



Managed Growth for International Education – 2026 Arrangements

The Australian Government remains committed to a high quality, resilient international education sector with modest growth over time. A managed growth approach has been effective in returning student numbers to a more sustainable level in 2025 and the Australian Government has now determined arrangements for 2026.

National Planning Level for 2026

The Australian Government has set a National Planning Level (NPL) for 2026 of 295,000 New Overseas Student Commencements (NOSCs). Providers delivering higher education and vocational education and training (VET) courses to international students will be issued with 2026 allocations in line with the overall NPL.

Link to student visa processing

For 2026, provider progress against allocations will continue to inform prioritisation for offshore student visa processing through a ministerial direction. Ministerial Direction 111 will be replaced later in 2025 to reflect 2026 arrangements.

2026 Allocations

In 2026, no active international education provider will receive an allocation that is less than their 2025 allocation.

Publicly-funded universities: Publicly funded universities making good progress with their 2025 allocations will be able to apply to increase their individual higher education allocations for 2026 by demonstrating support for two government priorities:

- increased engagement with Southeast Asia, in alignment with *Invested: Australia's Economic Strategy with Southeast Asia to 2040*, and
- provision of student accommodation, to ensure both domestic and international students have access to safe and secure housing.

Further detail on the application process for allocating growth to these universities in 2026 will be released shortly.

Allocations for publicly funded universities will be finalised and published in October 2025.

Other higher education providers: Other international higher education providers will receive a minimum allocation of 50 and otherwise an increase of around 3 per cent, on average, on their 2025 allocation. Allocations for not-for-profit universities have been adjusted to be more consistent with publicly-funded universities.

Final allocations for other higher education providers have been published on the Department of Education website.

The Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) will have regard to the utilisation of 2026 allocations for publicly-funded universities and other higher education providers as part of its consideration of 2027 arrangements.

TAFE Institutes: Students at TAFE Institutes will continue to receive priority processing for offshore student visa applications under the relevant Ministerial Direction. VET allocations for TAFE institutes remain at their 2025 level.

Other VET providers: Small VET providers (those with allocations of 100 NOSC or fewer) will be placed into a small provider pool for the purposes of visa processing prioritisation, which will provide additional flexibility for these providers. Larger VET providers (other than TAFE institutes) will all receive 5 per cent growth on their 2025 allocation.

Final allocations for other VET providers have been published on the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations website.

Providers will be able to view their final 2026 allocations in the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) from October 2025 onward.

New Overseas Student Commencements (NOSCs)

An international student will continue to count as a New Overseas Student Commencement (NOSC) when they are onshore and start their first non-exempt course at their first provider. This includes each time the student changes into a non-exempt course at a different provider. Students who move courses within a provider or commence a subsequent course at the same provider immediately after the first course, will not be counted as an additional NOSC (they are deemed 'continuing students').

Exemption categories

The following categories of students will continue to be exempt from the NPL. They are **not** defined as a NOSC and do **not** count as part of a provider's use of their indicative allocations:

- Schools
- Students studying standalone ELICOS courses
- Higher degree by research students

- Non-award students, including short term exchange students
- Students awarded certain [scholarships](#) including from foreign governments, multilateral organisations and Australian governments
- Students that are part of certain Australian [Transnational Education \(TNE\) arrangements](#)
- Students from the Pacific and Timor-Leste
- Students in pilot training courses.

Providers are responsible for recording scholarship and TNE arrangements on a student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) within PRISMS.

New exemption categories in 2026

From 2026 onward, the following categories of students will also be exempt from the NPL and will not be included in a provider's NOSC count:

- International students transitioning from secondary school studies in Australia to tertiary study (higher education or VET)
- Students transitioning from embedded pathway providers or TAFE institutes to affiliated publicly funded universities
- Students transferring providers as a direct result of a provider closing or otherwise being unable to continue training.

Further details on these arrangements will be published on the Department of Education website shortly.

Dual sector providers

In 2026, dual-sector providers will have a combined allocation reflecting the sum of their higher education and VET allocations. As in 2025, PRISMS will record the total allocation and progress against the total allocation.

Allocation redistributions for higher education providers

In 2026, providers with higher education allocations will continue to have the flexibility to redistribute allocations in the following circumstances:

- Providers with multiple CRICOS registrations
- A publicly funded university and its embedded pathways provider.