$13,612

Tuition fees at non-government schools vary from school to school.

Your dependants may be exempt from school fees at a Victorian Government School if you:

- are a postgraduate student enrolled in a doctoral (PhD) or Masters degree, OR
- receive a fully-funded award or scholarship from the Australian government.

Check if you are eligible for fee exemptions with the Victorian Government's International Education Division.

Local Council Maternal and Child Health Services

The Maternal and Child Health Service supports families in the areas of parenting, health and development and can give you referrals to other professionals and link you with other families in your local community. You and your child can have regular appointments with this free service from birth until your children reach school age.

The Maternal and Child Health Service offers Ten Key Ages and Stages consultations for you and your child, including a home visit followed by:

- consultations at two, four and eight weeks;
- four, eight, twelve and 18 months; and two and three and a half years of age.

At each consultation you are given the chance to discuss your concerns, talk about your parenting experiences and learn how to improve your child's health, growth and development.

For further information, and advice on how to make an appointment:

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/mch/pages/default.aspx

Childcare/Kindergarten

In Victoria, Children go to kindergarten in the year before school, usually when they are four years old. However, some services and centres also offer kindergarten programs for three-year-old children. The purpose of kindergarten is to prepare students for attending school the following year.

A comprehensive guide to kindergarten and childcare is available from the Victorian Education Department website.

You should contact your local council, once you have selected a kindergarten, and request to be enrolled.

On Thursday 22 October, 2015 the Victorian Parliament passed legislation known as 'No Jab, No Play' which requires all children to be fully vaccinated to be enrolled in childcare and/or kindergarten in Victoria unless they have a medical exemption. This legislation came into effect from 1 January 2016.

Details on the Victorian Immunisation schedule are available from the [Health Department website](#).

Dependants of international students are not eligible for free vaccinations, however coverage may be available through your OSHC policy. Please enquire with your OSHC provider.

Disclaimer:

The information provided here is intended as a guide only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate and current, information is subject to change. ACU International does not accept responsibility for any changes which might occur.

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