

Safety and Welfare of Children and Young People - International Student Welfare Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure establishes a clear process for the welfare and care of international students under the age of eighteen studying onshore at Victoria University (VU).

Section 2 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(2) [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 \(Cth\)](#): Standard 5.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to:

- a. All VU international students aged under 18 years at the time of the commencement of their course of study who are on an Australian Government student visa; and
- b. All staff with responsibilities for teaching and supporting international students enrolled in any course at VU, including:
 - i. Higher education coursework award courses;
 - ii. Vocational educational award courses;
 - iii. Postgraduate degrees by research; and
 - iv. Non-award courses where performance is being assessed by the University.

Section 4 - Definitions

(4) CAAW Letter: A Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare letter provided to students under 18 by Victoria University.

(5) Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)

(6) International Student (Onshore)

(7) Study Period

Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

(8) [Safety and Welfare of Children and Young People Policy](#)

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
VU Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Advises students and families of the requirements regarding welfare and guardianship.- Issues CAAW letters to accompany visa applications by students.
Student Services: Enrolments Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Where an international student under 18 has had their enrolment suspended or cancelled, ensures that all required notifications (to parents/legal guardians as well as the Australian Government) are performed.- Update CAAW as required.- Maintain up to date records of the student contact details.
Student Equity, Safety & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contracts with third-party service providers to deliver welfare and accommodation services to international students under 18.- Provides ongoing support to international students under 18, including referral to specialised services.
Third-party service providers (Approved welfare arrangements are provided by the International Student Alliance (ISA). Approved accommodation providers are UniLodge Victoria University (Footscray), or the Australian Homestay Network (AHN))	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provides, under contracted arrangements, Welfare Supervision of international students under 18.- Approves and monitors accommodation arrangements for all international students under 18.- In conjunction with Student Equity, Safety & Wellbeing, provide ongoing support and advice to the international student during their time in Australia, including providing assistance with personal and accommodation difficulties.

Part B - General Requirements

(9) Before a visa can be issued to an international student under the age of 18, the Australian Government requires that there be appropriate accommodation and welfare arrangements made for the time the student is in Australia. All students must register their accommodation and welfare arrangements with the university before they accept their offer of a place.

(10) Students may arrange welfare and accommodation while in Australia either with:

- a. A “Nominated Guardian” approved by the Department of Home Affairs. Nominated Guardians must be:
 - i. A parent, spouse, de facto partner, brother, sister, step-parent, step-brother, step-sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew, or a step-grandparent, step-aunt, step-uncle, step-niece or step-nephew; and
 - ii. Nominated by a parent of the applicant or a person who has custody of the applicant; and
 - iii. Aged at least 21; and
 - iv. Of good character, and show this by providing a police clearance from the countries in which they’ve lived for more than 12 months in the past 10 years after the age of 16; and
 - v. An Australian citizen, permanent resident or be eligible to remain in Australia until the overseas student’s visa expires or the overseas student turns 18 years of age (whichever happens first).
 - vi. Students with a Nominated Guardian do not require a CAAW.
- b. A parent, legal guardian or eligible relative, who must have an appropriate visa or have applied for a Student Guardian visa (subclass 590).
- c. International Student Alliance (ISA) (for welfare), and UniLodge Victoria University (Footscray), or the Australian Homestay Network (AHN) (for accommodation). VU may take on responsibility for approving arrangements for

the student's welfare and accommodation until the student turns 18 for a time period of sufficient length to cover arrangements for the student to leave Australia, or make other appropriate arrangements.

- i. A CAAW letter is provided to the Department of Home Affairs by VU and the student is provided with their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) for the purpose of applying for a visa.
- ii. Registered providers can approve a person who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident (including a family friend, or a family member that does not meet the definition of eligible relative) to care for the overseas student on a CAAW. However, the provider should ensure that the visa holder:
 - Has an appropriate visa to remain in Australia until the overseas student's visa expires or the overseas student turns 18.
 - Is of good character; and
 - Is at least 21 years old; and
 - Has an appropriate visa to remain in Australia until the overseas student's visa expires or the overseas student turns 18.

Part C - Guardianship for International Students Under 18

(11) Students without an appropriate guardian in Australia will need to:

- a. Apply for appropriate accommodation and welfare arrangements as approved by VU.
- b. Complete a VU form to receive a CAAW letter. Students will need a passport, a copy of their parents' ID, and a copy of the CoE letter to apply for the CAAW letter.

(12) VU will nominate in the CAAW the start and end dates of when they accept welfare responsibility for the student. The minimum length of welfare responsibility is the term of the CoE plus seven days, or until the student turns 18 plus seven days, whichever is the later date.

Part D - Welfare and Accommodation for International Students Under 18

(13) International students under 18 must make arrangements via the International Student Alliance (ISA) to be provided with welfare supervision and access to accommodation via the Australian Homestay Network (AHN) or UniLodge Victoria University.

(14) The student or their family enters into an agreement with the third-party provider to provide welfare and accommodation services for the student while they are in Australia, however the ultimate responsibility for approving and assuring welfare arrangements sits with Victoria University.

(15) The International Student Alliance (ISA) will appoint a "Welfare Supervisor" to assist and monitor each student.

