

Approval to Operate a Student Exchange Program

Application form for non-school organisations

Non-school organisations can use this form to apply for approval to operate a student exchange program in Victoria.

Associated documents

* [Guidelines for Student Exchange Programs](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/becoming-a-student-exchange-organisation.aspx) (the Guidelines)

**About this application**

There are three sections to this application.

Part A — Applicant organisation information

Part B — Overseas partner(s)

Part C — Standards for approval: supporting documentation (evidence list)

Part D — PEO declaration

Supporting documentation

The applicant must attach supporting documentation as evidence they meet the minimum standards for the operation of a student exchange program for each item listed in the checklist provided at **Part C** of this application.

**Before submitting your application**

Check that the application is complete and has all required attachments. Incomplete applications will be returned, delaying the assessment of your application.

Privacy statement

The VRQA requires the information collected in this application for the purpose of approving organisations to provide student exchange programs under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the ETR Act). Section 4.9.4 of the ETR Act provides for the disclosure of information about an applicant for approval to operate a student exchange program to a prescribed person or body if the information relates to the performance of a function of that person or body, including:

* a department of the Commonwealth Government or an Australian state or territory government
* an agency of the Commonwealth.

The VRQA may also disclose information where required, permitted or authorised by law. The VRQA is committed to handling all personal information securely in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. To learn more about how the VRQA handles personal information, see the VRQA website:

* [Information Privacy Policy](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/privpolicy.docx)

Principal Executive Officer

The person nominated in this form as the Principal Executive Officer (PEO) assumes responsibility for the organisation’s compliance with legislative requirements in the ETR Act and the Guidelines. The PEO will be the point of contact for the organisation’s compliance under the ETR Act.

The application must include a Fit and Proper Person Declaration completed by the PEO. To get a copy of the declaration, see:

* [Student exchange visas](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/visas-and-forms.aspx)

Overseas partners

The applicant must provide details of each overseas partner involved in providing the student exchange program. For each partner organisation, the applicant must include a copy of a written agreement signed by the PEO of both organisations that contains:

* a joint commitment to operate a reciprocal student exchange program that meets the minimum standards listed in the Guidelines, and any regulatory requirements of the overseas partner’s regional or national government
* a termination provision that enables either party to cease the operation of the exchange program with a notice period.

Submitting your application

Applications must be submitted with all attachments in electronic format. Zipped files can be emailed to:

* [vrqa.student.exchange@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.student.exchange@education.vic.gov.au)

Alternatively, files may be shared with the VRQA via your preferred file sharing platform.

Please ensure each file name:

* 1. references the standard that the file responds to
  2. does not include any special characters
  3. uses underscores in place of spaces
  4. e.g. “5.5\_certificate\_of\_incorporation”.

**Application process**

**Step 1**: Complete and submit an application form

**Step 2:** Pay fees when invoiced

The VRQA will acknowledge your application and will send an invoice for the application fee (non-refundable) and the assessment fee by email.

The invoice must be paid in full before your application can be assessed. To pay fees online by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), BPAY or Post BillPay, follow the instructions on your invoice.

**Step 3:** Assessing your application

Following receipt of payment, the VRQA will assess your application and provide feedback. You will be notified if further information is required.

**Step 4:** Decision made on application

Applicants will receive formal advice regarding their application.

For more information about the application process, contact the International Education Unit:

* [vrqa.student.exchange@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.student.exchange@education.vic.gov.au)

