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Association of South Africa



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Department:
Home Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Disclaimer

This *Immigration Compliance and Procedures Manual for South African Higher Education Institutions* has been prepared as a practical guidance resource to support higher education institutions in understanding and implementing South Africa's immigration framework as it relates to international students, academics, researchers and staff.

This manual is intended for information and guidance purposes only. It does not constitute, and should not be construed as, legal advice. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication at the time of publication, immigration legislation, regulations, policies, directives and administrative practices are subject to change. Users are encouraged to remain alert to new directives, concessions, circulars, and policy amendments that may affect immigration processes and requirements and to verify current requirements with the relevant authorities where appropriate before making decisions or taking action.

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This manual is intended to be a living document and will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect changes in legislation, policy and practice. Users are encouraged to make notes, provide feedback and contribute to future editions through the IEASA Immigration Working Group, thereby supporting the continued development of this resource for the South African higher education sector.

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Acknowledgements

The *Immigration Compliance and Procedures Manual for South African Higher Education Institutions* has been developed with the financial support of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA).

IEASA gratefully acknowledges the voluntary contributions of Orla Quinlan (Rhodes University), Gita Patel (University of the Witwatersrand) and Lebethe Malefo (University of Fort Hare), whose collective expertise, experience

and commitment made the development of this manual possible. Their willingness to contribute their knowledge and practical experience has resulted in a resource designed to strengthen immigration compliance and support the internationalisation of South African higher education.

IEASA also recognises the valuable role of Mr Phindiwe Mbhele, Director Corporate Accounts, Department of Home Affairs, in his collaboration on this project.

International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) Foreward

Internationalisation has become an integral part of South African higher education. It is no longer viewed as a complementary activity, but as a strategic imperative that shapes how our institutions teach, learn, conduct research, and engage with the world. The presence of international students, postdoctoral researchers, academics, researchers, and professional staff enriches our universities in profound ways. It broadens perspectives in our classrooms, strengthens research and innovation, expands opportunities for collaboration, and creates vibrant learning environments where intercultural understanding can flourish. Most importantly, it equips graduates with the knowledge, skills, and global outlook needed to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world.

As institutions continue to deepen their internationalisation agendas, they also assume an important responsibility. International students, postdoctoral researchers, academics, and professional staff must be able to navigate South Africa's immigration system with confidence, clarity, and dignity. At the same time, universities are required to fulfil their obligations as responsible institutions by complying with the legislative and regulatory requirements administered by the Department of Home Affairs. Achieving this balance is not always straightforward. Immigration legislation, regulations, and administrative processes are complex and continue to evolve, making it essential for institutions to establish clear procedures, informed practice, and a shared understanding of their responsibilities.

It is within this context that the *Immigration Compliance and Procedures Manual for South African Higher Education Institutions* has been developed. Drawing on extensive sector expertise, institutional experience, and established good practice, this manual serves as a practical resource for university practitioners working across international offices, admissions, human resources, academic faculties, research offices, and other institutional units responsible for supporting international students,

postdoctoral researchers, academics, researchers, and professional staff. While it does not replace legislation or professional legal advice, it provides practical guidance to strengthen institutional compliance, promote consistency in practice, and enhance institutional support for immigration related processes across the higher education sector.

In addition to supporting individual immigration processes, the manual highlights the important statutory responsibilities that institutions carry under South African immigration legislation. Universities are required to meet a range of compliance obligations, including visa verification, record keeping, reporting requirements, and monitoring responsibilities relating to the registration, progression, completion, and immigration status of international students. These responsibilities are fundamental to safeguarding both the interests of the international academic community and the integrity, accountability, and reputation of South African higher education.

The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) is proud to support this initiative as part of its ongoing commitment to advancing internationalisation across the higher education sector. This publication reflects one of the defining strengths of our community: our willingness to collaborate, share expertise, and develop practical solutions that strengthen institutional practice and benefit the sector as a whole. At a time when international education is becoming increasingly complex, resources such as this manual play an important role in supporting institutions to navigate change with confidence while maintaining the highest standards of governance and compliance.

On behalf of IEASA, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed their time, expertise, and experience to the development of this publication. In particular, I wish to acknowledge Orla Quinlan, Gita Patel, and Lebethe Malefo for their exceptional leadership and dedication in developing a

resource that is both practical and accessible. My sincere thanks also go to Tohiera Bagus, IEASA Operations Manager, whose coordination and commitment were instrumental throughout the development process. I further extend my appreciation to Mr Gideon Oelofse for his professional design expertise, which transformed the content into a clear, engaging, and user-friendly publication, as well as to the many colleagues across the higher education sector whose thoughtful review, consultation, and constructive feedback have strengthened the final product.

Immigration legislation, policy, and administrative processes continue to evolve, often requiring institutions to respond quickly to new developments. This manual has therefore been conceived as a living resource that will continue to develop alongside the changing needs of the sector. I encourage colleagues across South African higher education institutions to engage with it actively, share their experiences, identify emerging challenges, and contribute to future editions. Through this collective effort, we can ensure that the manual remains current, relevant, and responsive to the realities facing our institutions and the international communities they support.

Ultimately, successful internationalisation depends not only on strong partnerships and global engagement, but also on sound governance, responsible institutional practice, and effective regulatory compliance. By working together, we can continue to build a higher education sector that is welcoming, globally connected, professionally managed, and fully compliant with the legislative framework that underpins international mobility. In doing so, we strengthen the experience of international students, postdoctoral researchers, academics, researchers, and professional staff, while reinforcing the integrity, reputation, and global standing of South African higher education.



Dr Normah Zondo

President: International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA)



Department of Home Affairs Foreward

International student mobility remains an important pillar of higher education internationalisation and regional cooperation. As South African universities continue to welcome students, researchers, academics, and exchange participants from across the continent and the world, it is essential that institutions are equipped with clear, consistent, and practical guidance on immigration compliance.

This *Immigration Compliance and Procedures Manual for South African Higher Education Institutions* has been developed to support university management, international offices, and immigration practitioners in understanding and applying the relevant immigration requirements that govern the admission, registration, and continued compliance of international students. It brings together key legislative and procedural considerations, including the Immigration Act and Regulations, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training, study visa requirements, medical aid obligations, reporting responsibilities to the Department of Home Affairs, and applicable concessions.

The manual is intended not only as a reference document, but also as a practical tool to promote standardised processes, institutional accountability, and improved collaboration between universities, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), VFS Global, medical aid providers, and other stakeholders involved in the international student life cycle.

I wish to acknowledge the collective effort of all contributors who shared their knowledge, operational experience, and commitment to strengthening immigration administration within the South African higher education sector. Their contribution has resulted in a manual that is both compliance-focused and service-oriented, recognising the importance of supporting international students while upholding South Africa's legislative and regulatory framework.



