

Australian Study Pathway Calendar

2026 / 2027

A planning reference for education agents and student counsellors

StudyVisaHub Agent Network

Quality applications. Genuine pathways. Sector integrity.

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Introduction

This calendar is a planning reference for education agents and student counsellors guiding international students through Australian study pathways. It consolidates the cycles, lead times, and compliance milestones that shape quality applications and genuine career outcomes.

Use it to map the student journey from initial counselling through to visa lodgement and arrival. Individual provider dates, scholarship deadlines, and visa processing times vary — always verify current information through the relevant institution, regulatory body, or the Department of Home Affairs before advising a student.

1. Intake Cycles at a Glance

Australian education providers operate across several sectors, each with its own enrolment rhythm. Higher education and VET are the primary intake pathways for international students.

Sector	Primary Intakes	Notes
Higher Education (Universities)	February / March July / August	Some institutions offer a third trimester intake in October or November.
VET / TAFE	February, May, August, November	Many providers offer monthly enrolment for selected qualifications.
ELICOS / English Language	Weekly enrolment (year-round)	Most schools run rolling weekly start dates for general English programs.
Postgraduate Research	Flexible (March, July, or by arrangement)	Start dates often negotiated with the supervisor and faculty.
Pathway / Foundation	Multiple intakes (Feb, Jun, Oct typical)	Aligned to feeder university intakes — confirm with the provider.

2. Scholarship Application Windows

Scholarship rounds open well in advance of intake. Students should begin assembling supporting documentation — academic transcripts, English test results, references, and personal statements — at least nine months before the intended start date.

Scholarship Type	Typical Opening	Lead Time Before Intake
Australia Awards Scholarships (DFAT)	February – April	9 – 12 months
Destination Australia Scholarships	Aligned to provider intakes	6 – 9 months
University Merit Scholarships	Year-round (rolling)	3 – 6 months
Provider / Institutional Scholarships	Varies by provider	3 – 6 months
Country-specific Government Scholarships	Varies — check sending country	9 – 12 months

3. English Language Testing — Lead Times

Most providers and the Department of Home Affairs accept results from approved English language tests. Recommend students complete testing four to six months before their intended intake to allow time for re-sits if required.

Test	Availability	Booking Lead Time	Result Turnaround
IELTS Academic	Weekly in major cities	2 – 4 weeks	3 – 13 days
PTE Academic	Daily in major centres	1 – 2 weeks	1 – 5 days
TOEFL iBT	Multiple slots monthly	3 – 4 weeks	6 – 10 days
OET (health professionals)	Monthly	4 – 6 weeks	12 – 16 business days
Cambridge C1 Advanced	Set test dates	4 – 8 weeks	2 – 6 weeks

4. Visa and Compliance Milestones

The Subclass 500 Student Visa is the primary pathway. Strong applications demonstrate the Genuine Student requirement clearly, with documentation that supports the student's career intent, financial capacity, and academic preparation.

Milestone	Typical Timeframe
Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) issued	After offer acceptance and tuition payment
Student Visa (Subclass 500) lodgement	Once CoE is received — recommended 12+ weeks before intake
Visa processing time	4 – 12 weeks (varies by country and assessment level)
Genuine Student documentation prep	Begin 8 – 12 weeks before lodgement
Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)	Required for entire visa duration — arrange before lodgement
Financial capacity evidence	28 days of stable funds typically required
Pre-departure planning	Finalise accommodation, briefings, OSHC card 2 – 4 weeks before travel

5. Recommended Agent Planning Timeline

Working back from a target intake date, the following timeline supports quality applications and avoids the late-stage pressure that typically weakens Genuine Student documentation.

Time to Intake	Agent Focus
T – 12 months	Course discovery, career counselling, pathway alignment with student goals
T – 9 months	Shortlist providers, verify CRICOS status, begin application preparation
T – 7 months	Lodge applications, gather academic transcripts and supporting documents
T – 5 months	Begin English language test preparation if required
T – 4 months	Accept offer, arrange tuition payment, secure Confirmation of Enrolment
T – 3 months	Lodge Subclass 500 visa with complete Genuine Student documentation
T – 1 month	Pre-departure briefing, OSHC confirmation, accommodation, travel arrangements
T – 0 (Intake)	Student arrival, orientation, first-week check-in

6. Key Bodies and Acronyms

A working knowledge of the regulatory landscape supports informed counselling and credible representation of Australian study pathways.

Acronym	Body / Term
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency — regulator for higher education
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority — regulator for VET providers
DHA	Department of Home Affairs — administers student visas
DoE	Department of Education — sets international education policy
ESOS Act	Education Services for Overseas Students Act — sector legislation
National Code	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
GS	Genuine Student requirement (replaced GTE in 2024)
CoE	Confirmation of Enrolment
OSHC	Overseas Student Health Cover
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students

7. Principles for Quality Applications

Sector integrity rests on the decisions agents make at the point of counselling. The principles below reflect the standards expected of agents working within the Australian international education framework.

Match the student to the pathway, not the easiest course.

A career-aligned course choice strengthens the Genuine Student narrative and protects long-term outcomes.

Document career intent at the point of counselling.

Capture the student's reasoning early — it forms the foundation of a credible Statement of Purpose.

Verify provider CRICOS status before application.

Only CRICOS-registered providers can enrol international students. Confirm via cricos.education.gov.au.

Maintain transparent communication around fees and refund policies.

Clear disclosure protects the student, the provider, and the agent's reputation.

Discourage course changes within the first six months.

Repeated changes weaken visa compliance and are increasingly scrutinised by the Department of Home Affairs.

Keep records of all advice given.

Written communication and documented file notes support accountability and continuous improvement.

About the StudyVisaHub Agent Network

The StudyVisaHub Agent Network is a free, information-first community for education agents and student counsellors committed to quality applications and genuine student outcomes.

Members receive a monthly sector briefing covering regulatory updates, course and scholarship intelligence, and career pathway insights. Collaboration is opt-in — when sponsorship, partnership, or placement opportunities arise, members choose how to participate.

Join at studyvisahub.com.au/agents or contact us at contact@studyvisahub.com.au.

Disclaimer: This document is a planning reference. Dates, timeframes, and policy settings are indicative and subject to change. Agents must verify current information through the relevant institution, regulatory body, or the Department of Home Affairs before advising a student.

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