



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

Create change

# FAMILIES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

This information is intended for UQ international students and their families living in South East Queensland (QLD). It is advised to use this guide in conjunction with the [Getting Started Section](#) of UQ international student website.

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# VISA MATTERS



## APPLYING FOR STUDENT DEPENDANT VISAS FOR YOUR FAMILY

Only the legal spouse and dependent children (0-18 years) are eligible to apply to enter Australia on student dependent visas. Dependant visas are applied for in your home country. Details of the application process should be obtained at the time of applying for student visas. University of Queensland International Student Advisors (ISA) can provide information and support for students wanting to bring their family over on a dependant visa and general family welfare.

For Australia Awardee students, an ISA can assist you if you need to provide to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) a letter of support for issue of dependant visas, or if you need confirmation of enrolment (COE) for a school aged child. Information regarding dependant visa conditions and the application process can be found at the Australian Government's [Department of Immigration and Border Protection \(DIBP\) website](#).

## FAMILY AND VISITORS – VISITOR VISAS

Family members not on a student dependent visa may need to apply for a [visitor visa](#). Some visitor visas can be processed by travel agents at the time the flight plans are being organised although most are required to fill in an online or paper application form. In addition to supporting documents required, applicants may need to show they have sufficient funds to support themselves during their visit.

### Who may apply

Children over the age of 18, any other family members and friends may apply for a visitor visa. Visitor visas for a maximum of 12 months may be granted when the genuine purpose of the visit is travel, recreation and visiting family and friends.

### Health insurance when on a visitor visa

Visitor visa holders from certain countries may be eligible for Medicare funded [reciprocal medical treatment](#) under specific conditions. It is strongly advised that all visitors organise [health insurance](#) for the duration of their stay as health care in Australia is expensive.

### Letter of invitation

When the purpose of the visitor visa is to visit friends and relatives the applicant needs to provide a letter of invitation from the relative or friend in Australia. Contact the [Student Centre](#) on your campus for assistance with organising a letter of invitation.

## Further Information

If you are a prospective or enrolled international student with an international student visa, and have queries related to family issues, contact an International Student Advisor [via email](#). They can either assist you or direct you to the most suitable source of information.

# SPOUSE ACTIVITIES



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

### St Lucia

[English Conversation Club](#) is a free support service for UQ international student family members, visiting professors, international staff members and research fellows. Conversation groups are available for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Groups are run by experienced volunteer tutors at the St Lucia campus. Because the group is informal, there are no visa limitations on the length of time your family member may attend.

### Gatton

There is a free English conversation group in Gatton open to the entire community. New members are always welcome and you don't need to enrol - just turn up. The Gatton Centre also has other community facilities available such as a cheap Internet Café, table tennis table, and pool table. Go there on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights between 5.30pm - 7.30pm to meet people, socialise, use the Internet, and practice your English.

 Gatton Baptist Church  
Wednesday nights during term  
5.30pm - 7.30pm  
Steve Auld (07) 5478 1766

### Inexpensive English Classes at St Lucia and surrounds

[The Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education \(ICTE\)](#) located on the St Lucia campus offers courses in conversational English, academic English, business English, and a wide variety of courses are available from elementary to advanced level. Holders of dependant visas may take short English courses of up to 3 months duration. Courses are offered on a part-time basis at different times during the week. Some courses are only open to enrolled international students, and some are open to both international students and adult dependants. Other inexpensive or free English language classes can be found in the community.

## SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

Students are advised to refer to the [DIBP website](#) regarding working in Australia on student and dependent visas for the most up to date information and formal advice.

Unless they hold their own student visa or other independent visa, your dependants do not have any independent rights in Australia. It is through you, the sponsor or holder of the student visa, that dependants gain the right to enter Australia, the right to apply for a Tax File Number (TFN) and the right to work.

Neither the student or dependants may start work until the student begins their formal degree program. Working before this or [working for more hours](#) than permitted by your student visa, may result in the student visa being cancelled, possible immediate removal from Australia, and the possibility of not being permitted back into Australia for periods of up to 3 years.

Visa condition 8104 work limitations means you cannot work more than the hours permitted by your visa. Please refer to the [Australian Tax Office](#) for information on applying for a TFN.

## FINDING WORK

University and UQ Union staff are unable to assist family members of international students to locate work. To find professional jobs online please refer to the [Seek](#) and [CareerOne](#) websites.

## EMPLOYER CONFIRMING THE RIGHT TO WORK

When your spouse applies for work, prospective employers may ask to see proof that your spouse has the right to work in Australia. As DIBP is increasingly using electronic visas, visa conditions are maintained in the [DIBP Visa Verification Online System](#).

## WORKPLACE RIGHTS

Students and their dependants have the same rights and protections as permanent residents in regards to wages, entitlements and workplace safety. [Fair Work Australia](#) has further information on workplace rights for international students and their dependants.

## VOLUNTARY WORK

There are plenty of unpaid volunteer work opportunities in Australia. Volunteering is a good way to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge while giving back to the community. The coordinating body for volunteering throughout Queensland (QLD) is [Volunteering QLD](#). They help place volunteers in a variety of non-profit organisations such as health, cultural or environmental groups. The service is free of charge.

## SPOUSE STUDY

Current DIBP regulations state that a spouse of an international student on a visitor visa cannot study. Spouses here on a student dependant visa may only study in a course of up to 3 months full-time or part-time over the course of their visa.

