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|  | **Australian High Commission – Port Louis****Department of Immigration and Citizenship** |

**VISA INFORMATION SHEET**

Dear Client

This information sheet has been designed to assist you with enquiries that you may have on applying for an Australian visa.

**Please be advised that the staff at the Reception counter are not authorised to provide visa related information. Please do not seek assistance from the Reception Counter staff as they are unable to assist you with visa related enquiries.**

**Telephone Hours:**

**The telephone number of the Visa and Immigration Section is (230) 202 0180. Please do not call any other telephone numbers at the Australian High Commission if your call is related to visa matters.**

Telephone hours are strictly between **1.00 pm and 3.00 pm** (Mauritius time), **Monday to Friday**.

Telephone is not the preferred method of contact with the Australian Immigration Office in Port Louis. Visa applicants calling this office experience long delays due to the high volume of calls. If you prefer not to wait, please use our email address.

Unfortunately the Australian High Commission in Port Louis cannot assist with telephone queries if you have **not yet lodged** your visa application.

**Email:**

**Email is our preferred method of contact** and all enquiries are responded to within 48 hours. Our email address is:

immigration.portlouis@dfat.gov.au

You must include your full name and passport number, type of visa application, and date and method of lodgement. Failure to include these details will result in a delay in responding to your query.

Australian privacy legislation prevents officers from disclosing information to anyone other than the visa applicant unless you have provided formal written authorisation.

1. **Do I need a visa to go to Australia?**

Yes, **all people** regardless of their nationality and who are not Australian citizens need a visa to travel to Australia.

1. **I would like to come into the office to talk to someone in person**

We **do not provide** counter hours for general queries, so please **do not come** to the Australian High Commission in Port Louis in order to ask visa questions, as we will not be able to attend to you.

Instead, our preferred method of contact for general questions is via email. As noted above, you will receive a response within two business (working) days (same day response for compassionate and compelling cases).

Please note: ***Our counter hours are for lodgement of visa applications only.***

1. **What visa is right for me? Where can I find more information?**

The ‘Visa Finder’ tool on the Department of Immigration and Border Protection Website will help you select a visa that meets your requirements. This can be found at this link: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/Visa-finder>

1. **Where can I obtain a visa application form?**

Unfortunately the Visa Section **does not provide** visa application forms. Visa application forms must be downloaded from the Department’s web link:

 <http://www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/forms>

1. **Where can I obtain a visa application checklist?**

Unfortunately the Visa Section **does not provide** hard copies of visa application checklists.

The following checklists, information sheets and fact sheets are available for download from the Australian High Commission website <http://www.mauritius.embassy.gov.au/plut/Visas_and_Migration.html>

- [Tourist & Business Visitor visa checklist – Subclass 600](http://mauritius.embassy.gov.au/files/plut/Tourist%20%20Business%20Visitor%20visa%20checklist%20-%20subclass%20600-July%202015.pdf)
- [Transit Visa Checklist - Subclass 771](http://mauritius.embassy.gov.au/files/plut/Transit%20visa%20checklist%20-%20subclass%20771-July%202015.pdf)
- [Medical Treatment Visa Checklist – Subclass 602](http://mauritius.embassy.gov.au/files/plut/602_MEDICAL%20TREATMENT_JULY%202015.pdf)
- [Student Visa Checklist – Subclass 570- Subclass 580](http://mauritius.embassy.gov.au/files/plut/Student%20visa%20checklist%20570%20to%20580%20-%20July%202015.pdf)
- [Resident Return Visa checklist](http://mauritius.embassy.gov.au/files/plut/RRV%20Checklist-July%202015.pdf)
- [Fees and Acceptable methods of payments](http://mauritius.embassy.gov.au/files/plut/FEES_01%20JULY%202015%20%282%29.pdf)

1. **When can I lodge my visa application?**
* Tourist/Business Visitor and Transit visa applications: Monday and Wednesday between **09.30 and 11.50 am**
* Student visa application: by appointment only
* Resident Return visa: by appointment only
* Application for registration of Australian citizenship by descent: by appointment only
* Medical treatment visa application: by appointment only
1. **How do I get a visa to go to Australia for a holiday or to visit my family?**
2. You can apply for a subclass 600 Tourist Visitor visa, using Form 1419 and lodging the paper based application for processing at the Visa Section during the designated counter hours, that is on Monday and Wednesday between 09.30 am and 11.50 am, **or**
3. You can also apply for a Tourist Visitor visa online. Information on how to lodge an online application is available at <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/600-/Visitor-e600-visa-online-applications>

The online visa lodgement system is available to applicants at their convenience, seven days a week, without the need to apply in person or send in application forms by mail. Applications can be made at the links above. Please see this website for more information on online lodgement: [Online Services](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa).

