



Student visa holders - changing courses

Student visa condition 8202 – understand the requirements

Student visa holders are expected to understand and comply with the conditions applicable to their visa.

Condition 8202 of a Student visa (subclass 500) requires that a student maintains enrolment in a registered course that is the same Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level as, or higher than, the course for which they were granted their visa.

If a student changes to a lower AQF level course, or a non-AQF award course, they need to apply for a new Student visa. This requirement applies even if the course they change to is with the same education provider. The only exception is that a student does not need to apply for a new visa if they change from a doctoral degree (AQF level 10) to a Masters degree (AQF level 9).

If a student changes their main (or principal) course of study, it is their responsibility to ensure they still comply with their Student visa conditions. Failure to do so could result in visa cancellation.

Some examples where a student would need to apply for and be granted a new Student visa include:

- Studying a Bachelor degree (AQF level 7) at a university and want to transfer to a Diploma (AQF level 5) at the same university.
- Studying a Certificate IV (AQF level 4) and want to transfer to an ELICOS (non-AQF award) course.
- Studying Year 11 (AQF: Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification type) and want to transfer to an Independent ELICOS (non-AQF award) course.

A student does not need to apply for a new visa if they transfer to a course at the same or higher AQF level, or from a non-AQF award course to an AQF course.

Course packaging

Students can apply to undertake two or more courses on their Student visa (subclass 500) where there is clear progression from one course to another. This is known as course packaging. The final course that a student will undertake as part of their package of courses is their main (or principal) course of study.

Students who wish to change their enrolment to a package of courses, or who are enrolled in a package and want to amend the courses in the package, are able to do so without applying for a new Student visa, as long as they remain enrolled in the main (or principal) course of study that has the highest AQF level.

Further information

Visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au and search 'changing courses' for more information

Visit www.aqf.edu.au and search 'AQF levels' for more information