

Updates:

Australia: New rules on in-study and post-study work rights will take effect July 2023

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Short on time? Here are the highlights:

- *Beginning July 2023, international students in Australia will be able to work for a maximum of 48 hours per fortnight*
- *Also in July, extended post-study work rights will be available to international students who graduate with certain degrees linked to labour skills shortages in the Australian economy*
- *The list of eligible degrees has now been released*

The post-pandemic recovery of Australia's international education sector has been boosted by generous policies concerning in-study and post-study work rights for foreign students. These policies are evolving, and today we'll look at the latest rules around work rights in Australia, set to take effect on 1 July 2023.

Caps will be reintroduced on working while studying

First, [the temporary policy removing limits](#) on the number of hours international students can work while studying in Australia will end on 1 July 2023. However, the new limit on hours – 48 hours every two weeks – will be higher than it was previously (40 hours).

The aim here is to strike a balance between ensuring that foreign students can engage fully in their primary purpose (i.e., studying in Australia) and providing students with a way of supporting themselves financially if needed and of gaining work experience in the country.

Both currently enrolled and new international students will be subject to the 48-hours-per-fortnight (24 hours per week) cap beginning in July.

Some international students aren't pleased with the modest increase in allowable working hours. Speaking with [SBS Punjabi](#), Gunveer Singh, an Indian business student in Melbourne who works in a supermarket to help fund his studies, said,

“Currently, most students are clocking unlimited hours to finance their studies and manage the overall living expenses in Australia, which are skyrocketing. The limit of 24 hours a week would break the backs of many students who only come to Australia with the funds for the first semester and rely on onshore jobs to churn out tuition fees for the remainder of their degrees.”

Dahlia, an Indonesian student in Australia concurred, telling [ABC News](#): “At the moment I am working around 40 hours per week, and that is barely enough to cover all my living expenses.”

However, other students are relieved that a return to a cap on working hours will help stem the drive to work as many hours as possible among international students. Indian engineering student Niraj Kumar told [SBS Punjabi](#):

“Most of my friends are currently working extreme hours to save as much money as they can. They are sacrificing their studies over money, and as a result, most are lagging behind in their assignments.”

Speaking with [ABC News](#), dual citizen of Spain and Canada Macarena Alamo Santos added:

“Unless your work is related to your studies, the time that you spend at work is usually time that you can't spend studying or practising your skills. Working more than 40 hours per fortnight allows you to gain a higher income in the short term. However, this might prevent you from

successfully completing your studies, which can impact your visa status as well as your future career.”

The various student perspectives underline how difficult it is for many international students across host destinations to both study enough and pay for tuition, rent, and food. Not only do international students face higher fees than domestic students, but they also struggle with the higher consumer prices and rent facing all students in their host country. Some also face pressures due to the exchange rates associated with their currency.

In Canada, for example, the manager of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Canada told the [Toronto Star](#) last year that most of the nearly 2,000 students relying on the charity to eat enough were international students, and that a common reason cited by those students was the 20-hours-a-week cap on work rights during study.

Certain degrees will lead to an extra two years of post-study work rights

The Australian government had announced last fall that some international students graduating with specific degrees would be [eligible for extended post-study work rights beginning 1 July 2023](#). They have now announced which degrees – tied to areas of skills shortages in the Australian economy – will provide:

- Bachelor’s graduates with 4 years of post-study work rights
- Master’s graduates with 5 years of post-study work rights

[The list of eligible degrees for the 4-5-year work rights is long](#), which will come as a relief to students who might have been worried it would be limited to a handful of fields. The priority areas include health, teaching, engineering, and agricultural fields.

If a student is graduating with a degree that is not on that list, their post-study work time is 2 years for a bachelor’s degree and 3 years for a master’s degree.

All doctoral graduates – regardless of their study area – will be granted 6 years, up from the previous 4-year limit.

Commenting on the new post-study work rights for select degrees, Education Minister Jason Clare said:

“Businesses are screaming out for skilled workers, particularly in the regions. We have got the second highest skills shortage in the developed world, according to the OECD. Skills shortages are everywhere. We teach and train these skilled workers. This will mean they can stay on longer and use the skills they’ve gained in Australia to help fill some of the chronic skills shortages we have right now. As well as delivering the skills and qualifications Australia needs, the measure will make Australia more attractive as a study destination, helping the recovery of the international education sector and boosting earnings from Australia’s education exports.”

Home Affairs Minister Clare O’Neil added:

“Enabling students that gain an education in Australia to stay longer and contribute to our economy benefits us all. After a lost decade on immigration and skills we are looking for ways to utilise skilled migrants via enhanced training and better targeted, less exploitative programmes for temporary visa workers and students. This work is being undertaken as we work towards the conclusion of the migration review and continue to reform our broken migration and skills system.”

Indian education association welcomes the news

Ravi Lochan Singh, the president of the Association of Australian Education Representatives in India (AAERI), told SBS Punjabi:

“With this decision, Australia now offers the best post-study work offerings amongst Canada, the US, the UK or New Zealand. Postgraduate students in major cities can avail of up to five years of post-study work.”

Mr Singh also noted, “The list of qualifications that have been announced is fairly vast and includes almost all the popular programmes that interest students from the South Asian markets.”

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Eligibility details

The government [states](#):

“Eligible graduates with a valid Temporary Graduate Visa on 1 July 2023 or who apply for a Temporary Graduate Visa after 1 July 2023, will be considered for the two-year extension.

Graduates whose visa expires before 1 July 2023 can apply for an extension of their work rights by visiting Temporary Activity visa (subclass 408) Australian Government endorsed events (COVID-19 Pandemic event).”