GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION

OF

OVERSEAS SECONDARY STUDENT EXCHANGE ORGANISATIONS
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1.0 Background

1.1 Since 1 January 1990 the majority of overseas students seeking entry into Australia have been admitted on a full fee paying basis. However, as Commonwealth and State Governments are aware of the particular benefits arising from exchange programs, provision was made for them to continue, with reciprocity of exchange being accepted in lieu of the payment of a full fee.

1.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is the process by which exchange organisations are required to send at least as many students from a particular state overseas, as they host in that state, in full-year equivalent terms, on a rolling three year basis. Exchange organisations are required to submit to the state committee responsible for administering these criteria, statistics regarding all incoming and outgoing students.

The system of counting to assess reciprocity is based on the allocation of one point for each month of exchange, to be calculated from and including the month of arrival and the month of departure.

Example: (Hypothetical)

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange A</td>
<td>-75</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>+50</td>
<td>-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange B</td>
<td>+50</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>+50</td>
<td>+100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange C</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>-100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students must attend school for a minimum of 28 days to be included in any reciprocity calculations. Sending of students overseas must occur prior to hosting of students to Australia commences, on an equivalent number of months basis.

Effective 1 January 2006 students who have completed school and will not be returning to school and who undertake student exchange will not be counted for reciprocity purposes.

Organisations which do not comply with reciprocity requirements over a three year period may have their registration as approved providers suspended or terminated.
1.3 In order to obtain a student visa for entry to Australia an exchange student must prove that the exchange program is under the auspices of an organisation or school approved by the State for inclusion in a State register of approved organisations promoting or accepting student exchanges.

2.0 Definition

2.1 Student Exchange Programs

Student exchange programs range from a minimum of 29 days for government schools and 3 months for non-government schools to a maximum of twelve months in duration. Students enter Australia on a student visa, for which reciprocity must be maintained. The student is enrolled within the school, studying formal subjects at age appropriate levels. At the completion of the exchange a statement of achievement is provided.

2.2 In order to obtain a student visa the student must enter Australia under the auspices of an organisation, group or school approved by the State.

2.3 Cultural Visits

Students on cultural visits (maximum 29 days for government schools and 3 months for non-government schools), enter Australia on a tourist visa. Cultural visits may involve the exchange of students on a school to school basis or may be organised by a commercial operator. Students are visitors in the school and school study is not the major focus. Students on these visas may not attend school on a regular basis and are not to be enrolled in schools.

2.4 The following conditions are generally attached to a tourist visa:
   8101 – you must not engage in work in Australia
   8201 - while in Australia you must not engage in any study or training of more than three months duration.
   8205 - if you intend to study in a classroom environment for more than 4 weeks, a chest x-ray is required. Some countries are exempt.

2.5 Note: Schools hosting students on a cultural visit do not need to register as an exchange organisation.

3.0 General Criteria for the Registration of Exchange Organisations (Non-school)

3.1 Exchange organisations seeking approval status must submit an application through the Executive Officer, Committee to Register Exchange Organisations.

3.2 Exchange organisations making an application for registration will be interviewed by a Committee representative who will then make recommendations to the committee on the suitability of the organisation to operate a student exchange program.
3.3 Unsuccessful applicants may appeal against a decision by writing directly to the Minister for Education & Training.

3.4 Exchange organisations must address the following matters on the attached application form.

**Background History and Structure of the Organisation**

An outline of the background, history and structure of the organisation, including relationships with other agencies in relation to exchange and other related programs.

**Purpose of Exchanges**

Exchange organisations are required to demonstrate that the prime purpose of their program is to provide a broad educational experience for students and to further international/intercultural understanding.

**Administrative Support**

Exchange organisations are required to show evidence of an organisational structure within Victoria for which approval to operate is sought that is effective and appropriate for the size of the operation and has access to communication with parents, schools, students and officers of the Department of Education & Training.

**Not-for-Profit Status and Financial Viability**

Exchange organisations are required to provide evidence of not-for-profit status and a letter stating that they are financially viable. Organisations must have incorporated status and must advise the Registration Committee if they become nonfinancial.

Such documentation should include students costs that are reasonable and show revenue is expended entirely for the benefit of the program participants (details of what is included in the participation fee and what is optional should be provided).