(16) The Welfare Supervisors are suitable people who:

- a. Are at least 21 years of age;
- b. Have a valid police clearance and Working with Children Check;
- c. Have or agree to undergo a Working with Children Check every five years as required by the Laws of the State of Victoria;
- d. Speak the same first language as the student (where deemed necessary by the provider).

(17) Students under 18 years of age are required to live under the supervision of an adult of good character.

(18) If the student's accommodation is provided through the Australian Homestay Network (AHN), AHN will ensure the

character and suitability of the Homestay Host to provide the care and support required for the student.

Part E - Support for International Students Under 18

(19) International Student Alliance (ISA) is contracted to provide a range of supports for international students under 18 years of age for whom they provide services, including:

- a. Regular contact (weekly upon arrival and then minimum fortnightly communication) with student whilst enrolled at VU;
- b. Assisting the Student to settle into Australia and into the University;
- c. Supporting the Student with any personal matters;
- d. Making contact with the accommodation provider to check on the student's welfare and assist with any settling-in issues; and
- e. Provide regular monitoring of the accommodation arrangements of international under 18 students, including being available for student issues arising.

(20) The University also provides:

- a. Information Services. These include but are not limited to:
 - i. Pre-departure information;
 - ii. Airport reception program (must be pre-booked);
 - iii. Orientation program, including age- and culturally-appropriate information regarding emergency contacts.
 - iv. In the case of any incident or allegation involving actual or alleged sexual, physical or other abuse students should contact:
 - On campus – Campus Security (03) 9919 6666 (24/7 availability)
 - Off campus – Police and Ambulance 000 (Triple Zero) (24/7 availability).
 - v. VU's [Critical Incident, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Policy](#), including specific information and contacts regarding the management of emergency situations.
- b. Academic Support. The Learning Hubs provide a variety of academic support services. These include but are not limited to:
 - i. Workshops;
 - ii. Study Groups;
 - iii. Meeting with Academic Support and Development;
 - iv. Student Mentors and Student Rovers;
- c. Counselling. Services during office hours include but are not limited to:
 - i. Individual counselling;
 - ii. Workshops;
 - iii. Online wellbeing resources.
- d. Accessibility Services. Accessibility services can support and assist students with disabilities and accessibility needs. These include:
 - i. Inclusive course adjustment (inclusive teaching practices, provision of notes, audio recording of classes, negotiating alternative assessment arrangements, accessible course materials);
 - ii. Direct help in class (sign language interpreters, note-takers, participation assistance).
- e. Student Support. Provides a variety of support and advice including:
 - i. Access to the Housing Service for issues relating to their accommodation;

- ii. General welfare support;
- iii. Liaison with the third party to assist with the management of issues that may arise;
- iv. Practical wellbeing, life skills and transition support;
- v. A point of contact in the case of an emergency.

Part F - Monitoring Welfare and Accommodation Arrangements

(21) All accommodation utilised by students aged under 18 where VU has issued a CAAW will be monitored by the International Student Alliance (ISA) in accordance with the contract of service.

(22) This monitoring process will involve:

- a. Written check-ins with the student and the accommodation provider;
- b. Phone check-ins with the student and the accommodation provider;
- c. An accommodation inspection prior to the accommodation being approved, and at least every six months thereafter;
- d. A student interview;
- e. An audit of the status of Working with Children Checks for any adult involved with providing welfare or accommodation.

(23) In an emergency, or if there is a disruption to welfare arrangements or accommodation becomes unsuitable, the student's parent/guardian must seek and register a new suitable residency as soon as possible. The International Student Alliance (ISA) will provide assistance with sourcing emergency accommodation for transitional periods.

(24) Failure to seek new accommodation for a student whose current accommodation has been assessed as unsuitable will result in suspension of the student's enrolment until the matter can be rectified.

Part G - When Enrolment is Suspended, Cancelled or Transferred

(25) When the enrolment of an international student aged under 18 is suspended or cancelled, VU via the International Student Alliance (ISA) will continue to monitor the suitability of the student's accommodation until:

- a. The student is accepted by another registered provider and that provider takes over responsibility for accommodation; or
- b. The student leaves Australia; or
- c. Suitable alternative arrangements are made that satisfy the Migration Regulations; or
- d. VU reports to the Department of Home Affairs that it no longer approves of the arrangements for the student.

Transferring Students

(26) When VU enrolls a student who has welfare arrangements approved by another registered provider, VU will:

- a. Negotiate the transfer date for welfare arrangements with the releasing provider to ensure that there is no gap; and
- b. Inform the student of their visa obligations regarding the transfer date, or have alternative welfare arrangements approved. Students may also return to their home country until the new approved welfare arrangements take effect.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	7th August 2024
Review Date	7th August 2027
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital
Approval Date	7th August 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Lisa Line Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"International Student (Onshore)" - A person who has been granted a visa by the Department of Home Affairs which gives them study rights.

"Study Period" - A defined period of time in which teaching is delivered. This includes pre-teaching, teaching and assessment activities. Each study period has its own set of key dates, including start, end and census dates. Study periods vary across the academic year and include semesters, trimesters, terms, Block and intensive.

"Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)" - A document, provided electronically, which is issued by the registered provider to intending overseas students and which must accompany their application for a student visa. It confirms the overseas student's eligibility to enrol in the particular course of the registered provider (definition from National Code 2018).