



# COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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## General Advice

The latest information on novel coronavirus can be found on the Department of Health website at [www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov](http://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov).

On 15 March 2020 the Australian Government announced new measures to protect the Australian community in its response to the COVID-19 virus.

This includes the requirement that **all individuals arriving in Australia from an international destination must self-isolate for 14 days**.

This acts as a further precaution to the social distancing measures adopted by National Cabinet, which prevents non-essential static gatherings of 500 people or more.

The Department of Health has a Coronavirus Health Information Line - **1800 020 080**. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Each state or territory Health Department may issue additional advice. You can contact your state or territory public health agency through the following channels:

- ACT visit [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)
- NSW visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)
- NT visit [www.health.nt.gov.au](http://www.health.nt.gov.au)
- Qld visit [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)
- SA visit [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)
- Tas visit [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au)
- Vic visit [www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au)
- WA visit [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au)

Your education provider may also have further information on their website.

The Australian Government is taking a highly precautionary approach based on the latest and best medical advice. Australia remains vigilant about this virus and how it is developing, and we are very well prepared.

Australia's response arrangements are flexible and scalable, and will be tailored to respond to the situation as we learn more about the virus and how it spreads. To stay up to date on health matters visit the Department of Health website [www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov](http://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov).

To stay up to date with travel and visa matters visit the Department of Home Affairs website <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/archive/article?itemId=354>.

# COVID-19 Border Measures

## What are the border protection measures for COVID-19?

On 15 March 2020, the Australian Government announced new measures to protect the Australian community in its response to the COVID-19 virus. **This includes the requirement that all individuals arriving in Australia from an international destination must self-isolate for 14 days.**

Foreign national students (excluding permanent residents) in affected countries **will not be permitted** to enter Australia for 14 days from the time they leave or travel through the affected country. As of 11 March 2020 affected countries included mainland China, Iran, the Republic of Korea and Italy. Refer to the Department of Health and Department of Home Affairs websites for up to date advice on affected countries.

International students should monitor the advice on the [Department of Health](#) and [Department of Home Affairs](#) websites. We recommend that students check with their airline and education providers before making decisions to travel to Australia, including via a third country. You should also check any current travel restrictions for other countries before you travel.

## Update for international students travelling from or through additional affected countries

Foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents of Australia) travelling from affected countries will not be able to enter Australia until 14 days after leaving or transiting through the affected country. They will then be required to self-isolate for 14 days from their date of arrival into Australia.

Australian citizens, permanent residents, and their immediate family (including spouses, dependants and legal guardians) will still be able to enter Australia but will be required to self-isolate for 14 days after the date they entered Australia.

International students from affected countries should follow the same advice for those travelling from or through mainland China set out in the Australian Government's factsheets and frequently asked questions on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment [website](#), as well as the Department of Health's website and the Department of Home Affairs' [website](#).

## Exemption process for Years 11 and 12

The Australian Government announced on 22 February 2020 a process to allow Year 11 and 12 school students affected by coronavirus travel restrictions to apply for entry into Australia to complete their school education.

The decision to allow Year 11 and 12 students in mainland China to apply for strict exemptions does not extend to students travelling from other affected countries as students from these countries would have commenced 2020 classes before travel restrictions were enacted.

Students and any accompanying holders of guardian visas **should not begin** travel to Australia (including booking travel) until they have confirmation of an exemption being granted by the Australian Border Force Commissioner that states they have authority to travel.

## Implementation

Should they wish to, state and territory governments will be able to seek exemptions to COVID-19 travel restrictions for year 11 and 12 school students. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment is actively communicating with the state and territory education authorities on the specific application process. Schools should engage their state or territory authority for details as to how this process will be applied in their jurisdiction.

Schools should work with State and Territory education authorities to determine students' eligibility before providing students' details to the Commonwealth. Students and schools can not apply directly to the Australian Border Force or Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills, and Employment.

