

International Secondary Student Exchange (ISSE) Information about ISSE programs for school

For further information, please contact the International Quality Schools Unit either via phone on +61 (07) 3513 6748 or by email at InternationalRegistration@qed.qld.gov.au

General information on ISSE programs

What is an international secondary student exchange (ISSE) program?

An international secondary student exchange (ISSE) program offers an international cultural and educational experience for Queensland high school students.

It is a reciprocal program where Queensland students attend a high school in another country, while students from other countries study in Queensland. The maximum period for any ISSE program is 12 months.

Students participating in a registered student exchange program are exempt from paying tuition fees.

Student exchange programs do **not** include:

- school group study tours
- short term cultural or private visits by students holding Visitor visas (such as private arrangements initiated by parents hosting relatives or family friends).

Who is considered an exchange student?

Exchange students are both overseas students who arrive into Queensland to take part in an ISSE program and Queensland students who travel overseas with a registered student exchange organisation.

Inbound exchange students must:

- participate in an ISSE program offered through a [registered student exchange organisation](#)
- present an *Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Student (AASES)* form to the school on arrival
 - arrive on a Student visa (subclass 500) (not a Visitor visa (subclass 600))
 - enrol and participate in the host school's academic program.

Outbound exchange students must:

- participate in an ISSE program offered through a [registered student exchange organisation](#)
- meet the visa requirements of their destination country
- enrol and participate in the host school's academic program.

The maximum duration of an ISSE program is 12 months.

Who can offer an ISSE program?

Only registered student exchange organisations can offer an ISSE program. Student exchange organisations can be either:

- not-for-profit ISSE organisations

or

- schools with sister-school relationships which include student exchanges of up to 12 months.

A list of [registered student exchange organisation](#) is available (schools and registered student exchange organisations).

Enrolment of an exchange student

What is the process for accepting and enrolling an exchange student?

The student exchange organisation will contact the school requesting permission from the Principal to enrol an exchange student.

If the school agrees to accept the enrolment, the school will be asked to sign an *AASES request form* which sets out the period of enrolment at the school.

On arrival at the school, the student (and/or the representative of the organisation) will provide the school with a copy of the student's AASES form.

The school completes Part D of the AASES form, keeps a copy on the student's school file and returns the completed AASES form to the exchange organisation.

What is an *Acceptance Advice for a Secondary Exchange Student (AASES)* form? What is it used for?

The *AASES form* is the official document generated by the Department of Education and issued to each exchange student through their student exchange organisation to enable the student to obtain a Student visa.

All AASES forms issued by the Department of Education bear the department's logo and a unique number (e.g., Q2014/123).

The student must present this form when applying for a Student visa (subclass 500) through the Department of Home Affairs.

An AASES form is only issued to a registered student exchange organisations once the organisation has provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements are in place for the student's education and welfare.

Is a school obligated to accept an exchange student?

No. The decision to accept or decline the enrolment remains at the Principal's discretion.

Before accepting an exchange student, principals may take into consideration:

- availability of student places
- appropriate timing of the program
- support required
- resources available to ensure that a satisfactory program can be offered.

(For Queensland state schools) Does a Principal need to seek approval from the Department of Education International (DEi) to enrol an exchange student?

No, exchange students enrolling in a state high school are not considered 'overseas students' under the department's International Student program (ISP).

For further information – please see the [Information for Principals of state schools](#)

Can a student on a Visitor visa be considered an exchange student?

No, only students on a Student visa (subclass 500) issued via an *AASES form* are considered exchange students.

Students on Visitor visa (subclass 600) can enrol in a Queensland school as full-fee paying international students, subject to the school's acceptance.

Students on a Visitor visa:

- must pay tuition fees if enrolling in a Queensland government school (visit [Education Queensland International](#) for more details)
- may be required to pay tuition fees if enrolling in a Queensland Catholic or independent school (for further details contact the school directly).

If an exchange student arrives on a Visitor visa (subclass 600) instead of the required Student visa (subclass 500), the student is no longer considered an exchange student.

At this point, it is at the school's discretion whether it progresses the enrolment; however, students on Visitor visa are not subject to a tuition fee waiver, and the student exchange organisation is not legally responsible for the welfare of the student.

State schools must seek [department advice](#) prior to enrolling a student on a Visitor visa.

If a school is registered as a student exchange organisation, can it enrol students from another student exchange organisation?

Yes. Schools who are also registered student exchange organisations are able to host students taking part in an ISSE program with another student exchange organisation. In such cases, the duty of care and responsibility for reciprocity remains with the registered exchange organisation who is responsible for arranging the exchange, and not the hosting school.

If a school is CRICOS-registered, can it accept the enrolment of an exchange student? Does the student count towards the school's CRICOS program?

A school who is CRICOS-registered can accept the enrolment of an exchange student taking part in an ISSE program with a registered student exchange organisation.