It is my hope that this manual will assist institutions to enhance good governance, minimise compliance risks, and provide international students with accurate and timely immigration guidance throughout their academic journey in South Africa.

Mr Phindiwe Mbhele

Director: Corporate Accounts Unit (Permits)
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Credits

Published by:	International Education Association of South Africa, in association with the Department of Home Affairs
Publisher:	IEASA
Editors:	Gita Patel, Orla Quinlan, and Lebethe Malefo
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Introduction

International mobility forms an important part of Higher Education Internationalisation. This applies to diverse types of mobile students and Postdoctoral Researchers and, as such, these require different procedures and management principles.

The purpose of the manual is to guide the Management and Practitioners responsible for International Students and Postdoctoral Researchers at South African Universities on immigration matters. This guide should assist with the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures with reference to compliance with the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002.

It is important that institutions define the diverse types of international students and Postdoctoral Researchers and then apply the legal requirements to each of these. While it is important to make sure that compliance with Immigration Regulations is embedded in the institutional administrative processes, it is as important that institutions also apply the necessary rules and regulations as far as the academic admission of international students and Postdoctoral Researchers are concerned.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

- [Immigration Act, 2002 \(Act No. 13 of 2002\), as amended](#)
- [Immigration Regulations, 2014, as amended](#)
- [Refugees Act, 1998 \(Act No. 130 of 1998\)](#)
- [Department of Higher Education and Training \(DHET\) – Legislation, Policies and Regulations \(includes relevant DHET regulations and policy documents\)](#)
- [SADC Protocol on Education and Training \(1997\)](#)
- [Department of Home Affairs \(DHA\) – Circulars, Directives, and Notices](#)
- [Policy Framework for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa \(DHET\)](#)

The SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997)

- The SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) makes a specific provision for facilitating the mobility of students and academics in the region for the purpose of study, research, teaching, and any other pursuits relating to education and training.

The key stipulations in this regard are:

- that higher education institutions should reserve at least 5% of admissions for students coming from SADC nations other than their own.

- that higher education institutions should treat students from SADC countries as home students for purposes of tuition fees and accommodation.

The SADC Protocol was ratified by the South African Government in 2000. It was thus an early position on the internationalisation of higher education by the South African government.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

- Responsibilities of University Immigration Practitioners:
 - Ensure that the University is compliant with the Immigration Rules and Regulations of South Africa.
 - Report on international students to the Department of Home Affairs in terms of Regulation 12(1)(b) of Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002.
 - Aid and guide the international students with the relevant immigration information.
 - Provide the proper documentation for the visa application.
 - Build and support relationships with the stakeholders that have an impact on the immigration status of the international student.
 - Interaction with:
 - Academic Departments
 - Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)
- Department of Home Affairs (DHA)
- Foreign Embassies
- Foreign Entities and Consortiums
- International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA)
- International Offices at South African Universities
- International Students
- Partner Universities
- South African Embassies/High Commissions and Missions
- South African Medical Aid Service Providers
- Support Departments on Campus
- Universities South Africa (USAF)
- Visa Facilitation Service Offices (VFS)

SECTION 1

1. Categories of International Students

International students can be categorised into several types based on their purpose of study, duration of stay, funding sources and academic level.

1.1. Degree-Seeking Students

Students who enrol to complete a full academic degree (e.g. diplomas, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree). The duration of the study is over multiple years.

1.2. Exchange Students

Students that study abroad as part of a reciprocal agreement between institutions. Students do not have to pay for tuition as per signed agreement. The duration of the study is typically for one semester or one academic year.

1.3. Study Abroad Students (Free Movers)

Students from another university that take courses for credit. Students are liable to pay tuition and related costs.

1.4. Non-Degree/Certificate Students

Students taking specific courses or professional certification programmes without seeking a full academic degree. The duration varies from a couple of months to a year.

1.5. Sponsored or Government Supported Students

Students are funded by their home country's government or an international organisation. The attendance is for full degrees.

1.6. Self-Funded Students

Students who pay for their education and living expenses.

1.7. Refugee Students

A Refugee is a foreign national who has refugee status given by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and has a South African identity book which is stamped as refugee status and is normally valid for two years until permanent status is granted. If permanent status is not granted, the status reverts to 'Asylum Seeker'.

The Refugee Act, Act No. 130 of 1998 (Section 27) provides Refugee students with the right to study without a Study Visa. No medical aid cover is legally required; however, it is recommended.

1.8. Asylum Seeker Students

An Asylum Seeker is a person in possession of a valid Section 22 Permit, commonly known as an Asylum Seeker Permit. This permit temporarily legalises the stay of the individual in the country while the application for Refugee status is being processed. No medical aid cover is legally required; however, it is recommended.

1.9. Diplomats

The Diplomat, accompanying dependents (spouse and children of diplomatic staff under the age of 23) are exempt from a Study Visa.

These concessions are only for the period the Diplomat is in office in the Republic of South Africa. These benefits are not transferable. Once the diplomat's service ends in South Africa, the student automatically reverts to regular international student status, as per their citizenship, for which all relevant international fees will be applicable.

1.10. Out of Seat/Not in Attendance (Postgraduate Students)

PhD and Master's by Research students who are registered at a South African University but are based outside the country.

1.11. Block Release Attendance (Postgraduate Students)

Students who attend classes for a period of approximately 15 days per block.

1.12. Short Stay Students

Short learning programmes, Faculty-led programmes and island programmes, offered in country for a minimum period of one week to a maximum of three months.

1.13. On-Line Attendance (Postgraduate Students)

Students who attend online classes for programmes are identified and approved for online teaching.

STUDY VISAS are specific to one institution. Moving from High School to university or from one university to another requires a formal change of conditions.

Notes

[illegible]

SECTION 2

2. Types Of Visas and Permits

2.1. Study Visa

- i. Allows foreign nationals to reside in South Africa while pursuing full-time education at a registered institution.
- ii. Short-term internships/work practicals that are integral to the degree qualification are covered by the study visa.
- iii. Internships post the degree require a work visa.

Study visa holders may conduct work for a period not exceeding 20 hours per week.

Immigration Amendment Act 2011, Act No. 13 of 2011.

2.2. Work Visa

2.2.1. General Work Visa:

For foreign nationals who have a job offer and the employer can prove that a South African citizen cannot fill the position.

2.2.2. Critical Skills Work Visa:

For individuals with qualifications/skills listed on South Africa's Critical Skills List, who already have a job offer.

2.2.3. Intra-Company Transfer Visa:

For employees of multinational companies transferred to a South African branch.

2.2.4. Business Visa:

For foreigners who wish to start or invest in a business in South Africa. Requirements include a minimum investment amount and a business plan.

