



Your Lodgment Buddy

SEPTEMBER 2019

Pretoria Processing Times

- The current processing time in Pretoria for subclass 600 tourist applications is 30 days.
- This is now outside the 90% global average processing time frame listed on www.homeaffairs.gov.au.
- Subsequent Entrant applications do not have a time frame for processing. Priority is given to student applications.

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Christmas Peak Processing

Lodgement of visa applications for the Christmas period has begun and we would like to provide some useful information to applicants to ensure that our requirements are clear, and we are able to focus on finalising applications in an efficient and timely manner. Please take note of the following points, which we would encourage you to share with clients.

- * **Lodge a complete application.** Processing officers are able to make a decision on an application at first sight. If they open an incomplete application they may refuse the application. The check lists provide details of the documentation we require.
- * **Complete biometrics within the time frames.** We recognise that as the peak season builds up the biometric appointments will also fill up quickly. If you can only make an appointment outside of the permitted time frame let us know. We can make a case note and arrange for a new letter to be sent out. If you don't provide biometrics within 14 days (or otherwise negotiated) we will refuse your application.
- * **Lodge early.** The earlier you lodge the application, the more time we have to process and less stress for you. We will regularly update processing times on Twitter and Facebook. Please check these time frames for realistic expectations on when a decision will be made. The earlier an applicant lodges, the sooner a finalisation can be made, enabling the applicant to then purchase their flight tickets.
- * **No expedited processing.** Only a documented medical emergency will be considered for urgent processing. All other applications will be assessed on a lodgement date basis. Flight specials will not be considered an urgent or compassionate reason to jump the processing queue.
- * **Follow up emails.** In the lead up to Christmas we will not be responding to requests for updates that are inside service standards. We will also not expedite because a client has purchased a ticket.
- * **Requirements for Children.** Please remind applicants of the requirements for travelling children as soon as enquiries are made. Ensure Form 1229 is signed by both parents and attached, along with copies of IDs or passports.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAN I TRAVEL ON A ONE WAY TICKET?

This will depend on how long you will be in Australia. If you are on a 3 month tourist visa you may be questioned by Immigration officials regarding your intentions to leave within the 3 months. A return ticket demonstrates an intention to leave.

It would be reasonable for a student who intends to remain for a full year and not return home during holidays to purchase a one way ticket.

AN ETA ELIGIBLE PASSPORT HOLDER APPLIED FOR A S/C 600—CAN THEY GET A REFUND?

No. An ETA eligible passport holder is eligible to apply for either subclass 600 , 651 or ETA. We consider that either application is valid and could have been progressed. While the subclass 651 application would have been the cheaper option a subclass 600 visa was also appropriate and a valid visa application was made for the purpose of travel.

Our refund legislation does not permit for a refund to be approved under these circumstances. The guidance in the legislation states that a refund is not due if ...*"the applicant applied for the incorrect visa subclass"*.

An example of this circumstance includes when a client lodges a 600 visitor application and then realises they could have applied for a similar visa (ETA or 651 visitor) at a cheaper cost.

ARE VISA GRANT LETTERS REQUIRED FOR TRAVEL?

A visa grant letter is not required to enable an applicant to travel as the grant is electronically stored against a passport number. Check-in staff and immigration officials will check the linked systems to confirm a grant. The purpose of the letter is to remind applicants of the validity of their visa grant. The document is important for the client only, as a reminder that they have a valid visa.

I APPLIED FOR A 12 MONTH VISA AND WAS ASKED TO DO MEDICALS—WHY?

If you select a stay of 12 months on your application you will be asked to provide medicals. This option should not be ticked if you wish make multiple entries to Australia over a 12 month or longer period. This option is for applicants who wish to spend more than 3 months but up to 12 months in one trip and carries a requirement to undertake medicals. If you wish to apply for a visa that allows multiple trips of up to 3 months at a time you may request a longer validity. This may be considered by the case officer but is dependent upon factors such as your travel history and purpose for travel.

MY PASSPORT IS EXPIRING IN 5 MONTHS AND I WISH TO TRAVEL—CAN I CONTINUE WITH MY TRAVEL PLANS?

