



International Students – education agents

Many international students who choose to study in Australia use the services of an **education agent**. It is important to note, you **do not** have to use an education agent. You can enrol directly with the education provider (private schools, colleges or universities).

The register of Australian education providers that offer courses to people studying in Australia on student visas is available at cricos.education.gov.au.

This fact sheet is all about education agents and what to do if you think something isn't right.

Education agents in Australia

The law in Australia requires education providers to have a written agreement with their education agents, and to monitor the activities of agents who represent them. Providers must require their agents to:

- act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interest of students,
- have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Australian international education system, and
- understand the Australian International Education and Training Agent Code of Ethics.

Tips for students

If you choose to use an education agent:

- If you already know which education provider you want to study at, it is best to choose an education agent used by that provider. Look for a list of education agents on the provider's website.
- You can also check whether the agent is an authorised representative of the education institution you want to apply to by asking the agent to see written evidence from the education provider that they are working for.
- Be careful and alert when dealing with agents to ensure you enrol in a course that is suitable to you, and will help you achieve your learning goals.
- If you think your education agent is behaving dishonestly or unethically, you should stop using them immediately and contact your education provider directly.
- Ask about any fees you may have to pay for using their services.
- Make sure you understand any documents you are asked to sign before you sign them or indicate that you accept the agreement.

Contact us

ombudsman.gov.au
1300 362 072

GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601

If you think your education agent might be behaving dishonestly or unethically, you should stop using them immediately and contact your education institution directly.

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- Keep a copy of any paperwork from your agent and provider (such as payment receipts) and any communication such as emails, text messages or notes made during phone calls between you and your education agent.
- If you need migration advice, it is best to use a migration agent who is registered in Australia. An education agent based in Australia cannot give you information on visa and immigration matters unless they are also a [Registered Migration Agent](#).

Who can help me if I have a problem with an education agent?

Talk directly with your education provider about your education agent. Explain any difficulties and problems that you are having. You can make a complaint to your education provider using their complaints and appeals process.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, you can make a complaint to an external complaints body like the Commonwealth Ombudsman, about what has happened.

How do I make an external complaint?

If you are an international student studying at a **private education provider**, you can complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about problems that intending, current or former students may have with private schools, colleges or universities (education providers) in Australia. You can fill out our online form or phone us **1300 362 072**. For more information about how to complain and how to contact us, visit ombudsman.gov.au

If you are an international student or a domestic student studying with a **public (government) education provider** you can complain to the appropriate [state or territory ombudsman](#)¹.

Who else can help me?

You can find a list of [useful links](#)² to other organisations that may be able to help you on our website.

More information is available at ombudsman.gov.au.

Please note: This document is intended as a guide only. For this reason, the information should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases. To the maximum extent permitted by the law, the Commonwealth Ombudsman is not liable to you for any loss or damage suffered as a result of reliance on this document. For the most up-to-date versions of cited Acts, please refer to the [Federal Register of Legislation](#).

¹ <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/What-we-do/related-sites>

² <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students/useful-links>