If your spouse wishes to study in any course that is longer than 3 months they need to make an independent application for their [own student visa](#). UQ staff cannot assist your spouse to locate or to apply for a suitable course of study. You may find it useful to check the [Study in Australia website](#).

# HEALTH AND SAFETY



## ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES – GENERAL PRACTITIONERS (GP)

In Australia it is normal to first see a General Practitioner (GP) for treatment of routine illnesses, conditions and injuries. We do not access routine health services in public hospital clinics or emergency rooms. GPs can be found on campus or throughout your local suburbs. It is a requirement of your OSHC that you first see a GP in order to obtain any referrals to specialists. Should it be necessary for you to access a service or specialist located in a hospital setting you will be advised about this by your GP.

Always carry and show your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) card or e-card when visiting medical facilities and advise the receptionist that you have OSHC health insurance.

Should you wish to locate a medical practitioner who speaks your language, contact an International Student Advisor. You are strongly advised to attend [The Australian Health Care System and OSHC workshop](#) offered during orientation week and throughout semester by [Student Services](#).

### Treatment at UQ Health Services

The [UQ Health Service](#) on the St Lucia and Gatton campuses can take appointments for families of international students who live locally however they are not open evenings and weekends. There may be alternative medical centres near your residence that offer appointments after regular hours and on weekends. UQ Health Service does not provide immunisations for children.

### After hours service

If you need health care outside UQ Health Service operating hours, you can contact the [National Home Doctor Service](#) who will arrange for a doctor to visit you in your own home. This locum service only provides after hours services. The National Home Doctor Service bulk bills Medicare card holders and many of the OSHC providers. This means there may be no fee for the visit. To arrange an after-hours home visit from National Home Doctor Service call - 13 SICK (137425).

## TREATMENT IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND YOUR OSHC

Public hospital emergency rooms are available 24 hours per day but are open to respond to accidents and genuine medical emergencies only. You should only access these services if there is a threat to life, a medical trauma or recommendation by a GP for a service they are not able to provide. Upfront fees are very high if it is determined that patients are using public hospital emergency rooms for non-urgent medical attention. If you are unsure whether to go to a hospital emergency room, or to wait to see your usual GP, phone 13 Health (13 43 25 84) to talk to a health professional.

While at a public hospital, medical reception staff may ask you for your Medicare card. International students do not get Medicare cards as these are only for Australian permanent residents and citizens. Tell staff you are not covered by Medicare but that you have OSHC insurance and show them your OSHC e-card. If you or a member of your family need to be admitted to stay as an inpatient, you are advised to only go to [public hospitals](#) for treatment as these costs will be lower or fully covered by your OSHC.

## Children turning 18 and need for alternate health insurance

OSHC does not cover your dependent children after they reach the age of 18. The only exception to this is if they hold their own student visa. You will need to purchase special health insurance for visitors and non-residents. See an International Student Advisor if you have questions about this.

## Ambulance services for families

If you encounter an emergency and require an ambulance please call 000. An emergency is when an ambulance is needed urgently following an accident inside or outside of the home. Please do not phone 000 for medical advice. That is not the purpose of the 000 phone number. If you want advice on a medical matter please phone the 24 hour Queensland Health information line 13 HEALTH: 13 43 25 84.

Emergency ambulance cover for full-time international students in QLD is organised by your OSHC provider. If an ambulance is used for an immediate family member in an emergency and a bill is later sent out, forward it to your OSHC provider. Those who have arranged their OSHC with a company other than Allianz Global Assistance OSHC (including those countries which have reciprocal health agreements in place) need to check the details of their policy for information about emergency ambulance cover for themselves and their families.

Family members, including spouse and dependent children who are in Australia on a visitor visa, are not covered by QLD Ambulance or by OSHC and need to have their own traveller's insurance in case of any medical emergency requiring an ambulance.

## FAMILY PLANNING AND CONTRACEPTION SERVICES

[True - Relationships and Reproductive Health](#) have clinics in Brisbane and Ipswich for advice about contraception and all aspects of sexual health. Their services are not covered by private health insurance however all their services are free or low cost. No referral is needed but appointments are required to meet with a nurse or a doctor.

## THE LAW AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence occurs when someone in an intimate relationship uses fear to control their partner on an ongoing basis. Domestic violence is about the abuse of power by one person over another in that relationship. In an effort to gain or maintain power and control and instil fear over another person, a wide range of abusive behaviours can be adopted by perpetrators of domestic violence and include but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Social abuse
- Financial abuse
- Damage to personal property
- Stalking

In Australia, domestic violence is unacceptable and the use of threatening, controlling or violent behaviours to your partner or child is a crime that is punishable by law. Living and studying in another country can be stressful for individuals and their families, particularly being away from familial support. It is normal for there to be tension or arguments in a relationship in times of stress, however, denying your partner the right to disagree or using violence to control them is not acceptable. It is up to the individual to take responsibility for their behaviour and understand that violence is a criminal offence that has a major detrimental effect on your partner and may scar children for life.