Nationally, the following process will apply:

1. The Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment, in conjunction with states and territories, confirms the students are enrolled in year 11 or 12.
2. Each state and territory health agency provides assurance the student's (and guardian's where applicable) self-isolation arrangements meet all health requirements within their jurisdiction.
3. Neither student nor guardian is unwell, and have not demonstrated any sign of illness for more than 14 days.
4. Neither student nor guardian has visited Hubei province, China, since the outbreak of COVID-19.
5. The Australian Border Force and the Department of Home Affairs confirm the student (and their guardian if necessary) have valid and existing visas and border checks have been completed.
6. The Australian Border Force considers each individual meets the criteria for exemption and advises the Australian Departments of Education, Skills and Employment and Department of Health.
7. The Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment, will inform their state and territory counterparts of the outcome of the application for exemption.
8. State and territory education agencies will inform schools who will then inform students of exemptions or otherwise, as well as state and territory health authorities.
9. Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment will inform the ABF of the students' flight number and travel dates.
10. The Australian Border Force will provide uplift authority for exempt travellers, based on the travel information provided.
11. The Australian Department of Agriculture will conduct health/biosecurity screening of all students and guardians at the border.
12. Students and guardians complete 14 day -self-isolation in line with state or territory requirements (immediately after arrival in Australia).
13. State and territory health authorities monitor local quarantine requirements.
14. If students or guardians breach self-isolation arrangements, their visa may be subject to cancellation.

## I am a Year 11 or 12 international student still in China, how can I apply for the exemption? What requirements do I have to meet?

From 22 February 2020, the Australian Government will make a limited exemption to allow travel to be applied for on a case by case basis for foreign citizens in mainland China who are international students in Years 11 and 12, if the Australian Border Force Commissioner is satisfied the student and guardian meets requirements agreed with state and territory health and education authorities.

Students (and their accompanying guardian) must meet the following criteria:

- be a current international student visa holder, granted on or before 22 February 2020, and be enrolled in an eligible year 11 or 12 course;
- not currently be unwell;
- not travelling from, or via, Hubei province in China;
- have a stable residential address in Australia to enable self-isolation for 14 days; and
- be willing and able to meet the quarantine requirements set out by state or territory health authorities.

Students will need to meet the quarantine requirements set out by the state and territory health authorities.

Students and their guardians **should not begin** their travel back to Australia (including booking flights) prior to receiving official confirmation of their exemption granted by the Australian Border Force Commissioner.

For further information on what requirements students need to meet will be progressively updated on the department's [website](#).

## I am under 18 and don't have welfare arrangements in place. Can my guardian and/or family accompany me?

The exemption may be granted to an eligible student's guardian who already holds a valid guardian visa and meets other criteria set out above.

## Will the exemption be applied to other international student cohorts such as those in Universities? Why is the exemption only for year 11 and 12 students?

Year 11 and 12 students have strict school attendance requirements under state and territory regulations, which if not met could prevent them from being eligible to receive their senior secondary qualification. Further delay in their arrival may jeopardise their ability to meet course requirements and, for Year 12s, to complete their schooling this year.

## When I get back to Australia can I attend class straight away or do I have to self-isolate for 14 days?

Year 11 and 12 international students who are found suitable to enter Australia under the recent changes must meet the quarantine requirements set out by the state and territory health

authorities, including self-isolation for 14 days at their destination. Students should be in regular contact with their education provider to ensure they are up to date with class content.

### **I am an international student who resides in a boarding house does this meet the requirements of a stable residential address for self-isolation?**

Relevant state or territory health authorities will approve self-isolation arrangements for each jurisdiction. In the first instance, international students contact their education provider to discuss their options.

For more information on self-isolation visit the Department of Health's website

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>.

### **I have a homestay arrangement in place for when I arrive in Australia, will my homestay family be required to self-isolate as well?**

Relevant state or territory health authorities will approve self-isolation arrangements for each jurisdiction. In the first instance, international students who are under homestay arrangements should contact their education provider to discuss their options.

For more information on self-isolation visit the Department of Health's website

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>.

### **I'm an international student. If I believe I am exempt, how long until I can come to Australia?**

Decisions to exempt international students are at the discretion of the Australian Border Force Commissioner and will be treated on a case-by-case basis, informed by advice from state and territory health and education agencies. In the first instance, you should discuss options with your education provider.

### **I am worried about not being able to start class on time due to being overseas. Will this affect my Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), what should I do?**

For questions about your start dates, attendance, fee matters, CoE and other issues relating to your study, you should contact your education provider.

If you are not able to return to Australia in time for the start of your classes, you should notify your lecturer or student services contact officer of your circumstances to determine whether alternate arrangements, such as for remote learning, can be temporarily put in place.

If your education provider cannot assist, please see the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website at <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> for further advice, including factsheets in Mandarin. If you would like further assistance for specific matters please contact [international.students@dese.gov.au](mailto:international.students@dese.gov.au).

You can also call +61 1300 981 621 from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (AEDT) excluding public holidays.

