



Your Lodgment Buddy

November 2019

Pretoria Processing Times

- Subclass 600 visitor - 40 Days
- Subclass 600 business - 20 days

Please note that we are in our visitor peak processing season. Christmas travelers should be aware that time is running out for us to process your application in time for you to make bookings.

Biometrics Reminder

This is an important reminder to all applicants about the 14 day period provided for biometrics collection. The biometric requirement applies to each application lodged regardless of when biometrics were last provided.

In a bid to streamline our visa processes, as well as align the post's practices with other visa processing offices, case officers are refusing applications which have passed the 14 day mark. This is a lawful decision as case officers are not required to make a follow up request for biometrics. Clients can avoid this by ensuring that they undertake biometric collection within 14 days of lodgment, or in exceptional circumstances, informing us of appointments outside of the 14 days.

If you are experiencing difficulties in making an appointment with VFS Global we are able to grant an extension. However, clients should be aware that we cannot grant extensions of more than 14 days, if VFS Global have appointments available. We understand that a client may wish to combine medical and biometric appointments when they are required to travel great distances. The Australian High Commission receives regular feedback from VFS Global on the availability of biometric slots. When requesting a biometric extension please also include the reason why the extension is required.

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Department of Home Affairs Website

The Department of Home Affairs website not only provides immigration information, but also covers the other agencies within the portfolio. You can also search on information relating to customs, law enforcement, national security or border control.

When you first enter the Department of Home Affairs website you will need to select the agency that you wish to view before you can begin your searches.

Visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au for more information

Is my visa still valid?

You do not need to contact an Australian Immigration Office to find out if your visa is still valid. There are a number of options available to you.

Your Visa Grant Notification

When you lodge an application via your ImmiAccount or via VFS Global the notification of the visa grant will be sent to you or your authorised recipient via email. You will receive a grant notification letter. This letter is for your information and is the only evidence that you will have that you have been granted a visa. We no longer provide visa labels as the grant information is stored electronically within the departments information systems and is electronically tied to your passport number. For this reason it is important that you do not lose your visa grant notification. You should keep this information safe, preferably with your passport, as a reminder of your visas's validity.

VEVO Enquiries

If you lodged your visa via an ImmiAccount or on paper, you can check your visa entitlements via the Visa Entitlement Verification Online system (VEVO). You can access this through the Home Affairs website and will need certain pieces of information to complete the process.

1. Which document do you want to use to search? The drop down will provide your options and most travellers will choose passport.
2. Reference Type—This is where it is important to have access to previous documentation or your ImmiAccount. The options include transaction reference numbers (TRN), passwords, visa grant numbers or visa evidence numbers. If you can access your ImmiAccount you will be able to find previous applications which will give you a TRN number.
3. Your date of birth.
4. Document number— this is your passport number.
5. Country of document—which citizenship is on your passport

Once you have answered these questions press submit and the system will provide details of any visas still in effect.

But what do you do if you cannot find any details of your previous visa applications? If you cannot access your ImmiAccount to find your TRN or you have lost all notifications provided, you can request assistance through the [VEVO Request for Reference Number Form](#). Click on the VEVO request form which will take you to the link. Complete the online form and then submit. It will take roughly 14 days for the Department to respond with your information.

It will be easier if you can access your ImmiAccount and we encourage you to keep your log in details in a safe place where you can access them to check information about your visa history. There are a number of other important functions that you can access via your ImmiAccount, such as updating passport or other personal details.

If you lodged via an agent, keep a note of which agent you used so that you can go back to them. This is also important if you need to update your passport or other details.

Did you know that you can download the VEVO app from the app stores. If you are a regular traveller you may find this useful. There is also a tutorial in YouTube on how to use the VEVO app.



SPOTLIGHT — Checklists

The Department of Home Affairs provides checklists for each subclass of visa to assist clients when they are gathering their documents prior to lodgement. The documents that we request provide important information about you and your intentions while in Australia. They also provide information about your circumstances in your usual country of residence. Putting all of this information together enables the case officers to make a decision on your application.