## Get help if you are experiencing domestic violence

If you fear for your immediate safety, call the Police on 000. If you are experiencing domestic or family violence and need assistance please call DVConnect Womensline on 1800 811 811. DVConnect is a the 24hour domestic violence crisis telephone service and can assist you to get to a place of safety such as a women's safe house, provide you with accurate information and referral as well as provide crisis counselling. A woman's safe house is a place for women and children escaping domestic violence and provides a range of support services based on your needs and assist you to explore your options and make decisions about the future.

## Perpetrators of violence

There is never an excuse for controlling or violent behaviour. The Australian Legal System focuses on ensuring that perpetrators of violence are held accountable for their behaviour. If you hurt or feel that you may hurt your partner or another member of your family, then it is important to seek professional help. Taking this step does not necessarily mean the end of a relationship but is a first step in taking responsibility for your violent behaviour. To access professional help call DVConnect Mensline on 1800 600 636 from 9am - midnight 7 days a week. Mensline assist men who are ready to take responsibility for their violent behaviour by providing counselling and information and referral to other services or groups that may be able to provide support.

## DRIVING IN QUEENSLAND

If you or your spouse hold a current licence from your home country the licence holder may be able to drive legally for the duration of your study period. If the licence is not in English you also need to carry an International Driving Permit or a recognised translation of your licence. You can obtain these from your home country. Any restrictions on your [home country licence](#) must be observed in Australia. Anytime you or your spouse drives it is your responsibility to have the correct legal driver's licence and to abide by the QLD [road rules](#).

## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SELLING COMPANIES AND STRANGERS

Many companies use door knocking or the telephone to sell their wares and products. Religious groups also come to private homes uninvited to promote their religion. Other companies call

your home and may say you have won the opportunity to sample a product. These salespeople are well trained to keep your attention and can be very persistent. If you are not interested, a firm, "No, I am not interested" and hanging up the phone or close the door is the way to handle this type of caller. It may seem rude but it is the only way to handle uninvited visitors and callers.

Unfortunately some aggressive sales people seem to take advantage of those who do not, as yet, have a good grasp of English. To protect yourself and your family from exploitation please:

- Do not give any personal details to strangers over the phone, in shops or at the door.
- Do not sign anything unless you are 100% clear and agree with what you are signing for.
- Do not let anyone into your home unless you expect them and they can appropriately identify themselves.
- Please advise your spouse and children about the above matters.

## **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

Dial 000 for Police, Fire and Ambulance.

### **Use of 000 emergency number**

Police warn the public to only use the 000 emergency number when life is threatened. Life threatening situations include fire, urgent need for the Police and serious illness or injury in the house. Some crisis situations include; armed robberies, serious traffic accidents and assaults, sexual offences and serious illness requiring an ambulance.

For all non-urgent Police reporting please contact Police Link 131 444.

### **Emergencies following storms**

People wanting help after storms due to leaking roofs, hail damage, or fallen trees should call the State Emergency Service on 13 25 00.

# CHILD HEALTH AND SAFETY



## PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY CARE

If you or your spouse think they may be pregnant, confirm this by visiting a GP. The coverage you have for maternity care in Australia will depend on your OSHC provider. It is important to understand that your health cover may not cover the entire costs for pregnancy related expenses. Depending on the cover and the hospital services you access, there could be substantial out of pocket expenses which you will need to pay. If you or your spouse are considering falling pregnant while in Australia, please consult with your OSHC provider to discuss the anticipated costs involved. Also contact the UQ Health Service if you are currently residing in Brisbane to inquire about maternity care in Queensland.

Students may find it useful to talk to an International Student Advisor about the possible effect a family pregnancy may have on your studies, OSHC and student visa. We strongly recommend you contact an International Student Advisor [via email](#) if you are still in your home country, pregnant and considering commencing studies at UQ.

## PREPARING FOR THE BIRTH

### Returning home

You and your spouse may choose to return to your home country to be with family. Check with your airline about the latest time a pregnant woman can safely travel. If you as the student are pregnant and are considering interrupting studies, you may wish to speak to an International Student Advisor about possible visa implications. If you and your spouse are planning to return to Australia following the birth, you can normally do this provided there is sufficient time before the multiple entry student dependant visa expires. Before returning to Australia you need to contact the [DIBP in your home country](#) about organising a dependant visa for the baby.

### Children born In Australia

Children born in Australia automatically have the same visa status as their parents. Be sure you have the correct health insurance cover in case of any complications at the birth. If you hold a single OSHC, it is very important that you organise family OSHC before the birth of your child. If you already hold family OSHC, normally you organise for a new baby to be added to your OSHC following the birth but discuss this with your OSHC provider. It is best to inform your OSHC provider of your intended hospital admission so they can approve the payment.

### Registering the birth of a child

You need to [register your baby's birth](#) in QLD and in your home country. The spelling and order of some international names is sometimes very different to Australian names. To ensure this is recorded accurately you may want to lodge the birth registration form in person.

Birth certificates may also be applied for at Court Houses outside of Brisbane. Students attending UQ at facilities outside of Brisbane should discuss this with Student Services staff on campus. If you have not registered the birth but urgently require a birth certificate you will need to discuss this with the [Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages](#).

## Baby passport or visa

Contact the nearest embassy, consulate or servicing consulate for your own country to find out exactly what they require to register your baby's birth. If your nearest embassy or consulate is outside of Australia, ensure you do this as soon as possible after the birth of the child. They will advise if you need a passport for your child or if your child's details can be added to you or your spouse's passport. After receiving back the new endorsed home country passport, phone 131 881 to make an appointment with the Brisbane office of DIBP to have your child endorsed into your Australian student visa. This process takes several weeks and it is important to leave more than enough time to complete it before your departure from Australia.

