

International Secondary Student Exchange (ISSE) Information about ISSE programs for students and parents

For further information, please contact the International Quality Schools Unit either via phone on 07 3513 6748 or by email at

InternationalRegistration@qed.qld.gov.au

General information

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

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

It is a reciprocal program where 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 or Queensland students who travel overseas as part of a registered student exchange organisation's ISSE program.

Inbound exchange students must:

- participate in an ISSE program offered through a [registered student exchange organisation](#)
- present an *Acceptance Advice of 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 a secondary student exchange program is 12 months.

Who can operate an international secondary student exchange (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).

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 branch of the Department of Education.

Information for students and parents

What is an *Acceptance Advice of 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 accepted 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 the AASES form when applying for a Student visa (subclass 500) through the Department of Home Affairs.

An AASES form can only be issued by the Department of Education to registered student exchange organisations once the student exchange organisation has provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements are in place for the student's education and welfare.

What are my responsibilities as an exchange student?

As an exchange student you must follow the program rules set out by your exchange organisation (host school).

You must also attend school full-time and actively participate in your host school's academic program.

You must comply with the rules attached to your Student visa, including only arriving in line with the dates of your visa and returning to your home country at the end of your exchange.

Your student exchange organisation will have responsibility for your welfare during your exchange. Your host family will be providing your accommodation and board on a voluntary basis – they will not receive any financial remuneration for this; you must follow your host families' rules while you live with your host family. Living with a host family is a unique opportunity for rich cultural exchange and language immersion (where English is not spoken in the home).

What is the student exchange organisation's responsibility for the welfare and accommodation of a student on exchange?

Student exchange organisations are responsible for arranging suitable accommodation, support and general welfare for the exchange student throughout the program, including during school vacations.

Student exchange organisations must also ensure that incoming and outgoing exchange students and host families have adequate local assistance and support.

Such support will:

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

What fees to I have to pay as an exchange student?

Your student exchange organisation will advise you of the cost of your program and the program inclusions.

As an exchange student you are not required to pay any tuition fees to your host school; however, you may be required to pay the following school-based fees and charges:

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

Your student exchange organisation will discuss these fees with your host school upon enrolment, and will advise you prior to you commencing at the host school of any fees or charges.

Your host family will provide you with accommodation and board on a voluntary basis – they will not receive financial remuneration for hosting you. However, you will be required to provide your own spending money.

What information should I receive from my student exchange organisation before I go on exchange?

Your student exchange organisation **must** provide you with the following information before you travel on your exchange:

- the program rules and expectations, including information on what happens if you don't follow these rules;
- how the organisation will select your volunteer host family and what happens if you need to change host families during your exchange, including information on whether your volunteer host family has been verified via a Criminal Record Check;
- information on your host school including any school rules you will be expected to follow (for example, whether you will be required to wear a uniform);
- information on the travel arrangements from your departure point to your arrival with your host family;

- information on what to do and who to talk to if you need to report an incident or allegation of abuse, as well as information on child protection laws in your destination country.

You will also receive information on how to contact the International Quality Schools Unit, at the Department of Education, as the regulator for registered student exchange organisations if you have concerns about how your exchange organisation is running its program.

Can I choose my own host schools?

No, your student exchange organisation is responsible for finding a host school for the duration of your exchange. Not all schools have the enrolment capacity to accept an exchange student. Your organisation will notify you which school you will be enrolling at prior to your arrival in your destination country.

Can I arrange my own exchange program without working with a registered student exchange organisation?

If you are a Queensland student who would like to travel overseas to study, you can do so either with a registered student exchange organisation or through an out-bound only organisation.

Please note, outbound-only organisations are not regulated and are not required to meet the legislative requirements under the Queensland guidelines.

Overseas students who would like to study in Queensland as an exchange student must participate in an ISSE program offered through a [registered student exchange organisation](#) in order to be eligible for a Student visa and enrolment in a Queensland host school.

Can I arrange for my relative or family friend to come to Australia on an exchange?

In order for your relative or family friend to come to Australia, they will need to apply to a registered student exchange organisation for acceptance into their ISSE program. Only a registered student exchange organisation can facilitate an ISSE program.

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

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

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

Students on Visitor visas can enrol in 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).

How do I lodge a complaint or notify of a concern with a registered student exchange organisation?

If you have any concerns about the conduct of your exchange organisation, you can lodge a complaint with the International Quality Schools (IQS) Unit in the Queensland Department of Education. You can contact the IQS Unit either

via email at InternationalRegistration@qed.qld.gov.au or by phone on +61 (07) 3513 6748.

We will ask you to provide us with a detailed outline of your experience and your concerns, including any steps you have taken with your student exchange organisation to address the problem.

Note: we will not act on your behalf to resolve the complaint but will ensure the student exchange organisation is compliant with the Queensland Guidelines for the operation of international secondary student exchange programs.