With a work visa, part-time studies **ONLY** are permitted.
No further endorsement is needed to study.
Transfer to full-time study requires a change of conditions to a study visa

2.3. Diplomatic Visa

Issued to foreign government officials, diplomats, and representatives of international organisations who are visiting South Africa in an official capacity. Accompanying dependents (spouse and minor children) can study on this visa.

2.4. Asylum Permit

Issued to individuals who seek refugee status while their application is under review. This Permit allows individuals to work and study.

2.5. Refugee Permit

Granted once an individual is officially recognised as a Refugee. This Permit allows individuals to work and study.

2.6. Exemption Permit

An exemption permit is a **special temporary status** granted under **Section 31(2)(b)** of the Immigration Act. It allows nationals from specific countries (**Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Angola** to date) to:

- i. **Legally reside, study, work, seek employment, and conduct business** in South Africa.
- ii. **Travel freely** between their home country and South Africa.

It does not allow the same nationals to:

- i. **Apply for Permanent Residency** on the basis of holding this visa
- ii. **Change Conditions** within South Africa.

2.7. Visitor's Visa Section 11(1)(b)(iii) Research

Issued to **Postdoctoral Researchers**.

Postdoctoral Researchers can only hold a Visitor's Visa – Section 11(1)(b)(iii) – for research purposes. No other visa category is applicable for this purpose.

A work visa or a work endorsement (including Section 11(6) endorsements) does not qualify for Postdoctoral Research appointments.

Police Clearance Certificates are required for all change of conditions and new visa applications. Renewals/extensions only require the South Africa Police Clearance.

2.8. Visitor's Visa Section 11(1) and Port of Entry Stamps

Issued for short-term visits of 30 to 90 days for purposes such as tourism, business meetings, or family visits.

Purpose of short stays may be:

- holiday or tourism
- business meeting (not full-time employment)
- visiting friends/family
- attending conferences
- short-term academic programmes (non-degree).

2.9. Visitor's Visa Section 11(6) Relative Visa

This visa is issued to immediate members (ordinarily spouses, children, parents) of South African citizens or permanent residents. This visa allows the holder to:

- i. Reside in South Africa based on their dependency relationship.
- ii. If applied for authorisation to work, study, or conduct business while in South Africa. This is a secondary activity/endorsement.

2.10. Permanent Residence Permit

Allows a foreign national to live, work, and study in the country indefinitely. It is issued by the Department of Home Affairs. With permanent residence, the permit holder can live and work without restriction, study without a study visa, and enter and exit South Africa freely.

2.11. Naturalised South Africans

Naturalised South Africans are recognised and registered as South African citizens.

Notes

SECTION 3

3. Student Visa Application Process

Universities are not allowed to register international students until the student has produced a **VALID** Study Visa. It could take at least six (6) to eight (8) weeks for the Study Visa application to be processed. It is also important to note that a Study Visa is only valid to study at the institution named on the visa.

Advise all students to check the details of the visa at the point of collection, in case rectifications are necessary.

It is also advisable to always check the details on port of entry stamps.

3.1. Verification of Visa Applications

The adjudication of study visa applications may require verification by a South African Mission abroad or the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) with the higher education institution that issued the Letter of Offer. Verification requests may be made via email or telephone.

It is essential that all verification requests are responded to promptly and accurately. Delays or failure to verify the information within the required timeframe may result in the rejection of the visa application.

Each higher education institution should establish and implement a clear internal procedure for managing visa verification requests. This procedure should identify the office responsible, outline response timelines, maintain appropriate records of all verifications, and ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities to facilitate the efficient processing of student visa applications.

3.2. Where to Apply?

3.2.1. Outside South Africa

Students must apply for a Study Visa at the South African High Commission, Embassy, Consulate or Trade Mission in their country of residence. If there

is a Visa Facilitation Service Global Centre that manages the South African visa application, this service provider must be used.

If there is no South African representative in that country, the student must apply at the nearest South African High Commission, Embassy, Consulate or Trade Mission.

3.2.2. Inside South Africa

If students are in South Africa, visa applications are sent to DHA through the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Global offices: www.vfsglobal.com/southafrica/

Applicants are permitted to apply for the following:

- i. Renewal of existing visas; change of conditions of visa. This does not apply to visitor's visas relying solely on port of entry stamps.
- ii. Change of conditions of visa. This is not applicable to Visitor's Visa Section 11(1) and Port of Entry Stamps.

Any international person on a **Visitor's Visa Section 11(1) and Port of Entry Stamps (PoE)** will not be permitted to change the visa type and conditions unless in exceptional circumstances:

- i. In the case of an emergency lifesaving treatment for longer than three months.
- ii. For an accompanying spouse or child of a holder of the business or work visa who wishes to apply for a study or work visa.

Visiting students who remain registered at their home institution and come to visit South Africa for 90 days may extend their holiday visa by applying for an extension to the holiday visa via VFS.

3.3. How to Apply Inside South Africa

Applications must be submitted at least 60 days prior to expiry of the current visa. Applicants must collate all the required documents when submitting to the VFS office.

In terms of South Africa's Immigration Regulations, specifically Regulation 9(8)(c), applications for the renewal of a study visa and Regulation 9(5), a change of visa conditions or a change of visa status must be submitted at least 60 days before the expiry of the current visa. This is a legal requirement.

3.4. The Consequences of Non-Compliance

Failing to adhere to the 60-day submission rule can have serious consequences, including:

- i. **Rejection of application:** Late applications are unlikely to be accepted unless exceptional circumstances can be proven.
- ii. **Becoming an illegal foreigner:** Overstaying the visa status makes the individual "undesirable" i.e. an illegal foreigner under South African law, which may result in detention or deportation.
- iii. **Banning from re-entering South Africa:** Overstays can lead to a ban from entering the country for up to five years. There are also implications when applying for visas to other countries.
- iv. **Disruption to plans:** A rejected application can affect the ability to work, study, or maintain a life in South Africa.

Understanding these risks underscores the importance of not only adhering to the 60-day rule but also starting preparations early.

"Border-Hopping"



Students **MUST NOT** be advised to cross the border and return to South Africa on a new port of entry stamp.

The practice known as "border-hopping" is highly irregular and is done by people who want to get more days without applying for a visa.

Legislation specifically states that a maximum of seven days can be granted to such a "border-hopper" with the purpose of allowing them to depart the country to their country of origin, within those seven days.