## CHILD HEALTH ADVISORY LINE

Child health advice is available 24 hours via 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84). Services are also located in many suburbs to provide professional advice to parents on all matters of infant health including:

- babies and young children feeding, crying and sleep problems
- ongoing child development and parenting skills

For the location of child health centres in your area please phone 1300 366 039. It is necessary to phone for an appointment as not all centres are open all day every day.

## FREE CHILDREN'S IMMUNISATION CLINICS

The Brisbane City Council (BCC) operates the [free immunisation service](#) to help protect children against many childhood diseases. The centre closest to the St Lucia campus is located at Indooroopilly.

-  Holy Family Church Hall, lower level  
Ward Street, Indooroopilly  
Open from 9am to 11am  
Wednesday mornings

Gatton students should check with the ISA on your campus for details of the immunisation clinic in your community. All international students who have children under the age of seven should bring their child's immunisation certificate. The certificate does not have to be in English.

## WATER SAFETY

Please ensure you carefully watch toddlers and young children at all times they are around swimming pools, the beach, and any other bodies of water. Even when pools are fenced they are an extremely dangerous environment for young children and it takes only a moment of inattention for a child to drown. It is advisable that parents and children [learn to swim](#), are familiar with basic first aid and support their school age child's participation in their school's swimming activities.

## CHILDREN AND BABIES IN CARS

Do not leave babies or children unattended in vehicles at any time. Under QLD law, it is illegal to leave a child under 12 unattended for an unreasonable amount of time without making reasonable provision for their supervision and care. In QLD's heat, children can become severely distressed within minutes resulting in serious health damage, or death. If you have to leave your vehicle, even if just for a quick errand, always take your children with you.

### Baby capsules and child restraints

It is a requirement of a law for children up to seven years of age to be correctly restrained according to their size and age. [Kidsafe](#) offers a child restraint hiring for the Brisbane metropolitan area only. The [RACQ road safety](#) website has detailed information on matters relating to the selection, purchase and use of child restraints.

## PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SUN DAMAGE

Childhood and adolescence are critical periods during which exposure to UV radiation is more likely to contribute to skin cancer in later life. Parents have an important role to ensure their children establish healthy sun protection habits during the early years.

Young babies need a small amount of gentle indirect sunlight for normal healthy growth and development. Too much sunlight will mean premature ageing and possible skin cancer in the future. The damage done by too much exposure to sunlight builds up year after year and the damage cannot be undone. You can help protect your children by:

- Avoiding direct exposure to the sun particularly between 10am and 2pm.
- Seeking natural shade - trees, wide brimmed hats and wide hoods on prams.
- Covering babies with loose cotton clothing.
- Using SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen on exposed areas such as the face, hands and legs.

In case of accidental sunburn a cold compress should be used. Creams and ointments should be avoided. Sunburn in infants can be a medical emergency. If the skin blisters or you are concerned you should consult your GP or call 13 HEALTH (Ph: 13 43 25 84) for further advice.

## HELP FOR PARENTS ON UQ CAMPUSES

International students may be away from the support of extended family, community and friends for the first time. The task of parenting children without this support while balancing study and perhaps work, can be very challenging. The [Parenting and Family Support Centre](#) offers a range of support to parents of infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, primary schoolers and teenagers. The [Triple P Positive Parenting Program](#) is world famous for the practical help it provides with some

of the universal issues faced by parents. Triple P can help parents via individual consultations, group programs, seminars and self-help materials.

## CARE AND SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

### Planning for emergencies

- Your child should be able to recite their name, address and telephone number clearly for emergency situations.
- Children should know who to contact in cases of emergency.
- It is recommended you leave telephone numbers for yourself and friends beside the phone so that a child can easily call someone in case of emergency.
- The child should be familiar with your neighbours so that they feel comfortable contacting these people in case of an emergency.
- Teach your children not to open the door to strangers and not to give any personal information to strangers over the phone.
- In a situation where a supervising adult is injured, the child should be aware of the procedure for calling Emergency 000.

### Family responsibilities

It is important that new residents of Australia understand the legal and community standards in relation to child safety. By applying for student dependant visas for your family members you, as the sponsoring student, have agreed that you will meet the welfare needs of your family.

As a parent, it is your responsibility to look after your own children or to organise for another responsible adult to do so. Using any form of physical, emotional or psychological punishment on children, including hitting or smacking a child anywhere on their body, may be seen as abuse and could be reported to authorities by neighbours, teachers or anyone else in the community. Domestic violence is also considered a form of child abuse in Australia. Children can be direct victims of domestic violence and be badly affected by witnessing any form of violence (e.g. emotional, sexual, physical violence or social and financial derivation) by one family member against another.

It is against the law to leave children under the age of 12 at home without supervision. Leaving a child under the supervision of another person under the age of 18 years old, such as an older sibling, can be also considered negligent. The police or child welfare services may be called if this pattern is noted by the community. If an accident should happen when children are not being cared for by responsible adults, the police may be called and the parents could be charged with neglect.