**Privacy**

Organisations must have in place appropriate policies and procedures to ensure privacy obligations are met.

**Insurance**

Organisations are required to have and maintain appropriate liability and indemnity insurance for the period the organisation is approved to operate an exchange program.
**Duty Of Care**

The legal obligation of a registered exchange organisation’s Duty of Care applies to both incoming and outgoing students. There is a high standard of care required to fulfil that duty. The obligation is to positively take reasonable measures to protect against reasonably foreseeable risks.

**Support for Students and Host Families**

Exchange organisations are required to demonstrate that local assistance is available to exchange students (both incoming and outgoing) and host families. Such support must cover appropriate reception, orientation, accommodation and transport arrangements as well as having support and counselling networks for exchange students;

**Selection of Students – Incoming & Outgoing**

Exchange organisations are required to demonstrate that an appropriate screening process for the selection of incoming and outgoing students occurs and that only students with the potential to benefit from the experience are selected. Overseas students attending Australian schools must be of an age compatible with secondary schooling.

**Selection of Host Families**

Organisations are required to demonstrate that there is an appropriate and thorough screening process for the selection of host families for both incoming and outgoing students as outlined in the application form.

The selection of host families must not involve the payment of board or a subsidy as such to the host family or to any other party as a condition of the student’s placement.

Hosting must be voluntary and there should not be any form of contract binding a host family to continue hosting an exchange student in the event of difficulties arising.

Permanent host families must be arranged for incoming students by Exchange Organisations prior to applying for Acceptance Advice for Secondary Student Exchange (AASES) forms;

**Resolution of Problems**

Exchange organisations must demonstrate that they have in place appropriate and adequate procedures and resources within their own means to resolve potential problems surrounding exchange students (both incoming and outgoing), host families, natural families and schools during the exchange. Grievance procedures should be publicly accessible and a copy must accompany the application for registration.
Exchange organisations may agree to move a student to another school should the original school placement not prove satisfactory. The International Division of the Department of Education and Training should be advised of any changes to a student’s placement.

Orientation for Students and Host Families

Exchange organisations are required to demonstrate that an orientation and preparation program, both prior to departure from the home country and after arrival in the host country, is provided for incoming and outgoing exchange students and that there is a corresponding program for host families, both in Australia and overseas;

School Liaison

Exchange organisations are required to liaise regularly with schools to ensure that the following conditions of a student visa are met:

- the student is attending secondary school full time and is not undertaking other significant studies
- the student abides by the conditions of his/her visa in relation to employment and that this is not affecting school performance
- that school attendance, progress and behaviour are in accordance with the school policy;

Travel

Exchange organisations are required to demonstrate that they can provide appropriate support for incoming and outgoing students enroute between their natural and host families.

Travel Insurance is highly recommended for both incoming and outgoing exchange students. The onus is on the organisation to ensure that the maximum standard insurance cover is obtained.

Health Insurance

It is compulsory for all incoming exchange students to take out Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) as a condition of holding a student visa. OSHC must be paid for in Australia prior to the visa being issued and entitles the student to health services. The cover can be obtained through: Medibank Private, Lysaght Peoplecare Limited subcontracting to OSHC Worldcare, BUPA OSHC and Australian Health Management.

Exchange organisations must ensure that adequate health insurance provisions are made for outgoing exchange students.
Documentation

Exchange organisations are required to provide the Committee with the current documentation used in promoting their programs and in advising students, host families and program representatives of their operations. All such information will be treated as confidential.

4.0 General Criteria for Registration of Schools

4.1 Government and non-government schools seeking registration as an exchange organisation must submit an application through the Executive Officer, Committee to Register Exchange Organisations.

4.2 The Registered Schools Board (RSB) will interview non-government schools submitting applications and will then make its recommendation to the Committee on the suitability of the school to operate a student exchange program.

4.3 The International Division (ID) will interview government schools submitting applications and will then make its recommendation to the Committee on the suitability of the school to operate a student exchange program.

4.4 Unsuccessful applicants may appeal against a decision by writing directly to the Minister for Education.

4.5 In the attached application form schools must address the following issues:

Background History and Structure of the School

A brief outline of the background, history and structure of the school including any sister school relationships or relationships with other agencies.

