

**The VET Student Loans program has strict citizenship, visa and residency requirements. It is not available for all Australian residents. To be eligible, students must be either:**

- Australian citizens
- permanent humanitarian visa holders who are usually resident in Australia, or
- New Zealand citizens who hold a special category visa and meet certain qualifying requirements.

Other permanent residents/permanent visa holders are NOT eligible for a VET Student Loan.

## **Australian citizenship**

The department will accept a current Australian Passport as suitable evidence of Australian citizenship.

If the applicant does not have a current Australian Passport, the evidence required to demonstrate that an applicant is an Australian citizen may differ depending on whether the applicant was:

- born in Australia before 20 August 1986
- born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986
- born overseas.

This is because different rules applied at different times.

## **Applicants born in Australia before 20 August 1986**

Applicants without a current Australian Passport born in Australia before 20 August 1986 must provide their full birth certificate issued by an Australian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (RBDM).

An exception to this is where the applicant's parents were in Australia as diplomats or consular officers at the time of the applicant's birth. In these circumstances, the applicant will need to provide a citizenship certificate as evidence that they are an Australian citizen.

If the applicant does not have a citizenship certificate they will need to lodge **Form 119 Application for evidence of Australian citizenship\*** with certified copies of the required documents and the application fee with Home Affairs.

## **Applicant was born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 and one of their parents was an Australian citizen at the time of their birth**

Applicants in this category who do not have a current Australian Passport must provide their full birth certificate issued by an Australian RBDM.

If the student's full birth certificate shows that at least one of their parents was born in Australia, and that parent was born before 20 August 1986, this is sufficient evidence to prove the student's Australian citizenship.

If their parent was born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986, the parent's full birth certificate issued by an Australian RBDM is still required.

If the applicant cannot provide this they should apply for their own evidence of Australian citizenship by lodging **Form 119 Application for evidence of Australian citizenship\*** with certified copies of the required documents and the application fee with Home Affairs.

## **Applicants born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 and one of their parents was a permanent resident of Australia at the time of their birth**

Applicants in these circumstances without a current Australian Passport must provide their Australian citizenship certificate.

They can apply for evidence of Australian citizenship by lodging **Form 119 Application for evidence of Australian citizenship\*** with certified copies of the required documents and the application fee with Home Affairs.

The following documents **are not** acceptable as proof of a parent's permanent residency for VET

- Student Loan applications:
- parent's foreign passport with a visa label
- Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) printout
- visa grant notification letter
- Certificate of Evidence of Resident Status (CERS)
- Certificate of Status for New Zealand Citizens in Australia (CSNZCA)
- ImmiCard
- Freedom of Information (FOI) letter from the Department of Home Affairs.

These documents only provide proof of a person's visa status on the day they are issued / printed and are not sufficient proof of a parent's resident status at the time the applicant was born.

## **Applicants born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 and neither parent was an Australian citizen or an Australian permanent resident and they spent the first 10 years of their life in Australia**

Applicants in these circumstances without a current Australian Passport must provide their Australian citizenship certificate.

They can apply for evidence of Australian citizenship by lodging **Form 119 Application for evidence of Australian citizenship\*** with certified copies of the required documents and the application fee with Home Affairs.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants not registered at birth by the relevant State/Territory authority**

Applicants in these circumstances without a current Australian Passport may submit a Statutory Declaration as provided on the department's Information for VET Student Loans Approved Providers page under 'Forms'.

Note: the Statutory Declaration has been pre-populated, and must only be used by applicants to whom these circumstances apply. The Statutory Declaration must be witnessed by a person included in the List of Occupations or the List of Persons provided in the template on the department's website mentioned above.

Statutory declarations are not acceptable forms of proof of Australian citizenship for any applicants other than Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders whose birth was not registered by the relevant State/Territory authority.