### School responsibilities

School attendance is monitored by the school and by DIBP. As child safety is a joint community responsibility, schools have a duty of care in relation to their pupils. If your child's school has concerns about the welfare of attending children, they are required to report this to the authorities. Some examples of welfare concerns are suspected physical, sexual or emotional abuse, lack of attention to the child's health or hygiene, provision of adequate diet and school attendance. For example, children who fall asleep regularly in school or who are seen to be hungry or have inadequate lunches will quickly come to the attention of school staff.

## POISONS AND CHILDREN

Details on common poisons are available on the [Queensland Poisons Information Centre](#) website. For poisons information in the event of an emergency call 13 11 26. This hotline is available 24 hours a day.

# CHILDCARE



The age of a child determines what level of childcare or education they attend.

## Family day care

[Family day care \(FDC\)](#) is a Government approved form of child care that is provided in the FDC Educator's own home. FDC Educators must meet minimum legislative requirements and standards to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children in their care. Vacancies in FDC are very limited and there are usually waiting lists. Parents need to organise payment directly with the Family Day Care Scheme. Assistance via the Child Care Benefit (CCB) may be available only to international students whose scholarships come directly from the Australian Government (e.g. Australia Awardees).

## Child care centres

Childcare facilities are licensed and monitored by the QLD state government to ensure the highest standard of childcare. The demand is greater than the supply of childcare places. As a result there may be long waiting lists of one year or more until a suitable place may become available. If you anticipate needing childcare services you are advised to enquire about vacancies immediately and put your child's name on one or more waiting lists before arriving.

There may be a non-refundable charge to put your child's name on the waiting list. Do not wait until your child reaches the appropriate age or until your child comes into the country to add their name to the waiting list. After you get a place in a child care centre, please inform the other centres if your child is on more than one waiting list.

## Locating childcare or pre-school services

UQ staff cannot help you locate a place in a child care centre. However, there is [general information](#) about child care and about the location of child care and pre-school services in Brisbane and QLD.

## Paying for child care

Child care is expensive. The cost varies between child care centres and depending on the age of the child and what is provided. You will need to contact each child care centre to get information on their current charges. There is no free child care and there is a cost for [on-campus](#) as well as off-campus services.

## GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

There are a variety of waivers and benefits that different categories of international students may receive. For example, a fee waiver for your school-age child's school tuition fees based on your scholarship or level of study. Some benefits come from the QLD state government and some from the federal government. The government departments involved and the eligibility criteria for entitlements are all different. Eligibility varies between each entitlement. The following information is a general guide only. If you need clarification of benefits please talk to an International Student Advisor.

## Child care benefit

This is a form of financial assistance from the Australian Government to help pay for child care expenses. It is only available to those international students who are sponsored directly by the Australian Government such as Australia Awardees.

To confirm eligibility you may check the [eligibility section](#) located in the Australian Government's guide to social policy law. The child care benefit (CCB) can help not only with the cost of child care for children before school age, but with out of school hours care for primary school age children.

Applications for the CCB are available from the [Department of Human Services](#). International Student Advisors have a brochure which fully explains how eligible parents may apply for the CCB. If you are eligible and plan to apply for the CCB, children and young people must have their immunisations up to date.

## Non eligibility

No holders of international Student Visas are eligible for the Family Tax Benefit, the Baby Bonus or the Parenting Payment. For further clarification please refer to the [Department of Human Services](#).

# SCHOOLING OF DEPENDANT CHILDREN



Children's education is managed by the State Government therefore regulations and processes will vary depending on which state you live in. Under State law in QLD, it is mandatory for children of compulsory school-age to attend school. Compulsory school-age is defined as a child aged at least 6 years 6 months and less than 16 years of age or completion of Year 10, whichever is sooner. [Preparatory \(Prep\) year](#) is not legally compulsory in QLD, however, Prep will be considered as first year of schooling in the state.

In addition to the compulsory school-age set by the QLD law, DIBP further requires children holding student dependant visas up to the age of 18 to attend school. School attendance of dependant children ages 6 to 18 may be monitored by DIBP.

## EVIDENCE OF SCHOOL ENROLMENT: 'AUTHORITY TO ENROL'

One of the documents you need to provide to the DIBP before your school-age child can obtain a Student Dependant visa is [evidence of school enrolment](#).

Each state in Australia has a different process for organising school attendance for children. Schools in QLD will not enrol or register a child who is not yet in the country. Most QLD primary schools also limit enrolment to families living in the local area surrounding the school, so you need to have obtained permanent housing before selecting a school.

The Temporary Residents Admissions Centre (TRAC) within Education Queensland International (EQI) accepts applications for the enrolment of dependant children of international students studying in Queensland institutions. Applying for and obtaining an 'Authority to Enrol' from TRAC will provide evidence of school enrolment for Student Dependent visas.

## EXEMPTION FROM PAYING TUITION FEES

Not all sponsored international students are eligible for the [school tuition fee exemption](#) for their school-age children. Only certain categories of international students are exempt from paying tuition fees for their dependant children enrolled in QLD Government State schools. Please check the school tuition fee exemption policy as it changes from year to year. The tuition fee waiver only applies during the time when the parent is studying at university or another educational institution in QLD. After the parent completes their degree program all tuition fee exemptions cease and the dependant school enrolment also ceases.

The provision of special education services and facilities are specifically excluded from exemptions. Refer to [Education Queensland](#) regarding special education services and disability services.