To start an application, you will first need to create your own online account, known as ImmiAccount. ImmiAccount lets you create and manage all your online visa applications in one place. You can use your account to:

* lodge and pay for your visa application
* continue a saved application
* attach documents if required, and
* check the progress of your application.

Please note that you will need access to a credit card to pay for an online application. A third party may complete an online application on your behalf with your consent.

**Please remember: if you are applying for an online Visitor visa you must attach to your online visa application all relevant information and documentation as you would normally do for a paper based application (that is, copy of passport, invitation letter, letter of leave, proof of funds and other documents as applicable to you individual circumstances).**

**Please note - we have noticed that many people lodging their visa application online are not uploading supporting documents into ImmiAccount when lodging their visa. It is essential that you provide supporting documents when lodging online. If you do not, your visa may be refused, or may be subject to extensive delays**

1. **What do I do to get a visa to work in Australia?**

Information regarding visas that allow you to work in Australia is available online: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Work>

1. **I would like to move permanently to Australia as a skilled migrant. Where do I find more information?**

If you want to migrate to Australia as a skilled migrant and you have the skills Australia needs, you may need to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) in SkillSelect. More information is available online at Skilled Migration: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Work/Skil>

1. **I would like to study in Australia. What do I need to do?**

You may be eligible for a student visa. Information regarding student visas is available online at Study in Australia: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud>

1. **How do I apply for a visa?**

How you lodge a visa application depends on the type of visa application you wish to apply for. The following visa subclasses may be lodged at the Australian High Commission in Port Louis:

* Visitor visas (subclass 600) – Tourist and Business
* Transit visas
* Student visa
* Temporary Work (subclass 400)

Your application can be lodged at the Australian High Commission in Port Louis in one of three ways:

* online (subclass 600 Visitor Visas only): <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/600-/Visitor-e600-visa-online-applications>
* via courier service to the Australian High Commission in Port Louis
* in person or lodged by another person on your behalf (eg relative, friend, travel agent) at the Australian High Commission in Port Louis (**ONLY** during designated lodgement times)

**For Student visa applicants ONLY**:

Lodgement of applications can only be made by appointment once a visa application is complete and ready to be lodged. A request for appointment must be made by email to immigration.portlouis@dfat.gov.au

**FOR FAMILY MIGRATION APPLICATIONS**

If you wish to lodge a family visa application (including Partner, Prospective Spouse, Other Family, or Child visa), you must lodge your visa application at the Australian High Commission in Pretoria. For more information on how to lodge see the Pretoria Office’s website: <http://southafrica.embassy.gov.au/pret/Visas_and_Migration.html>

Family migration applications from Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Reunion Island and Comoros are processed at the Australian High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa.

If you have lodged a family visa application at the Australian High Commission in Pretoria (such as a partner or child visa), you can find information on processing times at: <http://southafrica.embassy.gov.au/pret/immi_how_long_to_process.html>

**FOR OTHER MIGRATION APPLICATIONS**

Some visa subclasses (including sponsored family visitors, and skilled migration) must be lodged in Australia. Please see [www.border.gov.au](http://www.border.gov.au) for more information.

1. **I am holder of a European, USA, Canadian, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and other passports – how do I apply for a visa?**

Passport holders from certain countries are eligible to apply online for an eVisitor (subclass 651) visa while passport holders from certain countries are eligible to apply online for an Electronic Travel Authority – ETA (subclass 601)

* See [**http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visi/Visi/Visitor-visas/eVisitor-online-application**](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visi/Visi/Visitor-visas/eVisitor-online-application)
* **See** [**http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Appl/Electronic-travel-authority**](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Appl/Electronic-travel-authority)
1. **Can I use a migration agent?**

You may wish to use the services of a migration agent but are under no obligation to do so. If you choose to use a migration agent you should use a registered migration agent. For more information on migration agents please see:

<http://www.border.gov.au/Busi/Migr/Agen>

<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Usin/Using-a-migration-agent-in-Australia>

<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Usin/Agents-outside-Australia>

1. **Where can I get application forms?**

You can download visa application forms from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website: <http://www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/forms>

1. **What documents do I have to provide when I lodge my application?**

It is important that you lodge a complete application, including the correct application form signed by the applicant and the correct application fee. It is very important to submit a complete application because it will provide all the important information necessary for a decision to be made. If you do not provide all the required documents your visa application may either be significantly delayed, or your visa application may be refused.

