

Working in Australia: Information for International Students

Visa restrictions

Under student visa regulations, international students can work for up to 40 hours per fortnight in part-time or casual employment during term - time. The international student centre can advise you on visa conditions regarding work in Australia.

A part-time job must not interfere with your study course, as study is your number one priority. It is not designed to subsidise your course or living costs. Students should also check the immigration website for information on the work rights of your dependants, ie spouse and children. Awards set down through the Fair Work Commission regulate working conditions in Australia.

Working while studying in Australia offers you a wealth of experiences and opportunities for cultural exchange. Students may also benefit from a volunteer position (no wages) – sign up to VolunteerConnect (www.vconnect.org.au) to receive information about volunteering positions in your areas of interest. Your resume (also known as a Curriculum Vitae or CV) will also be richer from the experiences.

Looking for a casual or part-time job is usually quite time consuming but you can start on campus. Visit the Adelaide University Union's website to get a listing of all casual jobs, www.auu.org.au

Taxation

International students are treated as residents for taxation purposes only. Employers are required to take tax from your regular pay and send this to the Taxation (tax) office, this is known as the PAYG (Pay As You Go) system. After the end of each financial year (30 June) you have to submit an income tax return to work out if the tax office owes you money or if you have to pay more. See the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website for information on Australia's tax rates – www.ato.gov.au

When you are ready to leave Australia make sure you read about lodging an early tax return and also the procedures for accessing any superannuation .

The Adelaide University Union also runs a free tax return service between early August and October which helps students lodge salary-based personal tax-returns.

Tax file numbers

A tax file number (TFN) is a unique number issued to individuals and organisations to help the Tax Office administer tax and other Australian Government systems. It's one of your most important forms of identification in Australia. It's yours for life and keeping it secure is a good defence against identity theft.

While it is not compulsory to quote a TFN without one you may:

- pay more tax than necessary, or
- not be able to get government benefits you are entitled to receive.

A TFN will also help you:

- lodge a tax return
- ask the Tax Office about your tax affairs
- start or change jobs
- limit the amount of tax you pay on interest or dividends earned if you have savings accounts or investments that earn income.

Your TFN is valuable. Don't share it with friends and don't provide it on the internet when applying for work. Keep it secure.

Applying for a TFN

If you are a permanent migrant or temporary visitor to Australia you can apply for a TFN online after you arrive in Australia if you have a:

- visa that allows work rights
- visa that allows permanent migration
- valid overseas student visa, or
- valid visa to stay in Australia indefinitely.

To apply complete the Online individual tax file number (TFN) registration. When applying online, you do not have to physically provide proof of your identity.

If you need more information about TFNs, you can:

- visit the Tax Office website at www.ato.gov.au or
- phone **13 28 61** between 8.00am and 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Superannuation

If you have worked in Australia and are now returning home, you may have superannuation money that you can claim and take with you. You can apply for this money as soon as you have left Australia.

What is Superannuation?

Superannuation is a way of saving for retirement. Your employer may have made legally required superannuation payments into a super fund on your behalf. Because many international students are here on temporary visas and will not retire in Australia, you may be able to take your superannuation once you leave Australia permanently. (You may be able to return to Australia on another visa even if you take your superannuation money.)

Can I take my Superannuation with me?

You may be eligible to claim your superannuation money if:

- a. you were on an eligible temporary resident visa (eg. overseas student visa)
- b. your visa has expired or been cancelled
- c. you have departed Australia (you must be outside Australia to lodge a claim for your money)

Note: Australian permanent residents & New Zealand citizens cannot claim their superannuation in this way because they can retire in Australia.

Where is my Superannuation?

If you don't know where your superannuation money is, contact your employer to find out what super fund they paid money into for you. You can also your superannuation using 'SuperSeeker' the ATO online search tool. To use SuperSeeker you need your tax file number (TFN), name and date of birth.

How to Apply?

You can start to fill out the application before you leave, but you can only submit your application once you have permanently departed Australia and your visa is inactive.

Further information

Full instructions on how to access your superannuation are available from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) Website www.ato.gov.au