3.5. Current Requirements for the Study Visa

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) from time to time updates their requirements for visa applications. It is important to confirm with the checklist as issued by the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Office or the South African Embassy/Consulate for the latest requirements. Current requirements are as follows:

- i. A passport valid for not less than 30 days after intended studies.
- ii. Payment of the prescribed administrative fee.
- iii. Full Birth Certificate.
- iv. An official letter from the Institution confirming provisional or confirmed acceptance of that learning institute and the duration of the course.
- v. Undertaking from the Registrar or Principal of the learning institution with the Institution's official stamp to undertake to notify the Director-General: -
 - vi. To provide proof of registration as contemplated in the relevant legislation within 60 (sixty) days of registration; or
 - vii. In the event of failure to register by the closing date, to provide a notification of failure to register within 7 (seven) days of the closing date of registration.
 - viii. Within 30 (thirty) days, that the applicant is no longer registered with such institution; and
- ix. Within 30 (thirty) days, when the applicant has completed his or her studies or requires to extend such period of study.
- x. Proof of South African medical cover renewed annually for the period of study with a medical scheme registered in terms of the SA Medical Schemes Act.
- xi. Medical report (less than six months old). This requirement is currently under review and may be withdrawn in the near future.
- xii. Yellow Fever vaccination certificate, where applicable.

Definition of a valid Yellow Fever vaccination certificate: Vaccine should be approved by the WHO and administered at least 10 days before departure to South Africa at a Yellow Fever approved vaccination centre. **The vaccine offers protection 10 days after administration and provides lifetime immunity.**

List of countries for which a Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for entry into South Africa:

Africa		Central & South America
Angola	Guinea	Argentina
Benin	Guinea-Bissau	Bolivia
Burkina Faso	Kenya	Brazil
Burundi	Liberia	Colombia
Cameroon	Mali	Ecuador
Central Africa Republic	Mauritania	French Guyana
Chad	Niger	Guyana
Congo	Nigeria	Panama
Cote d'Ivoire	Senegal	Paraguay
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Sierre Leone	Peru
Equatorial Guinea	Southern Sudan	Suriname
Ethiopia	Sudan	Trinidad & Tobago
Gabon	Togo	Venezuela
Gambia	Uganda	
Ghana		

- xiii. Details regarding arranged accommodation while in South Africa.
- xiv. Proof of sufficient funds to cover tuition fees, subsistence and incidental costs: Bank statements, date stamped by the bank, for a period of three months, or bursary details. If sponsored, written undertakings from the sponsor, with an official company stamp.
- xv. Proof of educational qualifications and academic results for the previous years (certified copies).
- xvi. Police clearance certificates (PCC): Original PCC for country of residence in the last five years before the application for the visa to South Africa is needed.

Study Visa 13.4:

A study visa issued in terms of the Act shall **automatically lapse** if the holder thereof **fails to register** or is **de-registered** with the learning institution at any time during the period for which his or her visa has been issued, or if any of the **undertakings referred to in sub-regulation (1) (b) are not met**.

Immigration Act No. 13 Of 2002, incorporating 2007 and 2010 amendments.

3.6. Study Visa Renewals and Extensions

Renewals/Extensions or Change of Conditions must be applied for through the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Offices in South Africa: <https://www.vfsglobal.com/southafrica/>

A renewal outside of South Africa is considered a new application and the South African Police Clearance Certificate is a requirement if the applicant resided in South Africa for a period longer than one year.

3.7. Appeals and Rejections

Appeals for rejected outcomes must be submitted through the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Offices: <https://www.vfsglobal.com/southafrica/>. Applicants are given ten working days during which the appeal application must be submitted.

Applicants must be recommended to attach a motivational letter addressing the reason for the rejection. In addition, the applicant must include all documents as per the first application. This is to ensure that the application meets all requirements for the adjudication.

3.8. Overstay and Good Cause Application

A person who overstays after the expiry of his or her visa, as contemplated in Section 30(1)(h) of the Act, may:

- i. in the case of a person who overstays for a period not exceeding 30 days, be declared undesirable for a period of 12 months;
- ii. in the case of a person who overstays for the second time, within a period of 24 months, be declared undesirable for a period of two years; and
- iii. in the case of a person who overstays for more than 30 days, be declared undesirable for a period of five years.

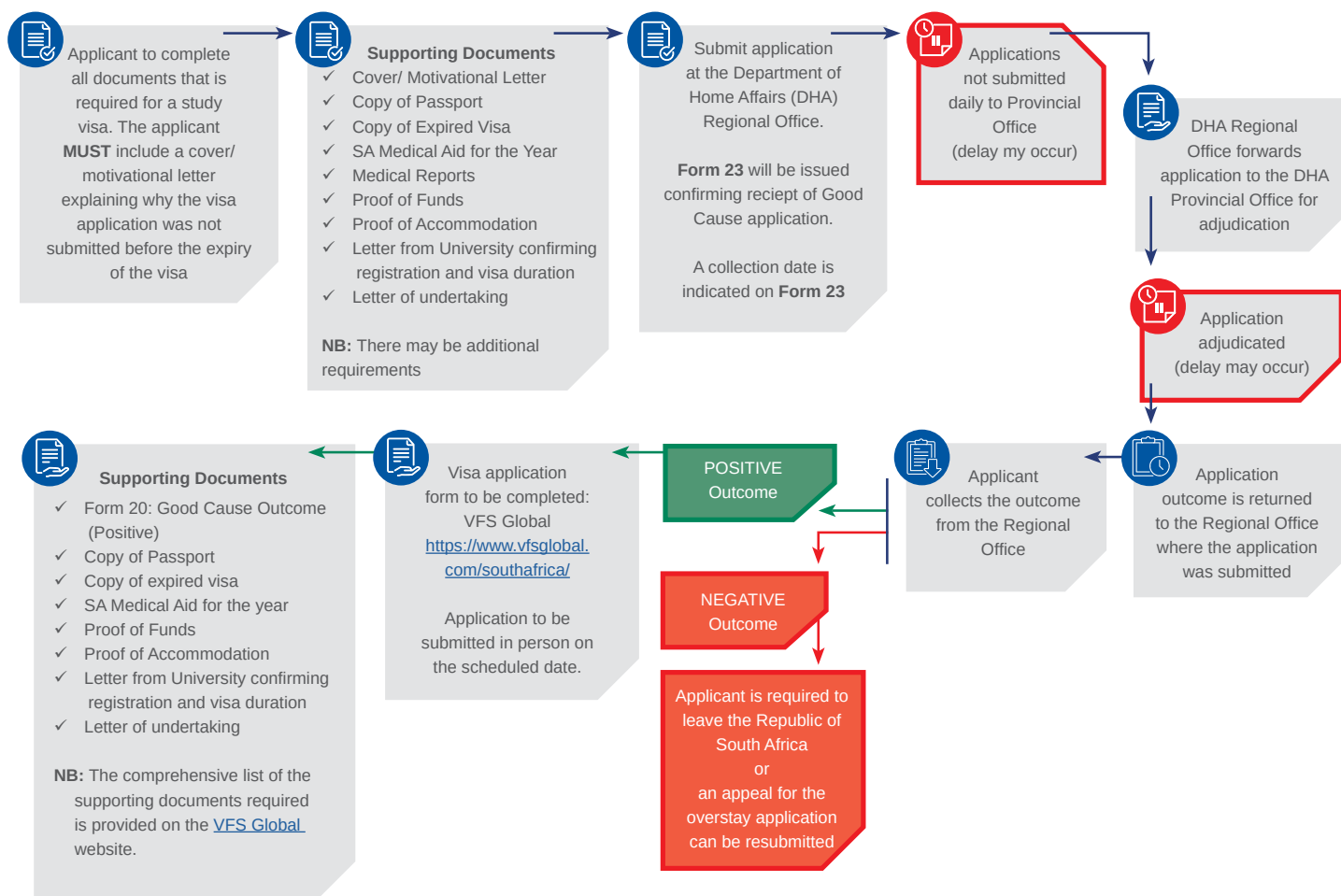
Please Note:

An applicant may apply to the Minister to waive any of the grounds of undesirability in terms of section 30(2) of the Act if they are able to show good cause.