Visa checklists are available to assist you in lodging all required documents.

You should not provide original documents (unless specified). Instead you must provide certified (or notarised) copies. You should also provide an English translation of any document in another language. Any documents submitted in languages other than English which are not accompanied by a certified translation, cannot be taken into consideration in the assessment of your application.

You do not need to provide your passport as Australia does not issue visa labels for passports.

For more information please see:

Fees and charges: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Fees>

Visa applications forms: <http://www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/forms>

Visa checklists: <http://mauritius.embassy.gov.au/plut/Visas_and_Migration.html>

1. **Do I need a visa label in my passport?**

No. Visa labels do not exist anymore. Australia is visa label free, so visas are recorded electronically and will be confirmed by airline staff when you board your plane for Australia, and by Australian border officials when you arrive in Australia.

1. **How long does it take to process my visa application?**

The time taken to process an individual visa application depends on a number of factors, including the type of visa application, whether or not the visa application is lodged with all required documents, peak processing periods (like holiday periods) and the individual circumstances of the case.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection Client Service Charter and Service Standard is available at <http://www.border.gov.au/AccessandAccountability/Pages/client-services-charter.aspx> and <http://www.border.gov.au/about/access-accountability/service-standards>

The Australian High Commission in Port Louis is committed to meeting or exceeding these published service standards, however it is important that you note the following matters:

* The service standards are indicative only. Individual cases may take longer or shorter times to process depending on the individual circumstances of the case.
* The service standard only applies to complete applications. If you lodge your application without some of the required documentation, your application may experience significant delays and you may not be able to travel on your intended date of travel.
* A complete visa application may include a medical examination in some cases. Medical examinations can cause significant delays, particularly for visitor visa applications where the applicant is aged 75 years and over. For more information on circumstances requiring a medical examination, see: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Heal/meeting-the-health-requirement>
* If you need to travel to Australia within a short timeframe for compassionate and compelling reasons, please contact us via email to immigration.portlouis@dfat.gov.au to discuss your visa application. In some instances, we may be able to expedite your visa application.

**NOTE:** compelling and compassionate reasons include but are not limited to ‘***serious illness or death of family or friends in Australia’.***

**A gentle reminder for Visitor visa applicants:**

**It is in your interest to lodge your visa application as earlier as possible that is at least 3 months before your proposed travel date as much as possible. Note: Visitor visas are usually granted with a validity period of 12 months.**

**Please note that lodging your visa application much in advance of your proposed date of travel will enable this office process, assess and finalize your visa application in a timely manner which in turn will allow you sufficient time to prepare for your travel and travel on the scheduled date without any pressure.**

**If you enter into any financial commitments prior to the grant of the visa, you do so at your own risk.**

**Visitors, Temporary Residence and Returning Residents**

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| **Visa** | **Current Port Louis Processing Time** | **Global Processing Standard** |
| Visitors (Subclass 600) | Mauritian passports - 10 working daysNon-Mauritian passports - 15 working days | 1 month |
| Business Visitors (Subclass 600) | Mauritian passports - 10 working days Non-Mauritian passports - 15 working days | 1 month |
| Transit visas  | 10 working days | 1 month |
| Medical Treatment visas | 15 working days | 1 month |
| Resident Return visas | 10 working days | 2 weeks |

**A gentle reminder of Student visa applicants:**

**It is in your interest to lodge your visa application as earlier as possible that is at least 3 months before the commencement date of your course and/or your proposed travel date. Note: Student visas can be granted 4 months before the proposed commencement date of the course.**

**Please note that lodging your visa application much in advance of your course commencement date and proposed date of travel will enable this office process, assess and finalize your visa application in a timely manner which in turn will allow you sufficient time to prepare for your travel and enable you start your course on time without missing your orientation.**