Where are these checklists? On the Department of Home Affairs website you should navigate to the information about your selected/most appropriate subclass. Navigate to the 'step by step' tab, which provides guidance on the lodgement process. Under Step 2, Gather your Documents, select the blue box 'show steps'. A number of further headings appear

and each one should be expanded for further information. It is important to read each of the headings. Failure to read and understand what is required of you could lead to a refusal.

For each application you need to provide evidence of your identity. There are various documents that you can provide from passports, birth certificates, marriage certificates and any other official document that provides evidence of any names that you have been known by.

You also need to prove to the Department that you are a genuine visitor and that you will return to your usual country of residence. This is required to satisfy the case officer that you have a reason to return, such as financial commitments, an ongoing job, property ownership and family ties. The case officer requires substantial evidence that builds a picture of your ties to your home country.

There are a number of documents that are legally

required to be submitted. These mostly relate to children who will be travelling. Failure to provide adequate proof that you are the legal guardian of a child may result in the application being refused. A case officer has to be absolutely certain that correct permissions have been submitted proving that a child is travelling with the parents' consent.

All supporting documentation is to be submitted in English. If a translation is provided please ensure that it complies with the instructions on the checklist for prepared documents.

For students, there is a very detailed checklist on the Home Affairs website. This [link](#) will take you to the checklist. You will need to answer four questions. There then follows guidance on every type of document you may need to submit for your

application. This subclass requires a larger number of documents as it may involve family members and relationships that need to be proved.



While each subclass provides a list of the types of documentation required to support your purpose of travel you are encouraged to provide any other additional pieces of information that you feel will support your application. During the lodgement process ImmiAccount will prompt you if you have not uploaded the minimum required documentation.

It is advisable to provide all documentation at the time of lodgement. A case officer is entitled to open an application and make a decision based on the documentation before them. The case officers are not required to contact you to request missing documentation. It is in your best interests to be fully aware of your obligation to provide, as a minimum, the documents listed in the checklists.

Visa Scams

The Immigration Section at the Australian High Commission has noticed an increase in applicants wanting to verify if a visa offer is genuine or not. The old adage that 'if it appears to be too good to be true, it probably is' applies to most of these enquiries. Before you accept any request to pay funds, provide personal information or sign up for a wonderful job, ask yourself a few questions:

- Did you apply for the visa or did they contact you
- Does the documentation look professional
- Have you checked our website for information on the subclasses they are offering
- Does the email they have used indicate an organisation or is it from yahoo or gmail
- Official email addresses for Immigration staff will end with @dfat.gov.au or @homeaffairs.gov.au. Any other variations on these themes are not genuine.

There is a [Scamwatch](#) site to assist and to inform client about current trends. The Australian High Commission in Pretoria has a page relating to [visa scams](#). Here you will find some basic advice and a number of website where you can verify information or agents. Only registered and approved migration agents are listed on the [OMARA](#) website.

You can protect yourself through the following:

- If you wish to use an Australian migration agent, check that they are registered on the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority website (<https://www.mara.gov.au/>) or if they are operating outside Australia, check with the relevant Business Registration office that they are a legitimate business.
- Never give or send anyone your original identity documents. Government departments may wish to view your original documents in person or may ask for certified photocopies but should never ask to keep your original documents.
- Never provide your personal, credit card or banking details in an email or over the phone. Scammers will use your details to commit identity fraud or steal your money.
- If you think you have provided your bank account details to a scammer, contact your bank or financial institution immediately.



Listed below are a number of web links, email addresses and contact numbers to assist locating commonly needed information or for general assistance.

[Department of Home Affairs](#)

Tempentry.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

[Australian High Commission, Pretoria](#)

Students.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

[VFS Global](#)

Immigration.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

[Panel Physicians](#)

[ImmiAccount Technical Assistance](#)

Global Service Centre—+61 2 6196 0196

[Visa finder](#)

[MARA Approved Migration Agents](#)

[My Health Declaration](#)

[Departmental Forms](#)

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