## 'AUTHORITY TO ENROL' APPLICATION PROCESS

Any international student visa holder planning to arrive with dependant children between the ages of five and eighteen should contact an International Student Advisor at your intended campus. Australia Award sponsored students will meet the ISA during the Introductory Academic Program (IAP), but are also welcome to contact them sooner with any specific queries.

**1. Complete a [TRAC Application for Authority to Enrol](#) form**

for each school-aged child and submitted to TRAC with supporting documentation. See the below for details on supporting documentation.

**When completing the application form, ensure you:**

- Complete all relevant fields. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.
  - Sign **by hand**. E-signatures will not be accepted.
  - Email the International Student officer at [internationalstudentss@uq.edu.au](mailto:internationalstudentss@uq.edu.au) if you require assistance with completing the form.
- 2. Email the completed application and all supporting documents to TRAC EQI**  
at: [EQInternational@det.qld.gov.au](mailto:EQInternational@det.qld.gov.au)
- 3. EQI processes the application and issues an invoice for tuition fees.**  
Processing times are typically 3-5 working days from receiving a complete application.
- 4. After payment, EQI issues an Authority to Enrol email with a School Acceptance Form and receipt attached.**  
Once you have received the Authority to Enrol, ensure all details, including expiry dates and spelling of names, are correct.
- 5. Use the Authority to Enrol email as support for your child's visa application.**  
Please provide the actual email to Immigration as it works as a demonstration that the child has been granted the authority to enrol in a Queensland Government School. The school acceptance letter can also be used as a supporting document for the visa application, however the Authority to Enrol email itself is the main document to submit in the application.

**You will need to submit the following documents with your TRAC application:**

- Your passport - copy of the title page
- Your child or children's passports - copy of the title page
- Your full scholarship contract, if relevant
- (10+ pages for Australia Award Scholarship students)
- Your Confirmation of Enrolment from UQ
- (Australia Award Scholarship students do not need to attach this)
- Your visa label or letter (if available)
- Your child's school acceptance letter - only if you have obtained this in advance (most people do not have this as yet, and it is not required to lodge an application)
- Bank transfer receipt

## **DEPENDANT CHILDREN STUDYING IN NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

Should you wish for your child to study in a non-state government school, you need to contact

the school directly to determine costs and enrolment procedures. Be careful to note the location of the school in relation to your campus. Be aware that school tuition fees are often not waived and that they issue their own COEs for the purpose of obtaining dependant visas. The [Australian School Directory](#) will assist in searching for school options.

## Cost of schooling

Tuition fees are only one element of the cost involved in schooling your children. In addition to school tuition fees, other necessary school costs at state schools may include: books, study materials, sports, excursions, and uniforms. These costs are paid to the school by the parent, and currently amounts to approximately \$300 per child for each of the 4 terms in primary school, and is higher in high school.

These additional school fees are not waived and there is no financial assistance to help any parents with these costs. Some schools may charge an additional English language tuition fee that is not covered by the tuition fees. If there is a special language teaching fee, this fee cannot be waived and is paid by the parent. You need to ask any private school about any additional school costs not covered by their school tuition fees.

## PARENTS WHO CEASE TO BE FULL-TIME STUDENTS

Parents who complete their own studies and want their children to continue studies at a QLD State School should contact [EQI](#) who can advise on continuing school enrolments. A higher level of tuition fees are charged for this extended enrolment and tuition fees are not waived. The child will need their own student visa and there may be other requirements.

## ENROLLING CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

Once you are in Australia and are seeking permanent housing, think about the location of your local schools in relation to your campus, public transportation or other factors. If you are not sure which schools are near your intended housing, talk to an ISA. After your child arrives, contact the school to make an appointment to formally enrol your child. To enrol a child at school, parents need to take to the appointment:

- TRAC application acceptance email
- TRAC school acceptance form
- Parent's/responsible nominee passport/ID
- Student's passport
- Visa (in passport or eVisa grant notification)
- Proof of address

In Australia, it is possible to enrol children at school at any time of the year, or any time during the term. Schools in the vicinity of the UQ campuses are familiar with the children of international students starting and leaving school throughout the year. If there is a special school language instruction program your child needs to attend, you will be asked to pay a special fee directly to the school. This fee cannot be waived. Most state and private schools require children to wear hats and school uniforms, paid for by the parents. [The school year](#) runs from late January to mid-December. It is divided into two semesters with two terms in each and vacation breaks for Easter, winter, spring and summer.

## WHEN YOUR CHILD MAY NEED A NEW COE

There are a few reasons your child may need a new COE such as:

- when your child reaches an age to start prep year or grade 1
- when you move house and your child changes schools
- when your child proceeds onto high school
- if your study program has been extended
- if there are changes to visa subclass numbers or expiry date
- if there is a change of enrolment dates or transfer of school
- the parent's COE is varied, a change in primary visa holder or education provider

All UQ international students should make contact with an International Student Advisor on their campus to discuss the COE application.

## SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN ON A VISITOR VISA

School-aged children who are visiting Australia are permitted to attend Queensland Government Schools on a fee-paying basis for up to three months. All arrangements are made directly with [Education QLD International](#).

