



# Choosing an education agent

## Advice for students considering study in Australia

If you have made a decision to study in Australia, but need help with the process, you may consider using an education agent. An education agent can:

- provide you with accurate up-to-date information on the Australian education system; education and training providers in Australia; and living in Australia – the cost of living, accommodation, lifestyle, culture
- help you complete enrolment forms
- help you prepare and submit a visa application, where they are qualified to do so.

**If you decide to use an education agent, it is important that you select and use the education agent who is right for you.**

## Tips for choosing the right education agent

Before you select an education agent, make sure that you:

### Think carefully about your career and study plans

You will get better advice if you have a clear idea of your career goals, and the type of course you are interested in.

You should check the Study in Australia website at [www.studyinaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au) for help in selecting the right course and other useful information on study costs and living in Australia.

### Check the website of the institution you plan to attend

If you plan to study at a particular institution, check its website first for information on enrolling as an international student. You may wish to contact the institution of choice and see if you can enrol with it directly. If you want to use an agent, you may want to ask the institution for a list of the education agents the institution uses.

### Ask your family and friends about education agents they know

A referral from a family member or friend is a good starting point

### Check the Pier Online website for a list of qualified agents in your country

Check to see if the agent has completed the Education Agents Training Course: <http://www.pieronline.org/qeac/>

Qualified agents will have a good knowledge of the Australian education system, visa requirements and life in Australia.

### Prefer an agent with experience

Sometimes agents may not be formally qualified, but will have a lot of experience as an education agent.

They will be able to provide you with references.

### Speak to more than one agent

This will give you the opportunity to compare the information you are given.

### If possible, use an agent who specialises in Australia

They will be in a better position to advise you, if Australia is your study destination of choice

### Always ask for a summary of costs

Make sure you know what you are paying for and compare prices. If an agent doesn't charge you a fee, they will receive a commission from the education institution and may prefer this institution when advising you.

## Read before you sign

When you have made a decision about your course of study, you must sign a written agreement with the education provider before you pay any course money.

**The written agreement is a contract between you and the education provider** which sets out the course you will be enrolled in; enrolment conditions; the fees you need to pay, and the refund payable if you don't complete your course with that provider.

**The written agreement is very important – if you don't start your course, or finish your course, this written agreement will be used to determine if you will receive a refund.**

- Read the written agreement carefully before you sign it.
- Make sure that you understand all your rights, including the refund arrangements.
- **Do not** sign the written agreement or pay the agent any money if you are not happy with any of the terms of the agreement.
- **Do not** sign the agreement just because the agent tells you to sign it.
- **Do not** use an education agent who asks you to sign the agreement without reading it.

## Your records

- **Do** obtain a copy of the written agreement and any other papers you sign.

You will need a copy of the written agreement so that you are aware of your rights. You will also need the written agreement if you need to make a claim against the provider.

## Payments

**Do not** make any payments to the agent until you have read and signed the written agreement.

## What should you avoid

Sometimes, in order to increase their business, agents may give you false information about how you can obtain permanent residency in Australia, and the availability of well paid jobs in Australia. You should avoid agents who make these claims.

**Do not use agents who guarantee that you will obtain a student visa, or permanent residence.**

The Australian Government assesses all applications for student visas and permanent residence.

Agents can not give a guarantee that you will obtain a visa or permanent residency.

**Do not use agents who guarantee that you will obtain work in Australia with a high salary.**

Whether or not you obtain work will depend upon the availability of work and your skills.

High salaries are usually only available to highly skilled applicants.

## Need migration advice?

- Use a migration agent who is registered in Australia if you need migration advice. A number of Registered Migration Agents are located, or have representatives working overseas, in key international student markets.
- Do not use education agents for migration advice, unless they are also Registered Migration Agents.