ISSE programs and CRICOS programs are not related – as such, any enrolments under an ISSE program does not in any way relate to the school's CRICOS program.

The exchange student is enrolled as a domestic student; no enrolment record is created in PRISMS and any obligations under ESOS do not apply to the exchange student.

Can a parent of a student at my school arrange a private exchange program for a relative overseas, and enrol the child as an 'exchange student' at my school?

No, only students who are participating in an ISSE program through a registered student exchange organisation are considered exchange students.

Students under private arrangements will arrive on a Visitor visa for a maximum study period of 3 months.

Students on a Visitor visa:

- must pay tuition fees if enrolling in a Queensland government school (visit [Education Queensland International](#) for more details)
- may be required to pay tuition fees if enrolling in a Queensland Catholic or independent school (for further details contact the school directly).

Fees

Do exchange students pay tuition fees?

No. Exchange students should only pay:

- local school levies or charges relating to special subjects
- school materials or resources that the student will retain
- any fees associated with school camps or excursions.

These fees or charges should be discussed with the student exchange organisation at the time enrolment is discussed.

Note: ISSE programs operate with reciprocal points in lieu of tuition fees. Registered student exchange organisations are required to balance the number of in-bound and outbound students on a student/month basis. This means that over the course of the year, the number of Queensland secondary students undertaking exchange programs is balanced with the number of overseas exchange students studying in Queensland.

Is an exchange student with a Student visa (subclass 500) regarded as a fee-paying student?

No. The Student visa (subclass 500) is issued to both full-fee paying international students (CRICOS programs) and exchange students (ISSE programs). The proof that a student is an official exchange student is the AASES form.

Can exchange students be included in the school's census data?

Yes, providing the student's exchange meets the Census criteria, and the student was active in a classroom secondary or special education program at a school which contributes to a Year 12 (or equivalent) certificate in their own country immediately prior to the exchange.

For further information, non-state schools should refer to the [funding information](#) published by the Queensland Non-State School Accreditation Board.

Welfare

Who is responsible for the accommodation and welfare of an exchange student?

School responsibilities

Schools enrolling an exchange student have responsibility for the student while they attend school, school activities and excursions, as per their obligations to all enrolled students.

The school is not expected to provide:

- support or pastoral care for the exchange student beyond what it provides domestic students
- crisis care or emergency management networks for exchange students, except where the school is the registered exchange organisation for the student.

All schools enrolling exchange students should ensure that they retain the mobile number for the student's local coordinator for use in an emergency.

Student exchange organisation responsibilities

The student exchange organisation is responsible for arranging suitable accommodation, support and general welfare for the exchange student throughout the student's program, including during school vacations.

The student exchange organisation must also ensure that the exchange student and host family have adequate local assistance and support.

Such support will:

- include appropriate reception, orientation, accommodation, transport and emergency arrangements
- provide ongoing support and counselling networks for exchange students.

What should the school do if they have concerns regarding the student's accommodation arrangements or become aware of an incident or allegation of abuse?

The school must immediately contact the student's registered student exchange organisation.

Every registered student exchange organisation has a Child Protection policy and procedure, as well as local emergency support for the student. In the event there are concerns with the student's volunteer host family, the organisation will immediately relocate the student to a new host family.

The student exchange organisation holds the welfare responsibility for the student – as such it is imperative that the school notifies the organisation of its concerns immediately.

Where the school becomes aware of matters which it considered a reportable incident, the school must follow its reporting process in addition to notifying the registered student exchange organisation.

Sister-school arrangements

My school has an overseas 'sister-school'. Do I need to become a student exchange organisation to host students from our 'sister-school'?

No. If the students from your 'sister-school' are undertaking a short-term cultural visit to your school of less than 12 weeks, and hold a Visitor visa, you do not need to become a registered student exchange organisation.

You will need to register as a student exchange organisation if you want to expand your school-to-school exchange programs to offer opportunities for student exchanges of between 3 and 12 months, as your inbound students will require a Student visa to support their stay in Australia.

Regulation of ISSE programs

What guidelines exist in relation to the operation of these programs?

All Queensland student exchange organisations must comply with the [Queensland Guidelines for the operation of international secondary student exchange programs \(PDF, 1 MB\)](#). These guidelines have been made under the [Queensland Education \(Overseas Students\) Act 2008](#).

Who regulates student exchange organisations in Queensland?

Registered student exchange organisations are regulated by the International Quality (Schools) Unit within the Registration Services (International, Non-state and Home Education) branch of the Department of Education.

What should a school do if it has concern about a registered student exchange organisation?

A school who has any concerns about the conduct of a registered student exchange organisation can notify the International Quality Schools (IQS) Unit in the Queensland Department of Education either via email at InternationalRegistration@qed.qld.gov.au or by phone on +61 (07) 3513 6748.