



Working in Australia on a student visa



Can I work in Australia?

Yes, most student visas allow you to work while studying. Key considerations include:

- Work hour limits during study: Most student visa holders can work up to 48 hours per fortnight when classes are in session. During scheduled course breaks (vacations), you can work full-time (no hour limit).
- A fortnight is defined as a fourteen-day period starting on a Monday.
- Higher Degree by Research (HDR) student visa holders have unlimited work hours once you start your course.

Visit the [Department of Home Affairs](#) for a full list of mandatory and discretionary student visa conditions or call 13 18 81.

Cash

Cash payments for work are okay if the employer deducts tax, pays superannuation on your behalf and provides pay slips showing tax and super payments.

ABNs and Contractor Work

An Australian Business Number (ABN) is a unique number used by businesses for tax and government dealings. It is free to obtain an ABN.

Be cautious if an employer asks you to get an ABN and work as an independent contractor. Unless you are truly running your own business, you do not need an ABN to work regular jobs.

If you are an employee, your employer

must withhold tax and pay super for you. An employer cannot make having an ABN a condition of employment – doing so may be a sign of an illegal “sham” contract. If in doubt, review the [Australian Taxation Office’s](#) guidance on being an employee or independent contractor and seek advice.

Working after graduation

You may be eligible for a Graduate visa that allows you to stay and work in Australia after finishing your degree. Check the [Department of Home Affairs](#) website for the latest information on post-study work options.

Do I need to pay tax?

Yes. All workers in Australia must pay income tax to the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

How to pay tax

Apply for a Tax File Number (TFN)

A Tax File Number (TFN) is your personal reference number in the Australian tax and superannuation systems. If you don’t have a Tax File Number, your employer is required to withhold tax at the highest rate, so getting a TFN ensures you take home more of your income and meet your tax obligations correctly.

Apply for free on the [ATO website](#) or call 13 28 61.

Protect your identity by keeping your TFN secure. Only disclose it to people and organisations that require it for legitimate reasons such as the ATO, your employer, bank and superannuation fund.

Lodge a tax return

International students who live in Australia for more than six months are generally considered Australian residents for tax purposes which means you must lodge a tax return each year. A tax return is a summary of your income earned and tax paid. You can lodge a tax return yourself or pay an accountant to do this for you.

- Tax returns are due after 30 June (end of Australian financial year).
- You may receive a tax refund depending on your circumstances.
- Leaving Australia permanently? You can claim your tax back early, before 30 June.

For more information, [visit the ATO](#).

Superannuation

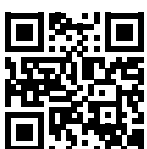
What is Superannuation?

Superannuation – often called ‘super’ – is Australia’s compulsory retirement savings system. Your employer must contribute a percentage of your wage into a superannuation account for you.

What you need to do

- [Choose a superannuation fund](#) and tell your employer which fund to use.
- Once you provide your super fund details, your employer will automatically deposit the required contributions into your account.

If you depart Australia permanently, claim your super back via the [Departing Australia Superannuation Payment](#) program.



Know your work rights

Talk to the International Student Support team at SCU if you are unsure about your rights or working conditions in Australia. For more information:

- [SCU Student Legal Service](#) for free support and advice
- [Pay and Wage conditions](#), The Fair Work Ombudsman
- [International students working in Australia Fact Sheet](#) - Fair Work Ombudsman
- [Access Fair Work Language](#) help
- Qld students - [Queensland Migrant WorkWise](#)

Beware Job Scams

Be careful when looking for work – scammers sometimes offer jobs that are “too good to be true”. Their goal is to steal your money or personal information.

Never pay upfront for a job offer and be wary of job ads that promise unusually high pay for easy work. For more information on common scams and warning signs, read the Australian government’s [Little Book of Scams](#) (available on the Scamwatch website with translations in multiple languages).



Job Search Tips

The SCU Careers and Employability team are here to help with all of your job search and career development needs. We recommend that you:

- Start with [Talent Connect](#), the SCU jobs board on CareerSuccess Central (on the SCU website) and set up your job search preferences.
- Bookmark other [recommended job search sites](#).
- Use our sample [job application templates](#) and [Career Fact Sheets](#).
- Book a [Career Coach appointment](#) to review your resume and cover letter or for help finding work.

Volunteering and unpaid work:

Explore volunteering to help build your networks and gain relevant work experience:

- [SCU Vollies](#) - For SCU campus-based volunteering opportunities.
- [Volunteering Australia](#) -National database for volunteering opportunities across Australia.
- [Volunteering Gold Coast](#) - Local volunteer opportunities in the Gold Coast area.
- [SCU Insurance for Unpaid Work Experience Information](#) on how SCU provides insurance coverage for students undertaking course-related volunteer work or placements.

[Book a Career Coach appointment.](#)

Job search checklist

- I have read ‘[Working in Australia](#)’ for International Students on the SCU website.
- I am a current student and I have checked my visa status.
- I have a Tax File Number that I use with every employer.
- I know the number of hours I am permitted to work.
- I know how much I legally should be paid and my workplace rights.
- I have conducted searches on the internet or newspapers for paid and volunteer jobs.
- I am letting people know that I am looking for a job and asking them if they know of any suitable positions. I regularly check with SCU’s online job vacancy site, Talent Connect in CareerSuccess.
- I have considered volunteering to get some local experience and to help me practice my English (if it’s my second language).



Careers and Employability
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Career fact sheets
[View and download our fact sheets](#)