Purpose of Exchanges

Schools are required to demonstrate that the prime purpose of their program is to provide a broad educational experience for students and to further international/intercultural understanding.

Administrative Support

Schools are required to show evidence of an organisational structure that can provide support for a student exchange program and which has access to communication with parents, students and officers of the appropriate government agencies.

Not-for-Profit Status and Financial Viability

Schools are required to ensure that exchange programs are not run for profit and should provide documentation of financial and other resources they are prepared to commit to a student exchange program.
Such documentation should include costs to the student that are reasonable and that revenue is expended entirely for the benefit of the program participants (details of what is included in the participation fee and what is optional should be provided).

Privacy

Schools must have in place appropriate policies and procedures to ensure privacy obligations are met.

Insurance

Schools are required to have and maintain appropriate liability and indemnity insurance for the period the school is approved to operate an exchange program.

Duty Of Care

The legal obligation of a school’s Duty of Care applies to both incoming and outgoing students. There is a high standard of care required to fulfil that duty. The obligation is to positively take reasonable measures to protect against reasonably foreseeable risks.

Support for Students and Host Families

Schools are required to demonstrate that assistance is available to exchange students (both incoming and outgoing) and host families. Such support will cover appropriate reception, orientation, accommodation and transport arrangements as well as having on-going support and a counselling network for exchange students.

Selection of Students - Incoming and Outgoing

Schools are required to demonstrate that an appropriate screening process for the selection of incoming and outgoing students occurs and that only students with the potential to benefit from the experience are selected. Overseas students attending Australian schools must be of an age compatible with secondary schooling.

Selection of Host Families

*Schools undertaking student exchanges as part of their sister school relationship should ensure that participating homestay families undertake a mandatory Criminal Record Check (CRC) prior to hosting visiting international students. CRCs are processed through the Department’s normal online criminal record checking system at the school level. Additional information on Criminal Record Checks is available on www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/res/crimcheckVOL.htm*
Schools are required to demonstrate that there is an appropriate and thorough screening process for the selection of host families for both incoming and outgoing students.

Hosting must be voluntary and there should not be any form of contract binding a host family to continue hosting an exchange student in the event of difficulties arising.

The selection of host families must not involve the payment of board or a subsidy as such to the host family or to any other party as a condition of the student’s placement.

Permanent host families must be arranged prior to the issuance of Acceptance Advice for Secondary Student Exchange (AASES) forms to incoming students by Exchange Organisations.

Resolution of Problems

Schools must demonstrate that they have in place appropriate and adequate procedures and resources to resolve potential problems surrounding exchange students (both incoming and outgoing), host families and natural families during the exchange. Grievance procedures should be publicly accessible and a copy should accompany the application for registration.

Orientation for Students and Host Families

Schools are required to demonstrate that an orientation and preparation program, both prior to departure from the home country and after arrival in the host country, is provided for incoming and outgoing exchange students and that there is a corresponding program for host families both in Australia and Overseas.

School Liaison

Schools are required to liaise with and monitor students to ensure that the following conditions of a student visa are met:

- the student is attending secondary school full time and is not undertaking other significant studies;
- the student abides by the conditions of his/her visa in relation to employment and that this is not affecting school performance; and
- that school attendance, progress and behaviour are in accordance with the school policy.

Travel

Schools are required to demonstrate that they can provide appropriate support for incoming and outgoing students enroute between their natural and host families. Travel Insurance is highly recommended for both
incoming and outgoing exchange students. The onus is on the school to ensure that the maximum standard insurance cover is obtained.

Health Insurance

It is compulsory for all incoming exchange students to take out Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) as a condition of holding a student visa. OSHC must be paid for in Australia prior to the visa being issued and entitles the student to health services through Medibank Private.

Schools must satisfy the Committee to Register Exchange Organisations that health insurance provisions are adequate for outgoing exchange students

Documentation

Schools are required to provide the committee with such current documentation as is used in promoting their programs and in advising students, host families and program representatives of their operations.

5.0 Accountability and Reporting Requirements of Registered Exchange Organisations / Schools

5.1 Exchange organisations/schools are required to balance the sending and hosting of students on a rolling three year basis, i.e. the total length of time overseas students spend in Victorian schools must equal the total length of time the Victorian students spend overseas over a three year period. This is required for reciprocity purposes. Organisations must ensure that sending occurs prior to hosting.

