

8 Special requirements and policies

8.1 Student visa requirements

To study in Australia as an international student, you need to apply for a student visa. To be eligible for a student visa, you need to meet the conditions set by the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). To find out more about student visa requirements, visit the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au/students/

Students under 18 years of age

Before you are granted a student visa, the Australian Government must be satisfied that you have appropriate accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements in place for the period that you will be under 18 years of age while in Australia.

Each institution decides whether they will accept responsibility for welfare arrangements for international students who are under 18 years of age. The following institutions accept this responsibility:

- **Australian Maritime College** – check www.international.utas.edu.au
- **The Australian National University*** – check http://info.anu.edu.au/studyat/International_Office/under-18.asp
- **Macquarie University** – check www.international.mq.edu.au/applications/Studentsunder18
- **Southern Cross University** – check www.scu.edu.au/international/
- **University of Newcastle** – check www.newcastle.edu.au/students/international/student-support/

*The Australian National University only accepts responsibility for students who turn 18 within the first six weeks of semester.

For more information on accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements and any restrictions that may apply, check the institution entries in Part 2.

8.2 Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

The Australian Government requires all international students on a student visa and their dependants to purchase an approved Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) policy from a registered health benefits organisation (usually referred to as a health fund) for the duration of their visas.

What is OSHC?

OSHC is insurance that provides cover on the costs for medical and hospital care that international students may need while in Australia. OSHC will also pay for most prescription drugs and emergency ambulance transport.

OSHC ensures that international students have adequate health care arrangements during their stay in Australia without undue financial hardship.

Who provides OSHC and what does it cover?

The Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing has a website with detailed information. Visit www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Overseas+Student+Health+Cover+FAQ-1 and read the FAQs for information on:

- who needs OSHC
- registered OSHC providers
- details of what is covered
- OSHC eligibility.

OSHC does not cover dental treatment. As dental services in Australia are expensive you should have your teeth checked and any necessary dental work completed before you leave home.

When and how do I organise OSHC?

OSHC is compulsory and is not included in your tuition fees. If you are coming to Australia for the first time on a student visa, you must pay for your OSHC before you leave home. You will be required to pay your OSHC charge at the same time that you pay your tuition fee deposit.

Your institution will help you to organise your initial OSHC membership – check each institution's Part 2 entry for its preferred OSHC provider and payment details.

Note: You can choose your own OSHC provider from the list of registered OSHC providers.

8.3 Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) framework

Institutions that process their applications through UAC International conduct their activities within the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) framework.

The ESOS legislative framework comprises:

- *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001
- National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code)
- *Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997*
- ESOS Assurance Fund – s.46 of *ESOS Act 2000*.

For more information and to download these documents visit www.aei.gov.au/AEI/ESOS/default.htm

8.4 Working while studying

As an international student, you can work in paid employment for up to 20 hours a week during teaching periods, and unlimited hours during vacation periods at your institution. You can apply for permission to work once your course has started. You must apply to DIAC for permission to work. You should not rely on working to fund your tuition or living expenses while in Australia as work may not be guaranteed and spending excessive amounts of time working may adversely affect your studies. For more information, visit www.immi.gov.au/students/students/working_while_studying/

Some institutions provide guidance about local employment opportunities – check each institution's Part 2 entry for more information.

8.5 Special requirements and policies for health-related and teacher education courses

Special requirements and policies apply to students in both health-related and teacher education courses.

These requirements relate to:

- clinical/internship placements undertaken as part of your course
- proof of English language proficiency, and
- procedures for employment after you have completed the course.

Note: The requirements and policies in these areas are subject to regular review.

Health-related courses

Criminal record checks

Note: The NSW Department of Health introduced changes to the procedure for processing criminal record checks from 1 June 2010. Students must obtain a complete information pack and forms from their educational institution.

NSW Health requires all students in health-related courses to undergo a criminal record check before they can undertake a clinical placement in NSW Health facilities.

- Students will obtain (and pay the fee for) their own National Police Certificate, either through a state or territory police service or through the Australian Federal Police.
- Overseas students – in addition to obtaining a National Police Certificate, overseas students must obtain a police certificate (with English translation) from their home country and any country that they have resided in. If the student is unable to obtain a police certificate, the student must complete a statutory declaration stating they have no pending, current or previous criminal charges or convictions. If the student has any criminal records, the statutory declaration must list the offences, the dates and any court outcomes.

If a student's National Police Certificate (and overseas police certificates/statutory declaration for overseas students) **shows no criminal history**, they will present them to the Clinical Placement Co-ordinator/Facilitator and to the NSW Health facility before starting their clinical placement. The National Police Certificate is valid for three years from the date of issue and the overseas police certificates and statutory declarations are valid for the whole course.

If a student's National Police Certificate (or overseas police certificates/statutory declaration for overseas students) **shows a criminal record**, the student cannot use these documents for their clinical placement. The student

must complete the NSW Health 'Student Risk Assessment Form' available at www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/jobs/student_clearance/Appendix_3_S7_pdf.asp and send it to the NSW Department of Health, who will review the student's criminal history and conduct a risk assessment. If the student is assessed as suitable for clinical placement, they will be issued with either a Clinical Placement Authority Card or a Conditional Letter. A student given a Conditional Letter, must disclose the conditions to their institution's Clinical Placement Co-ordinator/Facilitator, who will liaise with the NSW Health facility before the clinical placement to determine if the conditions imposed on the student can be met by that facility. The Clinical Placement Authority card and the Conditional Letter will have a 'valid to' dates on them determined by the NSW Department of Health.