**Students**

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| **Visa** | **Current Port Louis Processing Time** | **Global Processing Standard** |
| Student Assessment Level 1 and ALX | 14 working days | 14 working days |
| Student Assessment Level 2 | 21 working days | 21 working days |
| Student Assessment Level 3 | 3 months | 3 months |

**If you enter into any financial commitments prior to the grant of the visa, you do so at your own risk.**

1. **Can I book my travel before I apply for a visa?**

If you enter into any financial commitments prior to the grant of the visa, you do so at your own risk. Please lodge your visa with plenty of time before you plan to travel. If you lodge your visa at short notice, you may be disappointed if you are not granted your visa in time for your planned date of travel. We strongly advise that you do not confirm any travel plans until you have received a decision about your visa.

1. **How much does a visa cost?**

A full list of fees is available from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website, here: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Fees>

and from the Australian High Commission website <http://www.mauritius.embassy.gov.au/plut/Visas_and_Migration.html>

1. **How do I pay the visa application charge?**

You are able to pay using the following methods:

* Payable in Mauritian rupees in cash at the Australian High Commission in Port Louis during designated Visa Counter hours
* By bank issued cheque in Mauritian Rupees only made payable to ‘Australian High Commission’
* Via a Credit card (either your own or someone else’s – with their approval). The credit card is charged in AUD. The credit card details should be included in your visa application form (in the payment section) – note: there is an additional credit card surcharge payable
* A person pays on your behalf at one of the Immigration Offices in Australia (in AUD) and sends you a copy of the receipt.

**For online visa applications:** The visa application charge is payable by credit card only and charged in AUD).

*Note: The visa application charge is for the processing of the application and must be paid regardless of the outcome of the application. The visa application charge is non-refundable and there are only limited circumstances in which refunds can be given.*

1. **Will I need to have a medical examination or a chest x-ray?**

As from 20 November 2015 visa applicants from Mauritius and Seychelles are no longer required to undergo an immigration health examination for a **temporary visa** (Tourist/Business Visitor and Student visa)unless special significance applies (eg the presence of any significant medical conditions or depending on the nature and purpose of the visit and the study to be undertaken)

However, Visitor visa applicants aged 75 years and over will still be required to do a medical examination with an Immigration Panel Physician.

**NOTE:** Applicants from Madagascar and Comoros are required to undergo an immigration health examination for a temporary visa:

* A chest x-ray examination if you intend to spend more than 3 months in Australia as a Visitor
* A medical examination if you are aged 75 years and above
* A full health examination if you are applying for a Student visa

Please visit the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website for more information about medical requirements, including a list of immigration panel physician in the region who can undertake medical examinations on behalf of the Australian Government.

See: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa/Heal/meeting-the-health-requirement>

1. **Will I need to have an interview after I’ve applied for my visa?**

If you are required to attend an interview you will be contacted by an Australian Visa Officer after lodging the application.

1. **How can I contact your office?**

Email is the preferred method for essential inquiries regarding your visa application. Email the Australian Immigration Office processing your application and remember to quote your full name and passport number in your email, and the date and method of visa application lodgement to immigration.portlouis@dfat.gov.au

Your emailed enquiry will be answered within 2 business (working) days. If you have a compassionate and compelling reason to travel and you require urgent information, please send an email to this address with the word ‘**URGENT**’ in the subject heading. We will respond to all compassionate queries on the same business day.

If your application falls within the standard processing times you may not be responded to about the process of your application. Unnecessary inquiries delay the processing of all visa applications, including yours.

1. **Can anyone make an inquiry about my visa on my behalf? What is an authorised recipient?**

Please note that Australian privacy legislation generally prevents visa officers from disclosing information about visa applications to anyone other than the applicant. This means that if someone contacts the visa offices for you to inquire about your visa application, the visa office will not be able to provide them with any information unless you have provided the visa office with written authorisation to release information to the person.

See: <http://www.border.gov.au/Lega/Lega/Form/Immi-FAQs/who-is-an-authorised-recipient>

1. **What happens after my visa is approved?**

We will send you a visa grant notification letter by email if we grant you a visa. This letter will explain the conditions of the visa, including any entry requirements.