5.2 All exchange organisations/schools will be required to complete a statistical report on a yearly basis. This report should be completed and returned to the Executive Officer by the due date.

5.3 The report will be circulated to organisations by the Executive Officer of the Committee.

5.4 This report includes the statistics and other information requested regarding all incoming and outgoing students, regardless of the duration of the particular program.

For counting purposes:
- students are counted from the beginning of the month of arrival until the end of the month of departure.
- every month in the program will be counted as one eg. 5 June to 3 August will be counted as three, and

5.5 The registration of each exchange organisation/school will be reviewed on a six year cycle. This involves a review of documentation at the end of three years and an interview every six years.
5.6 The triennial review of organisations/schools operating exchange programs will be conducted by:

- The RSB for non-government schools;
- The Department of Education & Training (DE&T) for government schools; and
- The Committee to Register Exchange Organisations for exchange organisations.

5.8 Registered exchange organisations/schools which have not been active in student exchanges for a period of three years or more will automatically lose registration and will be required to reapply for registration in order to operate student exchange programs.

6.0 Exchange Organisations and Host Schools

6.1 Exchange organisations/schools must be aware that the onus remains on them, at all times, to complete the arrangements for the student to receive an AASES form.

6.2 Official representatives of the exchange organisation should approach schools directly to accept exchange students. Before Principals of host schools accept an exchange student they must be satisfied:

- that appropriate documentation has been provided;
- with all arrangements;
- with the capacity and support of the project from the school community;
- with the benefits to the school;
- with local support for the program, reception, orientation program, accommodation and details; and
- with the ongoing support and counselling networks for the exchange student.

6.3 Schools hosting an exchange student through a registered exchange organisation are not expected to provide additional pastoral care for exchange students in excess of that which would normally be provided for students. Central resources cannot be supplied to schools for these purposes.

6.4 Principals of host schools should notify the Committee if there is concern regarding an exchange organisation in regard to any of the above either before the commencement of a student’s exchange or during the course of the placement.

6.5 The Executive Officer of the Committee, must be notified of any changes in enrolment status, eg. a change of schools.
### 7.0 Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Student Visit</strong></th>
<th><strong>Student Exchange</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>29 days to one year for government schools and 3 months for non-government schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 28 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visa</strong></td>
<td>Student visa ASES form needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor’s visa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>Students applying for a student visa are required to take out health cover (OSHC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally visitors are not required to undergo a health examination</td>
<td>Outgoing students must have arranged adequate insurance cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reciprocity</strong></td>
<td>Inherent to program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Status</strong></td>
<td>Enrolled student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor in school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program</strong></td>
<td>Full time student studying formal subjects at age appropriate levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join classes but not follow any formal study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All enquiries regarding matters pertaining to overseas exchange students in Victorian schools should be addressed to:

Sarita Yen  
Executive Officer  
Committee to Register Exchange Organisations  
International Division  
Department of Education & Training  
Level 6, 35 Spring Street  
Melbourne 3001

Tel: (03) 9651 3948  
Fax: (03) 9651 3982
COMMITTEE TO REGISTER EXCHANGE ORGANISATIONS

Terms of Reference and Composition

The Committee to Register Exchange Organisations comprises of a:

- nominee of the Department of Education and Training;
- nominee of the Registered Schools Board;
- representative of the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria;
- representative of Victorian Association of Secondary School Principals; and
- representative of the Catholic Education Office.

The Committee’s primary purpose is to:

- make recommendations to the delegate of the Minister for Education and Training on the registration of organisations/schools to operate exchange programs;
- maintain a register of approved organisations/schools to operate exchange programs;
- coordinate triennial reviews of approved exchange organisations and schools;
- develop guidelines for the registration of exchange organisations and schools;
- develop monitoring and accountability procedures for the registration of exchange organisations and schools;
- inform organisations and schools on all policy and procedures concerning secondary student exchange programs; and
- monitor reciprocity.

In carrying out its functions the Committee will:

- meet at least on a quarterly basis to consider applications and make its recommendations to the delegate of the Minister for Education and Training;
- meet as required with representatives of exchange organisations.