## **These changes may mean I incur costs because I cannot attend my course on time. Is there insurance or compensation available?**

If you have taken out travel or other insurance, you should discuss this with your insurance provider.

If you are not able to return to Australia in time for the start of your classes, you should notify your lecturer or student services contact officer of your circumstances and discuss with them how your course fees will be affected.

If your education provider cannot assist, please see the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website at <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> for further advice, including factsheets in Mandarin. If you would like further assistance for specific matters please contact [international.students@dese.gov.au](mailto:international.students@dese.gov.au).

You can also call +61 1300 981 621 from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (AEDT), excluding public holidays.

## **Accommodation**

For questions about your accommodation, you should discuss this with your accommodation provider in the first instance. You may also wish to discuss this with your education provider, such as the student services contact officer.

## **Employment**

If you have a part time job that you cannot attend while in self-isolation or unable to travel, you should contact your employer, advise them of your circumstances and your compliance with advice from the Department of Health.

## **What does self-isolate mean?**

This means you should not attend public places, in particular work, school and public areas of university and higher education campuses. You should not attend class in person. Only people who usually live with you should be permitted to come inside. There is no need to wear masks at home. Arrange for others (such as friends or family who are not required to be isolated) to get food or other necessities for you.

If you must leave your home or residence, such as to seek medical care, wear a surgical mask if you have one.

Further information on self-isolation can be found on the Department of Health website at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

## **If I have to self-isolate, what do I do about attending class?**

For questions about your start dates, attendance, fee matters and other issues relating to your study, you should contact your education provider.

If classes at your education provider have commenced and you are in a period of self-isolation, you should notify your lecturer or student services contact officer of your circumstances to determine whether alternate arrangements for remote learning can be temporarily put in place.



If your education provider cannot assist, please see the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website at <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> for regularly updated factsheets as well as factsheets in Mandarin. If you would like further assistance for specific matters please contact [international.students@dese.gov.au](mailto:international.students@dese.gov.au).

## **I have been in a foreign country other than an affected country, and wish to attend class, what should I do?**

On 15 March 2020 the Australian Government announced new measures to protect the Australian community in its response to the COVID-19 virus.

This includes the requirement that **all individuals arriving in Australia from an international destination must self-isolate for 14 days**.

This acts as a further precaution to the social distancing measures adopted by National Cabinet, which prevents non-essential static gatherings of 500 people or more.

If you have not been in an affected country in the last 14 days, you must still self-isolate for 14 days before attending class and work as usual, and only attend if you are feeling well.

Further information on self-isolation can be found on the Department of Health website at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

## **Where can I get further information on study options and assistance?**

In the first instance, we recommend contacting your provider for assistance and information regarding your studies. In addition, you may refer to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website [www.dese.gov.au](http://www.dese.gov.au) for regularly updated factsheets as well as factsheets in Mandarin.

You may also wish to visit Study Australia's website [www.studyinaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au) for more information on support services available to international students.

## **Advice for International Students currently in Australia**

### **I have not been in an affected country in the last 14 days, what should I do?**

On 15 March 2020 the Australian Government announced new measures to protect the Australian community in its response to the COVID-19 virus.

This includes the requirement that **all individuals arriving in Australia from an international destination must self-isolate for 14 days**.

This acts as a further precaution to the social distancing measures of 13 March 2020 which advise against non-essential gatherings of 500 people or more.

If you have not been in an affected country in the last 14 days, you must still self-isolate for 14 days before attending class and work as usual, and only attend if you are feeling well.

Further information on self-isolation can be found on the Department of Health website at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

## **I have been in an affected country in the last 14 days and I am not feeling well, what should I do?**

If you develop symptoms within 14 days of leaving an affected country or been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, you should arrange to see a medical doctor for urgent assessment. You should telephone the health clinic or hospital before you arrive and tell them of your travel history or that you have been in contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus. Your doctor will liaise with Public Health authorities to manage your care. You must remain isolated either in your home or a healthcare setting until Public Health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

For more information, please go to <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

## **I haven't been in an affected country in the last 14 days but I have been in contact with someone who has. What should I do?**

If you have been in close contact with a person with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus, you must isolate yourselves for 14 days after last contact with that person.