You may enter Australia as long as you have a valid visa and a valid passport for the duration of your stay. Australia does not require a passport to be valid for a further 6 months or any other time frame. While you are free to travel in and out of Australia while your passport is still valid you should check with your usual country of residence regarding their passport requirements. For example, South Africa requires all incoming travellers to have at least 6 months validity on their passports when they arrive.

I HAVE A VALID VISITOR VISA BUT NOW NEED TO TRAVEL ON BUSINESS—CAN I USE THE VALID VISITOR VISA FOR BUSINESS?

No. If you travel on a visitor visa for business purposes you may be in breach of your visa conditions. A visitor visa is only intended for visiting family/friends or tourist activities. Regardless of the remaining validity, if you need to travel for business you will need to apply for the appropriate business visa. The grant of a subsequent business visa will cease the tourist visa.

SPOTLIGHT – Health Requirements

To protect the Australian community, especially vulnerable people in institutions such as hospitals or health care facilities, visa applicants are required to meet health requirements.

The table below provides more information on who needs to undergo medicals.

Applicants who fail to declare a circumstance that requires a medical examination may be liable for visa cancellation based on providing false declarations. Having a disease or health condition does not always mean you will not meet the health requirement, however this needs to be assessed by an approved panel physician or clinic outside of Australia.

<p>Who needs to undergo medicals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent visa applicants • Visitor applicants who wish to remain in Australia for more than 6 months at a time • Student visa applicants • Visitor applicants who will be entering a medical facility • Applicants who have a medical condition • Applicants over the age of 75 at time of lodgement and grant.
<p>My Health Declaration</p>	<p>You may also jump start the process by logging into My Health Declaration through your ImmiAccount.</p> <p>The link provides advice on how to complete your Health Declaration. This process will provide you with a HAP number and a referral letter for your chosen approved panel doctor.</p>
<p>What is a HAP ID?</p>	<p>The HAP is a health case identifier (HAP ID) for eMedical, our electronic health processing system. This is a reference created in the health system which is linked to your passport and visa application. This number is used by the medical examiners only during the processing of your medicals.</p>
<p>Which Doctor can I make an appointment with?</p>	<p>You must be examined by one of the Department’s approved panel physicians or clinics.</p> <p>A panel physician is a doctor or radiologist appointed by the department to do health examinations outside Australia at an approved clinic.</p> <p>See how to contact a panel physician by finding the immigration office nearest to you.</p>
<p>What types of medical examinations are required?</p>	<p>Depending on the circumstances you may be asked for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medical examination • A chest x-ray • TB screening • An HIV test • Other specific test recommended by a panel doctor or Bupa in Australia
<p>What happens after the medical exam?</p>	<p>The results are forwarded by the panel doctor to Bupa in Australia for MOC assessment.</p> <p>Your case may be cleared without referral to a MOC if your results show you have no significant health conditions.</p> <p>If your case is referred, the MOC will assess it and let us know if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you meet the health requirement, or - you will meet the health requirement if you sign a health undertaking, or - you don't meet the health requirement <p>If you don't meet the health requirement, we will not grant you a visa unless a health waiver is available and exercised.</p>

STUDENT VISA UPDATES

While applicants are encouraged to begin the health assessment process before they lodge an application, you should **not** email a copy of your OPV certificate to the High Commission. This document should be loaded onto your ImmiAccount attachments at the time of lodgement. If we receive an OPV certificate the email will be deleted as the auto response will instruct you to load the certificate onto your application.

In preparation for the January intake we encourage applicants to begin their visa applications now. Within the ImmiAccount you can begin the process but not submit until you are ready, or have received your COE. If the application is completed it can remain in your ImmiAccount until you are ready to submit. In most cases you should already have most of the required documentation, excluding your COE which should arrive in January. If you have already completed the form and loaded the required attachments you need only load the COE and then submit. This may save you some time.

The Immigration website has a [Document Checklist Tool](#) for students to assist you with required documentation. This tool provides you with a comprehensive list of required documentation to help you make a complete application. We encourage you to use this tool.

As part of this preparation process you can also arrange your medicals, in advance, through My Health Declaration. This can be done before you lodge your application. You will find this in your ImmiAccount. The attached [link](#) provides more information on when you can begin your medical examinations and what you are required to do.

Web links & email addresses



Listed below are a number of web links 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](#)