## SCHOOL CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

Suggestions from the QLD Department of Education:

- Check your child's school [starting date](#). Most classes start the Monday or the Tuesday following the Australia Day public holiday at the end of January each year.
- Investigate second-hand uniform and book sales through the school.
- Be sun smart and make sure your child wears a hat and sunscreen. Some schools will send children home to get their hats. Encourage eating lunch in the shade.
- Safety first. Discuss road safety and always cross the road with your young child. Never call for your child from across the road.
- Please escort your child to school several times before they attempt to travel on their own. When they are ready to travel independently, provide a map highlighting the route between home and school.
- Warn them to never step out in front of or behind buses. Wait until the bus has departed.
- Ensure helmets are worn when children are riding a bike.
- Arrange a designated pick-up point for your child after school.
- Discuss stranger danger.

## GET INVOLVED

It is common in Australia for parents to be invited to parent-teacher evenings. These are routine friendly discussions and a way for all caring adults to share information that will assist in the child's educational experience. Your child's school may also have a parent & citizen's program in which parents and the community work together to support local schools. Schools also appreciate parents volunteering for certain school programs such as tuck shop duties and school

fetes (annual school fundraising activities). If you or your spouse have any spare time, get in touch with the school and express your interest in being involved in your child's school activities.

## OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Many primary schools provide out-of-school-hours care programs for children under twelve. While programs are attached to schools they are run independently. If you will be needing to access these services, when you are considering which primary school to send your child to please consult with the school as to whether or not they have these programs and if space is available. Many after-school programs have long waiting lists. The programs are not free and parents need to pay directly to the provider. Child care benefit may be available to eligible parents for this type of care.

## ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Activities for children can be expensive and there often is no reduction in costs or benefits available to help pay for these. Many of these require that the parents remain with the children as they are not child care services. Vacation Care programs are provided in many state schools for school-age children below twelve years of age. Check with your child's out-of-school-hours care provider for details. There is a daily fee for a full-day with additional costs for excursions.

International students who are directly sponsored by the Australian government may be eligible to claim the child care benefit to help meet some of these out-of-school-hours costs. Talk to an ISA if you are unsure of your eligibility for this. UQ Sport at St. Lucia also offers a range of [school holiday activities](#) for school-aged children. There is a cost for these. [Brisbane Kids](#) lists a full range of indoor (galleries and museums, movies and live shows, art and library) and outdoor (parks, sporting, camps, clinics and movies) activities for children during the school holidays. Some of these are free of charge.

### Playgroups

[Playgroup](#) is an informal session where parents, carers, and young children meet together in a relaxed environment to socialise and play together. Playgroups are set up and run by parents and carers. Playgroup activities are either free or low cost. All children from 0-5 years, including babies, love new experiences and benefit from developing sensory, social and communication skills through activities at playgroup.

### State Library of Queensland – Children's Corner

[The State Library of QLD](#) is located in the South Bank Complex between the QLD Art Gallery and QLD Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) not far from South Bank. It is easily reached by public transport. The Library includes a Children's Corner which is open daily from 10am to 3pm. Parents can bring children under the age of eight and find many stimulating exhibitions and fun materials to entertain them.

# THE BRISBANE COMMUNITY



## BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL (BCC) LIBRARY

BCC Library membership is free to anyone who lives, works or studies in the Brisbane City Council (BCC) area. You will find a range of audio materials on learning English in the council libraries. To join visit your [local BCC library](#) and show proof of your Brisbane residential address plus photo identification.

## RECREATION IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

These websites may provide useful information on recreation activities for you and your family:

- [Brisbane City Council](#)
- [Brisbane Tourism](#)
- [Tourism Queensland](#)
- [Gatton Tourism](#)

## MARKETS

[Markets](#) are a popular shopping venue for local residents to purchase local arts and crafts, to buy fresh food, and to buy new and used clothing. Generally markets are outdoors, only operate one day per week, and open early in the morning which is the best time to go.

## LOCATING PEOPLE FROM YOUR HOME COUNTRY OR REGION

An ISA may be able to assist you in locating other students from your home country. The [QLD Multicultural Resource Directory](#) can also assist in finding community organisations.

