

Understanding International Student Services

There are specific requirements for education and training providers who wish to be registered to deliver to international students. Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) legislation ensures training providers meet nationally consistent standards in education delivery, facilities, and services, and provides tuition fee protection for international students.

Components of the ESOS Framework

The ESOS Framework is made up of several legislative and regulatory components:

- **Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act):** The primary legislation covering the provision of education to overseas students.
- **Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 (ESOS Regulations):** Further details on the ESOS Act's implementation and operation.
- **Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997:** Governs the charges associated with becoming a registered ESOS provider.
- **National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code):** Sets out the standards Australian educational providers must meet when providing services to overseas students.
- **National Standards for Foundation Programs:** Specifies the standards for foundational programs provided to international students.
- **ELICOS Standards 2018:** Details the standards for English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS).

CRICOS (Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students)

CRICOS is the Australian Government's official platform that catalogues all ESOS providers that are approved to deliver training to international students. The website lists the offered courses and the approved locations for these courses. For an organisation to provide Nationally Recognised Qualifications (VET Courses) to international students, it must be a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and must also be registered with CRICOS.

ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students)

ELICOS pertains to overseas students who are studying in Australia on student visas. The term 'Intensive' implies a full-time study scheme that consists of a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week of face-to-face English language instruction. An organisation intending to offer ELICOS courses needs to be registered on CRICOS, but it does not necessarily have to be an RTO.

Simplified Student Visa Framework (SSVF)

The SSVF was designed to facilitate the sustained expansion of the international education sector by simplifying the application process for a Student (subclass 500) Visa. The framework reduces bureaucratic hurdles for businesses and offers a more targeted approach to immigration integrity.

PRISMS (Provider Registration and International Student Management System)

PRISMS is a secure database managed by the Department of Education and Training to administer the ESOS Act. The system allows education and training providers to fulfill legislative requirements by issuing genuine confirmations of enrolments (CoE) and reporting changes in course enrolment. PRISMS also aids in monitoring compliance with visa conditions and the ESOS Act.

Tuition Protection Service (TPS)

The TPS is a government initiative designed to help international students whose education providers fail to completely deliver their course of study. The service ensures that students can either finish their studies in another course or with another education provider or receive a refund of their unspent tuition fees.

Commonwealth Ombudsman

The Commonwealth Ombudsman is tasked with investigating complaints from international students about private schools, colleges, institutes, and universities in Australia.

Note: This VET Fact Sheet provides general information and should not be considered as legal advice.