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| Part A – Applicant organisation information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **A.1** | | **Organisation details** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.1.1 | | Legal entity name | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.1.2 | | Trading name | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.1.3 | | Australian Business Number | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.1.4 | | Address | | Street address | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Suburb/town | | |  | | | Postcode | | | |  | | |
| A.1.5 | | Postal address (if different) | | Street address | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Suburb/town | | |  | | | | Postcode | | | |  | |
| A.1.6 | | Email | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.1.7 | | Website | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.2 | | **Contact details** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.2.1 | | Principal Executive Officer | | Full name | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Position | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Email | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Telephone | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| A.2.2 | | Contact for day-to-day  operational matters | | Full name | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Position | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Email | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Telephone | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Should this person be included in correspondence about this application? | | | | |  | | | No |  | | | Yes |
| A.2.3 | | Contact for invoicing | | Full name | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Position | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Email | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Telephone | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| **A.3** | **Previous approval** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A.3.1 | Has the organisation previously been approved to operate a student exchange program? | |  | | No |  | | Yes | | | | | | | | |
| If yes, provide details about the period of approval and why the approval ended. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| Part B – Overseas partner(s) | | | | | | | | | |
| B.1 | | **Overseas partner #1** | | | | | | | |
| B.1.1 | Organisation name | |  | | | | | | |
| B.1.2 | Address | | Street address | |  | | | | |
| Suburb/town | |  | | Postcode | |  |
| Country | |  | | | | |
| B.1.3 | Organisation website | |  | | | | | | |
| B.1.4 | Frequency and duration of proposed exchange program | |  | | | | | | |
| B.1.5 | Year levels for inbound  and outbound students | |  | | | | | | |
| B.1.6 | MOU or agreement attached | |  | Yes | | | | | |
| B.1.7 | Date MOU or agreement signed | | DD | | | MM | | YYYY | |
| B.2 | | **Overseas partner #2** | | | | | | | |
| B.2.1 | Organisation name | |  | | | | | | |
| B.2.2 | Address | | Street address | |  | | | | |
| Suburb/town | |  | | Postcode | |  |
| Country | |  | | | | |
| B.2.3 | Organisation website | |  | | | | | | |
| B.2.4 | Frequency and duration of proposed exchange program | |  | | | | | | |
| B.2.5 | Year levels for inbound  and outbound students | |  | | | | | | |
| B.2.6 | MOU or agreement attached | |  | Yes | | | | | |
| B.2.7 | Date MOU or agreement signed | | DD | | | MM | | YYYY | |
| B.3 | | **Overseas partner #3** | | | | | | | |
| B.3.1 | Organisation name | |  | | | | | | |
| B.3.2 | Address | | Street address | |  | | | | |
| Suburb/town | |  | | Postcode | |  |
| Country | |  | | | | |
| B.3.3 | Organisation website | |  | | | | | | |
| B.3.4 | Frequency and duration of proposed exchange program | |  | | | | | | |
| B.3.5 | Year levels for inbound  and outbound students | |  | | | | | | |
| B.3.6 | MOU or agreement attached | |  | Yes | | | | | |
| B.3.7 | Date MOU or agreement signed | | DD | | | MM | | YYYY | |

Attach a separate list if additional fields are required.

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| Part C – Standards for approval: supporting documentation (evidence list) | | |
| The applicant must provide evidence that the organisation meets the following standards. | | |
| General | | |
| Standard | Please provide: | Document name and page number, or website URL: |
| 5.1 | A statement or a policy that confirms that the purpose of the organisation’s student exchange program is to provide a broad educational experience for students and to further international and intercultural understanding. |  |
| 5.2 | A policy that ensures all inbound exchange students will enter on subclass 500 student visas issued via an Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Student (AASES) form.  If the organisation also provides other visit or cultural programs for inbound or outbound students, the organisation must demonstrate:   * that these programs are not referred to or promoted as ‘student exchange’ * that the organisation makes clear to parents and guardians of participants in these programs that they are not student exchange programs under the Guidelines and are not regulated by the VRQA. |  |
| 5.3 | A policy and procedure for managing reciprocity that indicates that the organisation:   * will operate its student exchange program on a reciprocal basis, balancing the number of inbound and outbound exchange students * will submit details of its inbound and outbound student exchange programs to the VRQA, including the start and end dates for each student * will complete and submit a reciprocity form to the VRQA by 1 October each year. |  |
| **Student exchange organisation governance** | | |
| Standard | Please provide: | Document name and page number, or website URL: |
| 5.5 | Evidence of the organisation’s not-for-profit status (for example, a certificate of incorporation and/or registration as a not-for-profit organisation with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission)  Evidence of the organisation’s financial viability (for example, audited financial statements)  Evidence that the organisation’s public liability insurance covers inbound and outbound student exchange programs, and provides at least $10 million public liability insurance  Schedule of program fees, including participation fees and optional extras |  |
| 5.6 | Fit and Proper Person declarations for the PEO and all senior officers involved in the management of the organisation. | *Attach Fit and Proper Person declarations* |
| 5.7 | An overview of the organisation’s organisational structure that indicates how the structure:   * is effective and appropriate for the size of its operation * allows ready access by and communication with parents, schools, students and officers of appropriate agencies, including phone accessibility 24 hours per day, and seven days per week * enables them to make appropriate arrangements in Victoria for inbound exchange students’ accommodation, support and general welfare * can facilitate the provision of effective and appropriate support to participating inbound and outbound students   A register of local coordinators in Victoria (including their name, residential address, email address, telephone number) that shows each exchange student is provided with a local coordinator residing within 200km or two hours travel by car, whichever is shorter, from the student’s host family residence. |  |

