Frequently asked questions for our International Student Programs during COVID-19

Updated 9 December 2020

1. **Can I participate in a non-routine travel activity on weekends during the current restrictions?**

Always refer to the latest advice from the [Queensland Government](#) before planning any activities outside of Queensland. The Queensland Government has implemented enhanced border control measures, including border passes and identification screening to help protect Queensland. EQI does not encourage international students to travel to a COVID-19 hotspot.

This means that you may seek approval to undertake safe travel and activities within these constraints. If you wish to travel and engage in non-routine activities during the summer holidays, you should submit a [Travel and](#) [Activities form](#) to your school for consideration before schools close on 9 December 2020.

The following travel scenarios are now available to you:
- Day trips (e.g. from Brisbane Gold Coast, Sunshine Coasts and some parts of Northern NSW)
- Overnight stays with approved homestay providers (as long as approval is obtained from both homestay families)
- Travel with your homestay provider within Queensland and some parts of Australia (including overnight stays)

Your school will assess and manage your travel request as per the [Non-routine travel and activities for homestay student's procedure](#).

Remember, any non-routine travel activity will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You must continue to follow the Australian government advice and regulations that have been put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. EQI will not approve any activity that does not meet current Australian federal and [state government](#) guidelines. Lastly, your safety is our number one priority and we work with your schools to ensure you enjoy a safe and high-quality study experience. For student support, including afterhours, call [1800 QSTUDY](#) (1800 778 839).

2. **I am a non-resident of Australia. If travel restrictions are lifted when can I start my 2021 enrolment?**

The Australian Government has imposed restrictions to all foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents of Australia). As of 20 March 2020 9:00pm AEDT foreign nationals are no longer able to enter Australia. This restriction will stay in place until further notice from the Australian government.

When travel restrictions have lifted, EQI may review requests on a case-by-case basis depending on which program you are studying. In most cases, EQI would suggest postponing enrolment to the next term. If you are considering entering Australia, you must also factor in any mandatory quarantine period, which may add further delays to your study program.

3. **I would like to immediately return to my home country and book a flight that leaves as soon as possible. What does EQI need me to do?**

You need to complete the Travel and activities request form and return it to your school coordinator. At a minimum, we will accept an email from a parent or agent advising us that you are withdrawing from the program – this should be sent via email with a copy of your itinerary to your school coordinator, EQI and homestay provider. For afterhours support with Travel and activities requests call 1800QSTUDY (+61 1800 778 839).

4. **My course is finished but I cannot return home due to travel restrictions/ limited international flights?**

In the event that your flight is delayed or cancelled you should notify your school coordinator and agent. If you require advice after-hours, weekends or during the school holidays you can call 1800 QSTUDY (+61 1800 778 839). This is our free phone support service for international students studying in a Queensland state school, homestay providers, parents and agents.
Unfortunately flight cancellation is a common occurrence at this time so stay prepared for this and the possibility that you could be contacted to depart sooner than scheduled.

You may need to contact the Department of Home Affairs regarding your visa expiry date. Your school will organise an extension to welfare arrangements either with your current homestay provider or an emergency homestay provider until a flight is confirmed.

EQI will provide funding for up to an additional two weeks homestay if you are in this situation.

5. **Can I defer my studies in Queensland due to COVID-19?**

Yes. If you are offshore, you can defer your studies with EQI due to COVID-19, as this is both a compassionate and compelling circumstance. For information regarding deferring your enrolment prior to arrival (course commencement) please see Enrolment - Subclass 500 (schools) visa procedure under the Enrolment tab. If you want to defer your studies you must submit the Request to defer commencement form

6. **I am a continuing student. Can I suspend my enrolment and return home immediately?**

Note, under current [*Australian Government COVID-19 travel restrictions*](#)*, offshore international students cannot enter the country. Please carefully consider current travel restrictions when making the decision to suspend enrolment.*

Yes. You can suspend your studies and return to your home country for reasons related to COVID-19. This is considered both a compassionate and compelling circumstance and will not affect attendance requirements.

The duration approved will depend on your age and the course you are studying as defined in the [Entry and course requirement standards](#).

7. **How long am I able to defer my studies due to COVID-19?**

EQI will accept a deferral for up to one year (i.e. 4 terms) with evidence of schooling and academic reports supplied to EQI to ensure continuity of education.   Also deferrals for up to a year will be assessed on a case by case basis in line with DHA age requirements and school levels already completed. ([Entry and course requirements standards](#).)

It will be the responsibility of you or your agent to ensure your student visa is valid for the extended period.

8. **Will I be entitled to a refund if I suspend, withdraw or defer my enrolment because of COVID-19?** Yes, we consider the COVID-19 situation both a compassionate and compelling circumstance and a refund will be considered based on the following information:

   1. Any student withdrawals due to COVID-19 two weeks or longer before commencing the program, will not incur any additional fees and a full refund will apply.
   2. Any student withdrawals due to COVID-19 less than two weeks before commencing the program, a full refund less the homestay placement fees will apply. *
   3. Any student withdrawals due to COVID-19 after commencing the program, a full refund of unused tuition and non-tuition fees will apply from the date of flight departure. **

No administration fee will apply for deferrals. For students opting to defer, favourable refund terms are still available after deferral if COVID-19 circumstances still exist at a future date.

   4. * The homestay placement fee will not be refunded as a homestay placement has already taken place for the student
      ** The homestay placement fee and two week homestay fee will not be refunded.

In case of deferral, EQI may re-allocate prepaid fees to future enrolments if your parents choose to defer your commencement rather than withdraw.

If you make the decision to withdraw or suspend your enrolment there is a refund available. Our Refund Policy is outlined in the Standard terms and conditions.

The amount of the refund depends on the circumstances set out in the refund policy. If you are entitled to a refund, you must submit a Refund request form (PDF, 405KB).

Please note that you will need to claim any refund of Overseas Student Health Cover fees from the insurer.

9. **What will my Overseas Health Cover (OSHC) provider cover me for if I contract COVID-19?**

If you suspect you have or you are diagnosed with COVID-19, you should contact your OSHC provider immediately to find out what you are covered for. This will depend on the provider's policies and your level of cover. If your OSHC policy is with Allianz Global Assistance, you will find important information for customers about COVID-19 here.