

DO YOU WANT TO STUDY IN AUSTRALIA AND OBTAIN PERMANENT RESIDENCE?

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Obtaining a Degree, Diploma or Trade Certificate III from certain registered educational institutions in Australia then applying for permanent residence is one way of obtaining permanent residence in Australia. However, graduates must apply for permanent residency within 6 months of completing their course.

There are currently seven subclasses of student visas. However, it does not necessarily mean that if you are on a student visa whilst obtaining a degree, diploma or trade certificate, permanent resident visa will be granted. Not all courses in an Australian educational institution will qualify a graduate for a permanent resident visa. The visa applicant will still need to pass the points test. It is therefore advisable to study a course leading to an occupation that will entitle the applicant to the maximum 60 points. This is what many student visa applicants fail to consider.

To obtain a student visa, the visa applicant must satisfy the assessment factor which is applicable to his or her country of citizenship. In most cases, student visa applicants from the Philippines applying for a course towards a degree, diploma or trade certificate are determined under Assessment Level 3.

In addition to assessment of immigration history and other relevant matters, the basic requirements are financial capacity (to cover tuition, living and travelling costs), English language proficiency and acceptance of enrolment for full-time study in a registered course (a course offered by an Australian education provider registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)).

Proof of financial capacity is usually in the form of a bank deposit, *three* months before visa application. English language proficiency is usually proven by certain passmark in the academic module of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

The most common student visa conditions are:

- The satisfaction and maintenance of attendance record and enrolment in the chosen course.
- The student visa holder and family members under that visa must not work unless permitted to do so.
- The maintenance of Overseas Student Health Cover while in Australia.
- 'No further stay' condition restricting the application of other visas whilst in Australia with the exception of another Student visa, Graduate – skilled visa (mentioned above), and protection visas.
- The visa holder must remain with the chosen education provider for the first 12 months of their course.
- The visa holder must inform the education provider of their residential address within 7 days of arrival in Australia.

The changes to the Immigration Regulations on 1 July 2003 require that the permanent resident visa applicant must have studied for at least 2 years full-time. Those students who began their studies after 31 March 2003 for one year full-time course do not qualify for permanent residency under the overseas student stream. Masters or Honours degree students must be awarded an Australian bachelor degree as a result of at least 1 year full-time study

while in Australia to qualify. However, students who were studying full time on or before 31 March 2003 and who apply for a permanent resident visa before 1 April 2004 need only meet the previous '1 year of full-time study' requirement.

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The writer will conduct as seminar on skilled migration to Australia in Manila on 8 February 2004. The first five readers of the Philippine Star who book and attend the seminar shall be entitled to a discount on the seminar fee. Bookings may be made with Celia on 812 1833 or 0918 910 1040.