

Filipino Migrants Forum

DOES YOUR STUDENT VISA ENSURE PERMANENT RESIDENCE?

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To qualify under the skilled independent overseas student visa category, the student must have been physically in Australia, must have been engaged in a normal full time workload for at least two academic years (4 full semesters) in a course registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), among others. External study while offshore and compressed courses do not meet this requirement. Due to the high costs involved in relation to student visas, it would be prudent for an overseas student intending to study in Australia undertake a course which has the potential of enabling the student to qualify for permanent residence in the long term.

Those intending to study in Australia for the first term in 2005 should now prepare to meet the basic visa requirements such as proof of financial capacity by way of bank statement showing a deposit in cash of the required sum, three months before filing the visa application, proof of (IELTS) English test with the required passmark for the course as well as letter of acceptance from the education provider. The applicant should allow student visa processing of at least 60 days, taking note of Christmas holidays.

To assist intending overseas students in this regard, we have obtained accreditation from a number of education providers so that we are able to advise on preferred study packages for the purpose of maximizing their points under the Skilled Migration Scheme. Oftentimes the student has difficulty in meeting the score in the IELTS English test or does not qualify for the degree course immediately because the school where she or he graduated is not recognized in Australia.

We can now assist with enrolment and identification of qualifying English and pre-university foundation courses.

Bachelors degree qualifications in nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, teaching and accounting and trade qualifications as chef and hairdresser are recommended because of the employability of the student not only while undertaking the course (up to 20 hours per week) but more importantly after completing the course.

Applications for skilled independent overseas student visas (subclass 880) which are lodged before 1 April 2005 remain at 115 points and the passmark for sponsored visa classes remain at 110 points. However, the passmark for skilled independent visa subclass 136 has been increased from 115 points to 120 points for applications lodged from 14 April 2004.

Notwithstanding, the points for Australian qualification under certain circumstances were also increased:

Completion of an Australian doctorate at an Australian educational institution after a period of at least years full time (2 academic years) while in Australia	15
Completion of an Australian Masters or Honours degree (at least upper second class level) at an Australian educational institution while in Australia, provided, before completing the Masters or Honours degree, was awarded an Australian bachelor degree as a result of at least 1 year full time study while in Australia. The total period of full time study in Australia was at least 2 years (2 academic years)	10
Completion of a full time study in Australia for a total of at least 2 years (2 academic years) towards the award of a degree, diploma or trade qualification	5

Additional points for applicants who are eligible for Australian qualifications:

If they have lived and studied for at least 2 years regional Australia/low population growth metropolitan areas	5
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'Regional Australia or a low population growth metropolitan area' means anywhere in Australia except Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, the NSW Central Coast, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Perth, Melbourne or the ACT.

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Readers of the Philippine Community Herald Newspaper are invited to send their comments to "The President, Filipino Migrants Forum" c/o Imelda Argel & Associates, Solicitors & Attorneys, by email at info@iargel.com.au or by fax at (+612) 9699 3210 or by post to Suite 41, Ground Floor, 61-89 Buckingham St. SURRY HILLS NSW 2010.

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