This process is started if the visa holder has overstayed in South Africa beyond the expiry date of the last valid visa.

Overstay Appeal Process Good Cause (Form 20)

This process is initiated when the visa holder has stayed in South Africa beyond the expiry date of the last valid visa



3.9. New Passport and Transfer of Visa

3.9.1. Passport is Lost or Stolen

3.9.1.1. Steps to follow:

3.9.1.1.1. Report to the Police:

Student to immediately report the loss or theft to the South African Police Service to obtain an official affidavit (sworn statement of facts).

3.9.1.1.2. Report to Campus Protection:

If the passport is lost or stolen on campus, the student must also report the incident to Campus Protection Services.

3.9.1.1.3. Contact the International Office:

The International Office can assist by providing:

- A certified copy of the passport's bio page.
- A certified copy of the study visa.

3.9.1.1.4. Apply for a Replacement Passport:

The student must visit his/her home country's Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate in South Africa to apply for a new passport.

3.9.2. Passport Renewals

Passport renewals must be completed at the Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate of his/ her home country located in South Africa.

3.9.3. *Transfer/Rectification of Visa*

Once the new passport has been issued, students must apply for the transfer or rectification of their study visa through the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) via the VFS Global Office. For detailed information on the process and requirements, please visit: [VFS Global - South Africa DHA Services](#).

3.9.4. *Required Documents for Visa Transfer or Replacement:*

- i. New passport
- ii. Affidavit from the South African Police Service
- iii. Certified copy of the lost/stolen passport
- iv. Certified copy of the lost/stolen study visa
- v. Confirmation of registration from student's faculty

3.10. Electronic Visa (E-Visa)

The DHA has introduced the e-Visa platform for a Visitor's Visa for any period not exceeding three (3) years.

Citizens from the following countries are eligible to apply for a South African e-Visa:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Albania | • Kenya |
| • Algeria | • Liberia |
| • Belarus | • Lithuania |
| • Bulgaria | • Mali |
| • Cameroon | • Mexico |
| • Comoros | • Morocco |
| • Congo (Kinshasa) | • Niger |
| • Congo (Brazzaville) | • Nigeria |
| • Cote d'Ivoire | • Oman |
| • Croatia | • Pakistan |
| • Cuba | • People's Republic of China |
| • Egypt | • Philippines |
| • Ethiopia | • Republic of Guinea |
| • France | • Romania |
| • Germany | • Saudi Arabia |
| • Ghana | • Senegal |
| • India | • Slovakia |
| • Indonesia | • Uganda |
| • Islamic Republic of Iran | |
| • Japan | |

Applicants must plan to enter South Africa through O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. South Africa offers an electronic visa (e-Visa) system for eligible travellers seeking to visit the country for tourism, business, or short-term work purposes.

The South African e-Visa is a digital travel authorisation that allows foreign nationals from select countries to apply online for entry into South Africa. It simplifies the visa process by eliminating the need to visit a consulate or embassy.

Universities can utilise this platform for conference attendance, Winter/Summer Schools and short-term programmes.

3.10.1. *Application Requirements for a Visitor's Visa (e-Visa)*

For a Visitor's Visa for any period not exceeding three (3) years:

3.10.1.1. *Machine Readable Passport*

- i. Validity of no less than thirty (30) days after the intended departure from the Republic of South Africa.
- ii. Passports must have at least two (2) blank pages for endorsements.
- iii. Non-machine readable/handwritten passports are not accepted/ recognised.

3.10.1.2. *A Statement of Documentation*

confirming the purpose and duration of the visit.

- i. The statement or documentation must be dated and signed.
- ii. Statement or documentation must highlight the intended purpose (explaining the main reason for the intended visit) for the visit and duration thereof (for how long).
- iii. The starting and ending dates in the statement or documentation must correspond with the flight itinerary and information completed on the application form.

3.10.1.3. *Proof of Sufficient Available Financial Resources* in the form of bank certified statements for the last three months

- i. The bank statements, e.g. of a current account, must reflect all the transactions from the last three (3) months up to the week that the visa application is given.
- ii. The current balance must be the equivalent of a minimum of R3,000.00 at the current exchange rate.
- iii. Bank statements shall be printed and certified / stamped by the bank.
- iv. Applicants who cannot obtain bank certified statements e.g. have an online bank account, shall request a branch or main office of the bank either to issue a dated and signed letter on the bank's letterhead confirming the applicant's bank account and the current balance or to issue a statement / overview of accounts with the current balances, which must be dated, stamped and signed. In both cases, the applicant must also submit her or his bank statements for the last three (3) months up until the week that the visa application is submitted, which may be printed at home.

3.10.1.4. Proof of a return flight itinerary or onward ticket or reservation thereof

- i. A photocopy of the return flight itinerary / booking must be given.

3.10.1.5. Proof of accommodation or reservation thereof

- i. Proof of accommodation or reservation of where you will be staying during the period of your intended visit to the Republic or Booking confirming accommodation whilst in South Africa.

3.10.1.6. A Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate

- i. Only required if the foreigner travelled or intends travelling from or transiting through a yellow fever endemic area to the Republic of South Africa.
- ii. The certificate will not be needed where that person travelled or intends to travel in direct transit through such an area.

Definition of a valid Yellow Fever vaccination certificate: Vaccine should be approved by the WHO and administered at least 10 day before departure to South Africa at a Yellow Fever approved vaccination centre. **The vaccine offers protection 10 days after administration and provides lifetime immunity.**

List of countries for which a Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for entry into South Africa

Africa		Central & South America
Angola	Guinea	Argentina
Benin	Guinea-Bissau	Bolivia
Burkina Faso	Kenya	Brazil
Burundi	Liberia	Colombia
Cameroon	Mali	Ecuador
Central Africa Republic	Mauritania	French Guyana
Chad	Niger	Guyana
Congo	Nigeria	Panama
Cote d'Ivoire	Senegal	Paraguay
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Sierre Leone	Peru
Equatorial Guinea	Southern Sudan	Suriname
Ethiopia	Sudan	Trinidad & Tobago
Gabon	Togo	Venezuela
Gambia	Uganda	
Ghana		

3.10.1.7. Proof of payment of the applicable fee

- i. This is not a requirement for submission for the purpose of visa processing, however the application will remain pending and cannot be processed by the Adjudicator if the Applicant did not pay the application fee.