## RECYCLING AND RUBBISH COLLECTION

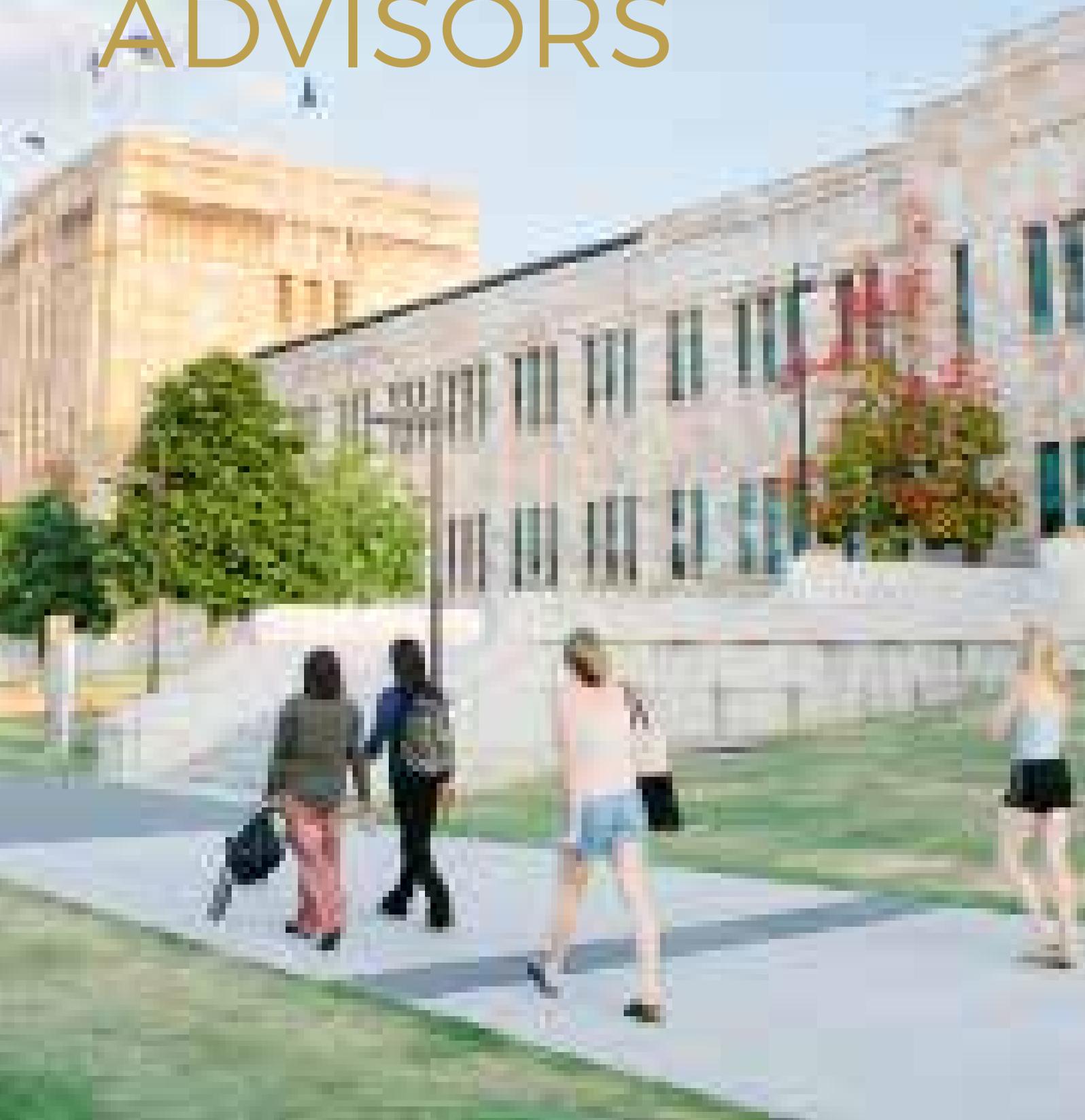
[Local city councils](#) organise rubbish collection including recycling facilities and rubbish collection dates. Please do not leave large items on the footpath when you leave a property as this is illegal dumping. Brisbane City Council has a special kerbside collection of large items that cannot fit into the regular bin throughout the year.

## WATER RESTRICTIONS

Water is not free in Queensland. The owner of a rental property pays for a generous minimum amount of water. If more than the minimum amount of water is used by the tenants, the cost of this extra water is usually paid for by the owner, but can legally be passed on to the tenants. At present if it is your responsibility as a tenant to pay for excess water, it will be written into the lease that you sign. In the near future, the full cost of water usage may be passed along to the tenant of a property. [Learn how you can be water wise.](#)

For any questions about paying for water in a rental property, contact staff in the UQ Accommodation Office via [email](#).

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORS



Students can have personal and confidential discussions with International Student Advisors (ISAs) about a variety of issues, including:

- personal adjustment including culture shock and homesickness
- adapting to life in Australia and cross-cultural matters
- contacting Government departments ( Schooling, DIBP, Human Services)
- understanding University processes
- assistance with practical matters (e.g. health insurance, student visa issues)
- family issues
- taxation and working while on a student visa
- who to talk to at UQ or in the wider community about specific matters.

ISAs provide a range of services and assistance for international students from pre-arrival to departure and after graduation. Staff can also advise on a wide range of University and community services and provide information about the cost of living in Australia and how to manage on a limited income.

## CONTACT AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR

### St Lucia

 (07) 3365 1704

 [internationalstudentss@uq.edu.au](mailto:internationalstudentss@uq.edu.au)

 Building 21D  
8am - 5:00pm  
Mon-Fri

### Gatton

 (07) 5460 1046

 [ssgatton@uq.edu.au](mailto:ssgatton@uq.edu.au)

 Building 8123  
Morrison Hall  
8:30am - 4:30pm  
Mon-Fri

# IMPORTANT CONTACTS



## EMERGENCY

<b>Emergency</b> Police, Fire	000
<b>Police Link</b> Non-urgent police reporting	13 14 44
<b>State Emergency Service</b> Assistance for property damage following a storm	13 25 00

## HEALTH

<b>Emergency</b> Ambulance	000
<b>Poisons Information Centre</b>	13 11 26
<b>Queensland Health Information Line</b>	13 43 25 84
<b>National Home Doctor Service</b> Doctor visits outside of normal business hours	13 74 25
<b>Domestic Violence (women)</b>	1800 811 811
<b>Domestic Violence (men)</b>	1800 600 636

## MY NUMBERS

<b>My Child's School</b>	-----
<b>My Local Medical Centre</b>	-----

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