**Your visa is granted label free. This means you do not need a label affixed to your passport, you just need to bring the visa grant notification letter with your passport to the airport. There is no need to come to the High Commission for a visa.**

You should keep this letter with your passport when you travel to and from Australia. Keep it in a safe place for your reference when you are not travelling.

1. **What happens if my application for a visa is refused?**

Once a visa application has been refused, the decision cannot be reviewed by the Australian Immigration Office. If you do have review rights, your refusal notification letter will provide information on how to seek review.

It is always open to you to lodge a new visa application if you wish. However, unless circumstances changes significantly or if you provide substantial new information, there is no guarantee of a different outcome.

For more information on review of visa decisions:

See: <http://www.border.gov.au/Lega/Lega/Form/Immi-FAQs/what-if-my-visa-application-is-refused-or-my-visa-is-cancelled>

1. **I need to travel to Australia urgently. What can I do to get a visa quickly?**

If you have a compassionate and compelling reason to travel and you require urgent information, please send an email to immigration.portlouis@dfat.gov.au with the word ‘URGENT’ in the subject heading. We will respond to all compassionate queries the same business day.

In some instances, we may be able to expedite your visa application.

***Please be aware that previously purchased flights are not considered to be a compassionat***e ***and compelling reason for travel***. This is reserved normally for cases where there is an emergency reason for visiting Australia such as serious illness or death of family or friends in Australia.

1. **I have recently been issued with a new passport and my visa is in my old passport. How can I update my passport details?**

See: <http://www.border.gov.au/Lega/Lega/Form/Immi-FAQs/how-can-i-update-my-address-or-passport-details>

Please send a scanned copy of your new and previous passport to this office by email at immigration.portlouis@dfat.gov.au and this office will electronically linkthe details your new passport to your existing visa. You will then be able to travel on the new passport.

**29. I need to check the conditions of my visa and whether my visa is still valid for travelling to Australia.**

You can use [Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO)](http://www.immi.gov.au/Services/Pages/vevo.aspx) for free to check your visa details and entitlements

**Checking your visa status online using VEVO -** See: <http://www.border.gov.au/Busi/Visa/VEVO>

[VEVO](http://www.immi.gov.au/Services/Pages/vevo/vevo-overview.aspx) is a secure and free service available to you anywhere, anytime.

VEVO allows you to check your current visa details online and it provides more information about your visa conditions and entitlements than a visa label. Information provided in VEVO includes:

* your visa type
* visa grant and expiry dates
* period of stay
* visa grant number
* entries allowed
* all conditions that apply to your visa.

Accessing VEVO is a two-step process.

For the first step, you will need to enter one of the following:

* Transaction Reference Number (TRN) – we give you a TRN if you applied for your visa online
* Visa Grant Number - you can find this on your visa grant notification letter
* Visa Evidence Number - you can find this on your existing visa label, if you have one

To finish, you must provide all of the following in the second part of the access process:

* your date of birth
* your passport number (used in your visa application)
* country of passport

[Using VEVO](http://www.immi.gov.au/VEVO) is a secure and effective method to check the ‘real time’ details of your visa.

1. **How can I give feedback about the service I received?**

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection is committed to providing a high quality client service and to being open and accountable, fair, lawful and reasonable in in our dealings with clients.

Your feedback is valuable to us, and will help to improve the quality of our programs and service delivery.

If you wish to provide feedback about the service provided by the Visa and Immigration Section at the Australian High Commission in Port Louis (either positive or negative), you are able to do so via our ‘Global Feedback Online Form’, available at:

<http://www.border.gov.au/Immi-Legacy/Pages/feedback.aspx>

If you contact the Global Feedback Unit, we will acknowledge your feedback within one working day and respond to any complaint within 10 working days.

You are also welcome to review our Client Service Charter, which is available online here: <http://www.border.gov.au/AccessandAccountability/Pages/client-services-charter.aspx>

1. **Australian High Commission Public Holidays in 2016**

The Australian High Commission including the Visa Section will be closed on following days in 2016:

Friday 1 January 2016

Monday 1 February 2016

Monday 7 March 2016

Friday 25 March 2016

Monday 28 March 2016

Monday 25 April 2016

Monday 13 June 2016

Wednesday 6 July 2016

Tuesday 6 September 2016

Monday 26 December 2016

Tuesday 27 December 2016

Wednesday 28 December 2016

Thursday 29 December 2016

Friday 30 December 2016