Notes

[illegible]

SECTION 4

4. South African Medical Aid

4.1. Requirements

In terms of the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 as Amended and its Regulations, any prospective student to the Republic of South Africa must provide proof of medical cover with a medical scheme registered in terms of the Medical Schemes Act, 1998 Act 13 of 1998.

Although students may be able to secure a study visa with other types of medical products, South African or otherwise, South African Universities only accept South African Medical Aid products. Amongst other coverage, the product must include provisions for Doctor's visits, private hospitalisation, medicines and emergencies.

To comply with the regulations, the University needs a continuous membership certificate as proof of full Medical Aid cover with a South African based medical aid scheme. Medical aid must cover the **duration of the study visa**. At application stage, the policy must provide **one full year's** cover, from the application date. For most undergraduates, this cover runs concurrently with the calendar year. For postgraduates it could run from June to June the following year.

The **International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA)** has appointed Simeka Health, a Division of Sanlam, who are specialist health cover intermediaries, to aid international students with obtaining appropriate medical cover. Simeka Health, together with IEASA, do an annual evaluation of available schemes and make clear proposals to universities around the most appropriate schemes, against the background of a wide range of criteria, including financial stability, benefits, costs and service offering.

Simeka Health recommends the following student medical cover products:

Company	CompCare Medical Scheme	Momentum Medical Scheme
Web Address	www.studentplan.co.za	www.studenthealthcare.co.za
E-mail Enquiries	student@universal.co.za	studenthealth@momentum.co.za
Contact Details	0860 73 53 63	0860 102 493 WhatsApp Chat: +27 (0)860 10 24 93

Please Note:

Membership cover is linked to the duration of the study visa rather than physical presence in South Africa.

Scheme Selection Criteria

Simeka Health applies the following selection criteria during the annual medical aid review process. These criteria are specifically tailored to meet the needs of international students:

Category	Key Needs
Affordability	Cost-effective plans suitable for student budgets
Annual Upfront Payment	Accept full annual payment; issue membership certificate (visa compliant)
Low Administrative Effort	Simple claims process, minimal paperwork
National Coverage	Services available nationwide, especially near campuses
Add-on Benefits	Options such as repatriation and emergency transport
Network Accessibility	Provider proximity to campuses or easy public transport access
Private Hospitalisation	Access to private hospitals for quality care
Sustainability	Financially sustainable with no sudden cost increases

4.2. Verification of Medical Aid Membership

This legislation clearly states that all international students wishing to study in South Africa must be in possession of appropriate medical cover with a registered South African medical scheme for the duration of their studies.

All international students must pre-register with the International Office, prior to academic registration at the University. For pre-registration purposes, the University requires proof of a full medical aid cover with a South African registered medical aid scheme for the year.

The two medical schemes have granted International Offices access to the Student Validation Portal. This portal can be utilised to confirm membership for the year during the pre-registration process.

Company	Student Validation Portal (Access to be activated with each company)
CompCare Medical Scheme	CompCare Student Validation Portal
Momentum Medical Scheme	Momentum Student Validation Portal

Recommendation:

All International Offices must have access to the verification portals for both Momentum and CompCare. This will enable timely verification of international student medical coverage, thereby minimising the risk of fraud and reducing potential financial liability for the University related to international student medical expenses.

Diplomatic Students

An exception can be made for Health Insurance **if the student (or their spouse or parent) has a diplomatic visa** and is covered under the foreign mission's medical arrangement. **In such cases, the student must provide a formal letter from the Embassy/High Commission confirming that full medical costs will be covered while in South Africa.**

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal blue or grey lines spaced evenly apart, typical of notebook paper. The lines extend across the entire width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical lines, text, or other markings on the page.

SECTION 5

5. DHA Procedures and Reporting Obligations

5.1. Regulation 12(1)(b) of the Immigration Act No.13 of 2002

Undertaking by the Registrar or Principal of the learning institution

Regulation 12(b)(i) 60 Day Proof of Registration

Provide proof of registration as contemplated in the relevant legislation within 60 days of registration

Regulation 12(b)(ii) 7 Day Failure to Register Report

In the event of failure to register by the closing date, provide the Director-General with a notification of failure to register within 7 days of the closing date of registration

Regulation 12(b)(iii) 30 Day De-registration Report

Within 30 days of de-registration, notify the Director-General that the applicant is no longer registered with such institution

Regulation 12(b)(i) 30 Day Completion of Studies Report

Within 30 days of completion of studies, notify the Director-General when the applicant has completed his or her studies or requires to extend such period of study

5.2. Visa Letters and Letter of Undertaking

At the admissions stage of a student cycle, the international student must receive a letter of undertaking, either a firm or provisional acceptance, which is a requirement for the study visa application. See sample template for the Letter of Undertaking on p.28.

This letter or the letter of undertaking must be on a university letterhead, signed and stamped by the relevant office and must have the following pertinent information.

- i. "Date"
- ii. "Visa Issuing Authority"
- iii. "South African Embassy/High Commission/Consulate"
- iv. "Address"
- v. "Name of the Student"
- vi. "Student number"
- vii. "Name of the Faculty"
- viii. "Name of the degree"
- ix. "Duration = start date to end date"
- x. Confirmation that the student is not taking the place of a South African at the University.
- xi. The institution is duly registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training and accredited by the relevant authorities to offer this programme to international students.
- xii. If the letter is not signed by the University Registrar, the following can be inserted:
 - a. As per the Delegation of Authority, the University Registrar has delegated the issuance of the letter of undertaking to "name of department".
- xiii. Insert Regulation 12(1)(b) of the Immigration Act No 13 of 2002 on the letter.

5.3. Sample Template: Letter of Undertaking for a Study Visa

[Institution Letterhead]

[Date]

To:

The Director-General
Department of Home Affairs
Republic of South Africa

OR

To the Visa Issuing Authority
South African Embassy/High Commission/Consulate

RE: Letter of Undertaking – Study Visa Application for [Full Name of Student]

Dear Sir/Madam,

We hereby confirm that:

[Full Name of Student], passport number [Passport Number], has been [provisionally accepted or accepted] for full-time study at [Institution Name].

The student has been accepted into the following program:

Programme Name: [e.g. Bachelor of Science in Computer Science]

Duration: [e.g. 3 years]

Start Date: [e.g. 15 February 2026]

End Date: [e.g. 30 November 2028]

Faculty: [e.g. Science]

The institution is duly registered with the **Department of Higher Education and Training** and accredited by the relevant authorities to offer this programme to international students.

