



International education and managed growth arrangements for 2026 – VET providers and the small provider pool

The Australian Government remains committed to a high quality, resilient international education sector with modest growth over time. A managed growth approach has been effective in returning student numbers to a more sustainable level in 2025 and the Government has now determined arrangements for 2026, including for small VET providers.

More information about the [Government's managed growth arrangements for 2026](#) is published by the Department of Education.

[Allocations for all VET providers for 2026](#) were published on 4 August 2025 (and continue to be available in PRISMS) and provider progress against allocations will continue to inform prioritisation for offshore student visa processing.

What is the small provider pool?

To ensure fair and flexible prioritisation for offshore student visa processing, the arrangements for 2026 will include the pooling of allocations for all small VET providers. The small provider pool will support small VET providers by increasing their access to high-priority processing of offshore student visa applications, while improving their overall utilisation of places.

How will the small provider pool operate?

All VET providers with a 2026 allocation of not more than 100 New Overseas Student Commencements (NOSCs) and who are recorded in PRISMS as a small provider, will be placed in the small provider pool. Their allocations will be combined and accessible to all providers in the pool.

For individual small providers

In the small provider pool, 100 NOSC becomes a provider's *de facto* allocation and 80 NOSC its individual prioritisation threshold. This is consistent with the method for calculating prioritisation thresholds for all providers (that is, 80% of a provider's allocation) for the prioritisation of student visa processing. The following rules will apply for individual providers:

- Individual providers can draw down on the total pool allocation to access Priority 1 visa processing for offshore applicants until they reach 80 NOSC.
- Once an individual provider reaches 80 NOSC within the calendar year, the provider is no longer identified in PRISMS as a small provider.

- Once a provider is no longer identified in PRISMS as a small provider (that is, once they reach 80 NOSC), that provider is automatically moved out of the pool.
- At this point, the provider will no longer have access to Priority 1 processing and will be subject to the same arrangements for prioritisation of student visa processing as any other VET provider.

This process ensures that a small number of providers cannot use all the NOSC in the pool, ensuring equitable access to Priority 1 processing for all small providers.

For all small providers as a group

If at any point, all providers in the small provider pool have collectively used 80% of the total NOSC available in the pool, all remaining providers in the pool will move out of the pool and no longer have access to Priority 1 processing. These providers will cease to be small providers for the purposes of student visa prioritisation and will no longer be recorded in PRISMS as such.

For new small VET providers

Newly registered VET providers will be given an individual allocation and then assigned to the small provider pool.

How will I know if I am a small provider?

Providers that meet the criteria for classifying small providers will be informed of this in PRISMS in their NOSC home screen display. Providers will be identified as small providers in PRISMS and included in the small provider pool when they meet the following criteria:

- They have a VET allocation or, for dual sector providers, a combined VET and higher education allocation, that is not more than 100 NOSC, and
- They have used fewer than 80 NOSC.

What happens when I use 80 NOSC? Am I removed from the pool?

If a small provider's NOSC reaches 80, they will no longer be recorded in PRISMS as a small provider. This will be visible in the provider's NOSC home screen display. When this occurs, the provider can continue to enrol new overseas students as normal, but offshore visa applications for these students will no longer be processed as Priority 1. These visa applications will be subject to the same arrangements for the prioritisation of student visa processing as for any other VET provider.

Will I lose my Priority 1 access if too many NOSC are used from the pool, even if I haven't reached my individual 80% threshold?

Small providers will no longer receive access to Priority 1 processing if at any point, 80% of the combined total small provider pool allocation has been used. At this point, PRISMS will treat all small providers as if they were one individual provider with an allocation that is equal to the total pool allocation. Because 80% of the combined total small provider pool allocation has been used, all remaining providers in the pool will no longer be recorded in PRISMS as small providers and will automatically be removed from the pool. This will be visible on the provider's NOSC home screen display in PRISMS.