All students seeking placement in a NSW Health facility must sign the:

- *Student Undertaking* with their institution as part of their enrolment, agreeing to notify NSW Health within seven days if they are charged or convicted of any criminal offences after the date of issue of their National Police Certificate or while completing their course. **Note:** If there are any further criminal charges or convictions, the student is not to attend any clinical placement until the student has been subject to a risk assessment by the NSW Department of Health.
- *Commission for Children and Young People Student Declaration* form as well as a form stating that they have read and understood the NSW Health Code of Conduct at the start of a placement with the NSW Health facility.

Infectious diseases

Students who need to complete clinical training in the NSW hospital system will be subject to various guidelines and procedures laid down for health workers by the NSW Department of Health, including guidelines on infectious diseases.

In the hospital system you will be exposed to a large number and variety of individuals, and this may place you at risk of contracting one of these diseases.

In other cases, if you have a communicable disease you may place your clients at risk. Therefore, you are required to be protected against a range of vaccine preventable infectious diseases and screened for tuberculosis.

Information about specified infectious diseases and the requirements of the NSW Health policy is at www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/immunisation/ohs

If you do not have the required documentary evidence of protection against the specified diseases, you will not be accepted for clinical placement in the NSW health system and progress in your course will be affected.

Some health care workers (nurses, doctors, dentists, dental technicians, podiatrists and physiotherapists) also have regulated individual responsibility with regard to infection control. You should familiarise yourself with these responsibilities.

Health care workers who are either HIV antibody positive or Hepatitis B e-antigen or Hepatitis B DNA positive or Hepatitis C PCR positive must not perform exposure-prone procedures. Infected people should seek expert medical advice on their infectious status and the extent to which this may limit their clinical practice.

Further information about exposure-prone procedures and the requirements of the NSW Health policy is at: www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/PD/2005/PD2005_162.html

Nursing and midwifery courses: English language proficiency

You may have to provide proof of proficiency in English at one or two points in your pathway to becoming a nurse or midwife in Australia:

- 1 when you apply for admission to your course, and/or
- 2 when you apply for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia for the first time.

The tests/qualifications and results that are accepted at these two points are different. You must therefore read the requirements carefully.

1 When you apply through UAC for admission to the course

If you have undertaken your studies in an overseas country, you may have to provide proof of proficiency in English.

You need to know that:

- institutions determine their own English language proficiency requirements
- you can find information about tests and qualifications that institutions accept as proof of English language proficiency in this Guide – read the English language proficiency table on pages 24–27
- most institutions have many ways for you to provide proof of English language proficiency.

2 When you apply for registration as a nurse or midwife

From 1 July 2010 practitioners applying for registration as a nurse or midwife for the first time in Australia are required to demonstrate English language proficiency as specified by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

You need to know that:

- the NMBA determines acceptable English language tests and results
- you can find a copy of the NMBA's English language skills registration standard at www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx
- the NMBA has three ways for you to provide proof of English language proficiency
- you can find useful FAQs and fact sheets at www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/FAQ-and-Fact-Sheets.aspx

Changes to current standard

The current English language skills registration standard may change; any changes to the standard will include transitional arrangements. To access the latest information, visit the NMBA website at www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx

Teacher education courses

Working with Children Check

The NSW Government is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for children. Under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, employers must implement what is referred to as the Working with Children Check. This Act also establishes employment screening requirements for child-related employment in NSW.

All teacher education students must complete a 'Working with Children Check - Applicant declaration and consent' form when undertaking practical training as part of an educational or vocational course in NSW government schools. By signing the declaration, a student is declaring that they haven't been convicted of any prohibited or registrable offence that would preclude them from working in child-related employment in NSW. Teacher education students won't be able to undertake practical course requirements in NSW schools if they are prohibited persons. It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for, remain in or undertake child-related employment. It is also an offence to make a false declaration.

In addition, teacher education students seeking to undertake an internship (ie become 'interns') or associate teacher program must complete a 'Working with Children Check - Applicant declaration and consent' form and be screened appropriately before they begin their internship in schools. The employment screening process involves a national check for relevant criminal records, relevant apprehended violence orders and relevant employment proceedings and a risk estimate where a relevant record is found. A National Criminal History Check is also conducted where the person is seeking to work in paid child-related employment in the Department.

For further details contact the course co-ordinator/s at the institutions.

Subject content requirements for teachers

When seeking admission to a graduate entry initial teacher education program you must meet the NSW Institute of Teachers' subject content requirements either before admission or before graduation.

The institutions determine if you meet the Institute's subject content requirements in your undergraduate and postgraduate degree/s.

English and Mathematics requirements for teachers

Primary teachers in NSW schools

Teacher education students seeking employment as primary teachers in NSW schools must have achieved a Higher School Certificate minimum Band 4 in English (Advanced), English (Standard) or English as a Second Language, and Band 4 in General Mathematics, or completion of Mathematics (2 unit).

Where you don't meet these entry requirements, institutions may offer concurrent study or appropriate bridging units and/or require satisfactory performance in approved tests in literacy and numeracy before graduation. For further details contact the course co-ordinator/s at the institutions and read the institutions' course descriptions. Visit the course search at www.uac.edu.au/international/course-search

Secondary teachers in NSW schools

Teacher education students seeking employment as secondary teachers in NSW schools must have achieved a Higher School Certificate minimum Band 4 in English (Advanced), English (Standard) or English as a Second Language.

Where you do not meet these entry requirements, institutions may offer concurrent study or appropriate bridging units and/or require satisfactory performance in an approved test in literacy before graduation. For further details contact the course co-ordinator/s at the institutions and read the institutions' course descriptions. Visit the course search at www.uac.edu.au/international/course-search