This letter serves to confirm that in terms of **Regulation 12(1)(b) of the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002**, the University hereby undertakes to notify the Director-General:

- i. To provide proof of registration as contemplated in the relevant legislation within 60 (sixty) days of registration; or
- ii. In the event of failure to register by the closing date, provide a notification of failure to register within 7 (seven) days of the closing date of registration.
- iii. Within 30 (thirty) days, that the applicant is no longer registered with such institution; and
- iv. Within 30 (thirty) days, when the applicant has completed his or her studies or requires to extend such period of study.

This letter is issued in support of the study visa application and confirms the valid intent of the student to study at our institution.

We confirm that the student is not taking the place of a South African at the University.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

[Full Name]

[Position – e.g. Registrar / Designated Officer for International Students]

[Institution Name]

[Email Address]

[Telephone Number]

[Signature]

[Official Stamp]

5.4. Reporting Format

Reporting responsibilities form an integral part of every Higher Education Institution's obligations when admitting and registering international students. In accordance with Regulation 12(b)(i)–(iv) of the Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002), institutions are required to maintain and report prescribed information relating to international students. The Department of Home Affairs has provided the following reporting procedures to ensure compliance with these regulatory requirements.

Reporting templates have been shared with all South African public universities through IEASA. Reports must be in Microsoft Excel format and have the following fields:

- i. Student Number
- ii. Student Names
- iii. Surname (Last Name)
- iv. Passport Number
- v. Nationality
- vi. VFS Receipt (Y/N)
- vii. Visa Category
- viii. Country of Visa Issue
- ix. Visa Expiry Date

5.5. Submission Pack and Sign -Off Requirements

Submit the following to DHA:

- i. Completed Excel Workbook (all relevant sheets)
- ii. Signed cover letter on University Letterhead (Registrar or formally delegated official)
- iii. Use secure transmission channels. If e-mail is used, encrypt the file and share the password via a separate channel.

All Excel Workbooks and letter must be e-mailed to Universityreports@dha.gov.za.

5.6. Template of the Cover Letter for Reporting on International Students in terms of Immigration Regulations 12(b)(i)-(iv)

To: Director-General
The Department of Home Affairs
Attention: Corporate Accounts Unit, Mr Phindiwe Mbhele
E-mail: Universityreports@dha.gov.za

**SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY RETURN UNDER IMMIGRATION
REGULATION 12(B)(I)-(IV)
[REGISTRATION CYCLE E.G. 2026 MAIN INTAKE]**

I, **[Name, Surname]**, Registrar of [University], or duly authorised delegate, hereby submit the Regulation 12(b) return for the [2026 semester one] period. Enclosed is the completed workbook "DHA International Student Report – XXX University" containing:

- i. Regulation 12(b)(i) – proof of registration within 60 (sixty) days of registration;
- ii. Regulation 12(b)(ii) – students who failed to register by the closing date, submitted within 7 (seven) days of the closing date of registration;
- iii. Regulation 12(b)(iii) – deregistration submitted within 30 (thirty) days;
- iv. Regulation 12(b)(iv) – completion/extension submitted within 30 (thirty) days of completion trigger; and
- v. Provisional acceptance and Total international students reconciliation sheets.

I certify that the information is true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge, and that the University has complied with the Immigration Regulations, 2014 reporting obligations for this period.

Signed:
Name & Title
Date:
Contact:

*Reference: Immigration Regulations, 2014
– Regulation 12 (Study visa)*

5.7. Types of Reports

Reporting Procedures on the types of reports requested by DHA as needed for **Regulation 12(1)(b) of the Immigration Act No 13 of 2002**.

5.7.1. 60-Day Proof of Registration Report

- i. One report for **all international students**.
- ii. This report must include students on all types of permits i.e. Study Visa, Work Visa, Refugee Permit, Asylum Seeker Permit, Permanent Residence Permit, Visitor's Visa, etc.

5.7.2. 7-Day Failure to Register Report

- i. One report for **all newly admitted, provisional acceptance, continuing/returning** international students.
- ii. This report must include students on all types of permits i.e. Study Visa, Work Visa, Refugee Permit, Asylum Seeker Permit, Permanent Residence Permit, Visitor's Visa, etc.

5.7.3. 30-Day De-Registration Report

- i. One report for **all undergraduate and postgraduate international students that suspended, discontinued, etc. his/her studies**.

- ii. This report must be sent frequently or as and when the student is no longer registered at the University.

5.7.4. 30-Day Completion of Studies Report

- i. One report for **all undergraduate and postgraduate** international students.
- ii. One report for **all international students who need renewals** due to having to repeat subjects.
- iii. One report for **provisional postgraduate international students who need their visas renewed**.

5.7.5. Medical Aid Report

- i. One report for all international students

All Excel Workbooks and letter must be e-mailed to Universityreports@dha.gov.za

Notes

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SECTION 6

6. CONCESSIONS

6.1. International Students: Registration without a Visa in Passport

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) periodically grants concessions to South African universities, permitting them to register international students without a visa endorsed in their passport. This measure provides flexibility for institutions to register students who have applied for a study visa within South Africa through the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) and whose applications are still pending.

This concession is valid only when the DHA issues a Directive confirming a temporary extension.

6.1.1. *APPLICABILITY: Long-Term Visas and Appeal Applications*

This concession applies to international students holding long-term visas, including:

- i. Visitor's Visas in terms of Sections 11(1)(b) and 11(6)
- ii. Business, Work, and Study Visas
- iii. Students who have submitted applications for any of the above visa categories.

Students covered under this concession may:

- i. Continue to study in line with the conditions of their current visa.
- ii. Exit South Africa before the extended deadline without being declared undesirable, if they choose to abandon their visa application.
- iii. Travel while awaiting visa outcomes:
 - a. Visa-exempt passport holders may leave and re-enter South Africa using their VFS receipt and passport to collect their visa outcome.
 - b. Non-visa-exempt passport holders must obtain a Visitor's Visa for re-entry, along with their VFS receipt and supporting documents, including a valid South African Police Clearance Certificate (PCC).

For a list of visa-exempt countries and additional information, visit the official [Countries Exempt from South African Visas](#).

Please Note:

There is no fixed timeframe for visa adjudication or the issuing of outcomes.

6.2. Registration and Documentation Requirements

To be eligible for registration under this concession, students must present the following:

- i. For visa extensions or renewals: A valid VFS receipt.
- ii. For visa appeals: A copy of the rejection letter and the appeal receipt.

6.3. Exclusions:

6.3.1. *Students Changing Institutions*

- i. Students who are changing institutions do not qualify for this concession. The visa conditions must match the institution where registration is being sought.
- ii. These students must wait for the outcome of their new visa application, which must reflect the updated institution, before registration can proceed.
- iii. Universities are not permitted to register students in this category under the concession.