\* Form 119 can be downloaded from <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/form-listing/forms/119.pdf>

## Applicants born overseas and acquired Australian citizenship by application

### As a guide, please refer to the relevant category below:

Applicants will need to provide one of the following documents as evidence of their Australian citizenship:

- a current Australian Passport
- an Australian citizenship certificate
- a Citizenship by Descent extract

If an applicant does not have one of the above citizenship documents they will need to apply for evidence of Australian citizenship by lodging **Form 119 Application for evidence of Australian citizenship\*** with certified copies of the required documents and the application fee with the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs).

## Applicant or their parent was born in Papua New Guinea prior to 16 Sep 1975

Papua New Guinea became a sovereign nation on 16 Sep 1975 (PNG Independence Day). Assessing Australian citizenship status of people born in PNG prior to 16 Sep 1975 can be complex. Home Affairs is aware that in the past this cohort of people has been incorrectly issued with an Australian Passport based on an incorrect assessment of their citizenship status. As such, the citizenship status of some applicants born in PNG prior to 16 Sep 1975 must be checked and verified with Home Affairs.

The applicant should be referred to Home Affairs to obtain evidence of Australian citizenship by lodging **Form 119 Application for evidence of Australian citizenship\*** if:

- evidence of citizenship was issued before 1 Jan 2009 and the applicant was born in PNG prior to 16 Sep 1975; or
- citizenship was acquired by descent before 1 Jan 2009 where the parent(s) was born in PNG before 16 Sep 1975.

A citizenship certificate can be accepted as evidence that the applicant is an Australian citizen if the evidence of citizenship was issued on or after 1 Jan 2009 regardless of the acquisition date or date of birth.

Applicants need to take the Department of Home Affairs' citizenship application processing times into account before applying for a VET Student Loan. Processing times are published on the Department of Home Affairs website. See [immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/citizenshipprocessing-times](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/citizenshipprocessing-times).

## Becoming an Australian citizen

If a student acquires Australian citizenship part way through their course, they may be eligible for a VET Student Loan for parts of a course not yet completed, for which the census dates have not passed.

This includes for parts of a course in which the student is currently enrolled. The student must submit an eCAF after acquiring Australian citizenship and prior to the next census day for their course.

Most applicants for Australian citizenship by conferral acquire citizenship only after making the Australian Citizenship Pledge and being issued with Evidence of Australian citizenship from the **Department of Home Affairs**. For further information regarding Australian citizenship, visit the Department of Home Affairs website at [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au). Please refer to '**Determining citizenship and visa status**' above.

## Permanent humanitarian visa holders

To confirm if the visa class held by a person applying for a VET Student Loan is a permanent humanitarian visa, contact the Department of Home Affairs website at:

[www.homeaffairs.gov.au/vevo](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/vevo). Home Affairs' Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) allows visa holders, education providers and other organisations to check visa details and conditions, including information of the visa type and expiry date.

Permanent humanitarian visas are defined in the Migration Regulations 1994, Volume 1, Part 1, Division 1.2 – Interpretation, Regulation 1.03 – Definitions. See: [www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F1996B03551](http://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F1996B03551) for the current version of the Migration Regulations, ensuring you access the latest and current version.

In determining whether a permanent humanitarian visa holder will be resident in Australia for the duration of their course, the provider must disregard any periods spent outside of Australia if the holder:

- cannot be reasonably regarded as indicating an intention to reside outside of Australia for the duration of the course or
- is required to leave Australia to complete the requirements of that course.

## Qualifying New Zealand citizens

A New Zealand citizen is eligible if they hold a Special Category Visa and:

- has usually been resident in Australia for at least 10 years; and
- was a dependent child aged under 18 years of age when he or she first was usually resident in Australia and
- has been in Australia for periods totalling eight years during the previous 10 years and
- has been in Australian for periods totalling 18 months during the previous two years <sup>[Acts 11]</sup>.

Most New Zealand citizens who arrive in Australia are the holders of a temporary visa called a Special Category Visa (SCV). This is not a permanent visa but allows its holder to visit, live and work in Australia indefinitely.