For more information, please go to <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

## **I am currently in Australia, can I travel to an affected country?**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has updated its travel advice to all international destinations as "level 3 – reconsider your need to travel." In line with the World Health Organization (WHO) declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic, DFAT now advises all Australians to reconsider your need for overseas travel. Regardless of your destination, age or health, if your overseas travel is not essential, consider carefully whether now is the right time.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) recommended its travel advisory be set to 'level 4 – do not travel' to all of mainland China and Iran. If you are an international student and travel to an affected country, you will not be able to enter Australia until 14 days has passed since you left the affected country. You will then also be required to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival in Australia.

International travellers should check the latest Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel advice on the Smart Traveller website <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

Information for visa holders and applicants is available from the Department of Home Affairs at <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/archive/article?itemId=354>

## Visas

### **If I have a student visa, can I still come to Australia?**

From the specified date of an affected country's respective travel restrictions, foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents) who are in an affected country, will not be allowed to enter Australia for 14 days from the time they have left or travelled through an affected country. You will then also be required to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival in Australia.

As at 11 March, specified dates include:

- 1 February 2020 – mainland China
- 1 March 2020 – Iran
- 5 March 2020 – Republic of Korea
- 11 March 2020 – Italy

If you have further enquiries about your visa you should check your ImmiAccount or visit the Department of Home Affairs website for further information:

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/news-media/archive/article?itemId=354>

### **I can't access my VEVO status, does it mean my visa is cancelled?**

The Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) system replicates information held in Departmental system to help visa holders comply with conditions attached to their visa.

It is **NOT** used by airlines as a primary tool to establish the visa status of travellers. You should refer to your ImmiAccount for information.

## **Mental Health and Translation Support**

### **I am experiencing mental health difficulties as a result of the coronavirus, where can I go for help? Will it cost anything?**

There are a number of support services available to you. In the first instance you should seek help from your education institution or overseas student health care provider.

Your insurance provider may be one of the following:

Health Insurer	Insurers website
ahm OSHC	134 148 <a href="http://www.ahmoshc.com">www.ahmoshc.com</a>
Allianz Global Assistance	13 67 42 <a href="http://www.allianzassistancehealth.com.au/en/student-visa-oshc/">www.allianzassistancehealth.com.au/en/student-visa-oshc/</a>
BUPA Australia	1300 884 235 <a href="http://www.bupa.com.au/health-insurance/oshc">www.bupa.com.au/health-insurance/oshc</a>
CBHS International Health	1300 174 538 <a href="http://www.cbhsinternationalhealth.com.au/overseas-students-oshc">www.cbhsinternationalhealth.com.au/overseas-students-oshc</a>
Medibank Private	1300 561 012 <a href="http://www.medibank.com.au">www.medibank.com.au</a>
NIB OSHC	1800 775 204 <a href="http://www.nib.com.au">www.nib.com.au</a>

**Mandarin language support services are available through:**

**One Door Mental Health** - One Door Mental Health offers bilingual support services for anxiety and emotional support. Services available in Mandarin. [www.onedoor.org.au/services/bilingual-support-service](http://www.onedoor.org.au/services/bilingual-support-service)

Phone: 02 8737 5566 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm AEST)

Email: [auburn@onedoor.org.au](mailto:auburn@onedoor.org.au)

If your overseas student health care provider or institution are unable to help, you can seek help from the following places:

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800

MensLine - 1300 789 978

ReachOut <https://au.reachout.com/>

These services are free of charge.

## I am an international student and in need of translation services, where can I get help?

If you need help with translation services while seeking help, you can contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 or [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

## How do I know what mental health services and other support I'm covered for?

If you are on a student visa you should contact your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) insurance provider for advice on your health cover and services available to support you.

Your insurance provider may be one of the following:

Health Insurer	Insurers website
ahm OSHC	134 148 <a href="http://www.ahmoshc.com">www.ahmoshc.com</a>
Allianz Global Assistance	13 67 42 <a href="http://www.allianzassistancehealth.com.au/en/student-visa-oshc/">www.allianzassistancehealth.com.au/en/student-visa-oshc/</a>
BUPA Australia	1300 884 235 <a href="http://www.bupa.com.au/health-insurance/oshc">www.bupa.com.au/health-insurance/oshc</a>
CBHS International Health	1300 174 538 <a href="http://www.cbhsinternationalhealth.com.au/overseas-students-oshc">www.cbhsinternationalhealth.com.au/overseas-students-oshc</a>
Medibank Private	1300 561 012 <a href="http://www.medibank.com.au">www.medibank.com.au</a>
NIB OSHC	1800 775 204 <a href="http://www.nib.com.au">www.nib.com.au</a>