6.3.2. *Waiver Applications*

- i. Applicants who have applied for waivers through the VFS Office are not permitted to register under this concession.
- ii. These students must wait until the waiver application has been finalised and the outcome received before registration can be considered.
- iii. The waiver outcome must be submitted along with the visa application before the student becomes eligible to register.

Concessions can vary over time. Each directive should be read on its own merits, as different concessions apply to different visa categories and circumstances.

Notes

[illegible]

SECTION 7

7. PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL CODES:

H01	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	CPUT
H02	University of Cape Town	UCT
H03	Central University of Technology	CUT
H04	Durban University of Technology	DUT
H05	University of Fort Hare	UFH
H06	University of the Free State	UFS
H07	University of Johannesburg	UJ
H08	University of KwaZulu-Natal	UKZN
H09	University of Limpopo	UL
H10	Nelson Mandela University	NMU
H11	North-West University	NWU
H12	University of Pretoria	UP
H13	Rhodes University	RU
H14	University of South Africa	UNISA
H15	Stellenbosch University	SUN
H16	Tshwane University of Technology	TUT
H17	University of Venda	UV
H18	Vaal University of Technology	VUT
H19	Walter Sisulu University	WSU
H20	University of the Western Cape	UWC
H21	University of the Witwatersrand	WITS
H22	University of Zululand	UZ
H23	Sol Plaatje University	SPU
H24	University of Mpumalanga	UM
H25	Mangosuthu University of Technology	MUT
H26	Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University	SMU

Notes

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal blue or grey lines spaced evenly apart, typical of notebook paper. The lines extend across the entire width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical lines, text, or other markings on the page.

Biographies

Gita Patel

Gita Patel is the Manager of the International Students Office at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University). With more than 20 years of experience in the international education sector, she has developed extensive expertise in the immigration requirements and regulatory frameworks affecting international students.

In her role, Gita leads initiatives focused on international student support, immigration compliance, student wellbeing, and support both inbound and outbound student mobility. She is committed to enhancing the student experience by ensuring that international students receive the guidance and assistance they need throughout their academic journey. Her approach is driven by a strong commitment to service excellence, centred on understanding the unique challenges faced by international students and developing practical solutions to help them successfully navigate the academic and administrative landscape. Through dedicated support and advocacy, she strives to create an inclusive and supportive environment for the international student community.



Gita Patel

Lebethe Malefo



Lebethe Malefo

Lebethe Malefo is an accomplished leader in international education with over two decades of expertise in fostering global partnerships, advancing student mobility, and enhancing cross-cultural engagement within South African universities, the African continent and the rest of the world. He is currently the Director for International Affairs and Partnerships at the University of Fort Hare, and he has the institutional responsibility to drive internationalisation in all facets.

As Director of Study Abroad and International Student Services at the University of Johannesburg, he oversaw the development and delivery of mobility programmes, as well as comprehensive support programmes for international students, including academic, social, and crisis management services. His leadership has elevated the university's international profile, primarily through initiatives such as the Africa by Bus programme, which facilitates cross-border educational exchange within the continent.

Previously, as Senior and Executive Director of Internationalisation (Acting), Lebethe was pivotal in steering the university's global engagement strategy, aligning international objectives with institutional goals. He successfully managed partnerships, academic services, and student recruitment, driving growth in international student enrollment and strengthening support structures. His efforts have significantly enhanced the University of Johannesburg's reputation as a globally engaged institution, known for its dynamic international student community and innovative programmes such as the World Café and the International Leadership Platform.

Lebethe's earlier roles at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town underscore his commitment to building robust international networks and supporting student development. As Manager of International Partnerships at Wits, he coordinated collaborative projects with Southern African universities, ensuring rigorous financial accountability in donor-funded initiatives. His extensive experience with student programmes, resource mobilisation, and protocol management highlights his ability to work effectively across diverse cultural and institutional landscapes, fostering vibrant, globally-connected academic communities.

He holds a Master of Arts (Politics) from the University of Johannesburg, a Postgraduate Diploma in Organisation and Management and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Cape Town. He is a member of the Management Council of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) and sits on the Ministerial Reference Group on Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa.

Orla Quinlan



Orla Quinlan is Director of Global Engagement at Rhodes University and a leading practitioner in the internationalisation of higher education in South Africa. Following an international career in the development sector, and personal experience of living and working across several countries, she has spent the past 15 years developing extensive expertise across the full spectrum of internationalisation in South African higher education, including specialist expertise in immigration policy, institutional compliance and international mobility. Her own experience of navigating different cultural, legal and administrative environments has shaped a practical, people-centred approach to supporting internationally mobile students and scholars.

She has advised thousands of international students, postdoctoral fellows, visiting academics, researchers and university staff from across the world, guiding them through South Africa's immigration system and intervening when required, while supporting institutional compliance with evolving legislation, regulations and administrative

processes. Her work combines strategic leadership with extensive operational experience, enabling her to translate complex immigration requirements into practical guidance for higher education institutions.

Quinlan served for 12 years on the Council of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), including as President (2019–2020) and Treasurer (2021–2023). She established the IEASA community of practice for immigration practitioners, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing and professional development across the sector. Through sustained engagement with the Department of Home Affairs, VFS Global and university colleagues, she has contributed to national capacity building through joint workshops at IEASA conferences, articles in *University World News* and other higher education publications, and ongoing leadership of the community of practice. Her work contributes to the interpretation of legislative and policy developments, strengthen compliance, and respond effectively to an evolving immigration environment.

Phindiwe Mbhele



Phindiwe Mbhele

Mr Phindiwe Mbhele is the Director: Corporate Accounts Unit in the Immigration Services Branch of the Department of Home Affairs. He has more than 28 years' experience in the South African public service, with extensive expertise in immigration administration, stakeholder relations, visa facilitation, regulatory compliance, project management and public sector governance.

In his current role, Mr Mbhele provides strategic leadership in the management of corporate accounts and stakeholder relations between the Department of Home Affairs, corporate entities, trusted employers, institutions of higher learning, business chambers and other key stakeholders. His responsibilities include the facilitation and oversight of economic visas, including critical skills, business and general work visas, as well as study visa-related processes for international students at institutions of higher learning.

Mr Mbhele has contributed significantly to red-tape reduction initiatives, the implementation of the Critical Skills List, investment facilitation through the InvestSA One Stop Shops, and the Trusted Employer Scheme. His work is focused on strengthening service delivery, promoting institutional compliance, supporting stakeholder collaboration and facilitating the attraction and retention of critical skills and investment into South Africa.

He holds a Master's of Business Administration from MANCOSA and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Thames Valley University in the United Kingdom. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration, further strengthening his contribution to public sector innovation, immigration policy implementation and organisational effectiveness.



IEASA

International Education
Association of South Africa



home affairs

Department:
Home Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