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| 5.8 | A policy and procedure that ensures all officers, employees and volunteers working with children or with access to exchange students’ personal records or information in Victoria have a Working With Children Check (WWCC) or hold current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. |  |
| 5.9 | Evidence of a training program for local coordinators and student support staff that includes instruction in:   * conflict resolution * procedures for handling and reporting emergency situations and critical incidents * the Child Safe Standards and reporting requirements * procedures for handling and reporting allegations of sexual abuse or any other allegations of abuse or neglect * sexual conduct codes * the criteria to be used to screen potential host families and exercise good judgement in assessing if the host family will be able to provide the appropriate environment and support for an exchange student * the Guidelines, ETR Act and WWCC requirements as they relate to the role of the coordinator and student support staff. |  |
| 5.10 | A register of all third-party organisations used by the applicant organisation to support and deliver the student exchange program (third parties), including overseas partners. The register should include:   * the name of the third party * evidence that the third party is registered by relevant authorities * the type of arrangement made between the applicant organisation and the third party * information about the applicant organisation’s monitoring process in relation to the operations of the third party * details of whether the third party is registered as a student exchange organisation in any jurisdiction * information about the applicant organisation’s periodic evaluations of service delivery for both inbound and outbound students, for example an end-of-program satisfaction survey.   A copy of the applicant organisation’s contracts with third parties.  Evidence that the applicant organisation has ensured third parties have processes to adequately screen and select host families in accordance with the requirements of standard 5.10.  Evidence that third parties have a critical incident policies to respond to incidents including natural disasters, terrorism, student illness or injury, and breakdown in the hosting relationship.  A risk assessment of all outbound students’ accommodation and welfare arrangements. |  |
| **Administration of student exchange programs** | |  |
| Standard | Please provide: | Document name and page number, or website URL: |
| 5.11 | Evidence that the organisation will manage the student exchange program effectively, minimising changes to the program dates, duration, host school and host family  A policy and procedure to ensure that if the student exchange program involves the student being placed with more than one host family, the student and the student’s parents will be advised of this prior to the student’s first placement  An interstate transfer policy and procedure that reflects:   * the exceptional circumstances under which a transfer can take place * parental approval is required prior to transfer * approval of the VRQA and the interstate registration authority is required prior to transfer. |  |

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| 5.12 | Evidence of a screening process for selecting inbound and outbound students, ensuring that only students with appropriate language proficiency or demonstrated capacity to acquire a language, and maturity to benefit from the experience are selected to take part in a student exchange program.  A sample of the information provided to potential exchange students in plain English about:   * school terms and holiday breaks * the grounds on which the student’s exchange may be suspended or cancelled * the organisation’s policy and process for approving the host family, support and general welfare arrangements. |  |
| 5.13 | Evidence that the organisation ensures the level of health cover for program participants meets the requirements of standard 5.13 and is communicated to the parents of exchange students, for example in a pre-departure information pack. |  |
| Host families | | |
| Standard | Please provide: | Document name and page number, or website URL: |
| 5.14 | A policy and procedure for selecting and screening host families for inbound and outbound students that complies with the requirements of standard 5.14.  The evidence should demonstrate that the organisation has a process for the placement of more than one student with a host family, and the placement of exchange students with single-adult host families without children. |  |
| 5.15 | A policy and procedure that prevents any conflict of interest in accordance with standard 5.15. |  |
| **Support and supervision** | | |
| Standard | Please provide: | Document name and page number, or website URL: |
| 5.16 | A sample of an orientation program for both inbound and outbound students as well as the host families that meets the requirements of standard 5.16. |  |
| 5.17 | An explanation of how the organisation provides support to students and host families that includes appropriate reception, orientation, accommodation, transport and emergency arrangements, as well as providing ongoing support networks for exchange students. |  |
| 5.18 | An overview as to how the organisation will maintain a monthly schedule of personal contact with all exchange students and host families, face-to-face or by telephone. For outbound students, the organisation may satisfy this requirement by ensuring a monthly schedule of personal contact by the overseas partner in the host country. |  |
| 5.19 | A policy that ensures that the placement of an exchange student with a host family does not involve payment of board or a subsidy to the host family. If the organisation offers an outbound program fee discount for hosting students, the discount meets the requirements of standard 5.19. |  |
| 5.20 | A procedure for the enrolment of inbound exchange students in Victorian schools.  Evidence of an identified liaison officer to maintain effective liaison with Victorian schools hosting exchange students.  Procedures for ensuring that students are meeting the student visa conditions and fulfilling all relevant school requirements. For example, requirements could include abiding by the school’s code of conduct, the school rules, and policies about uniform and full-time school attendance. |  |

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| **Requirement to notify the VRQA** | | |
| Standard | Attach a policy and procedure for notifying the VRQA of changes: | Document name and page number, or website URL: |
| 5.21 | to the ownership, control, executive management or operation of the organisation within 14 days of the change |  |
| 5.22 | to a student’s program, such as changes to host school, host family, start or departure dates. The policy must ensure:   * the organisation notifies the VRQA prior to implementing any changes to a student exchange program, unless there are exceptional circumstances that require an immediate change * if a change is made to a student’s program due to exceptional circumstances, the organisation will notify the VRQA of the change within five working days * the student and their parents' consent to the change. |  |
| 5.23 | to the organisation’s third-party arrangements within 14 days of the change. If the organisation enters into a new third-party agreement, the VRQA must be advised of this new arrangement, and the organisation must provide details of the new arrangements and any supporting documents to the VRQA, including the contract. |  |
| **Protection measures for exchange students** | | |
| Standard | Please provide: | Document name and page number, or website URL: |
| 5.26 | A copy of the organisation’s emergency management plan and procedures to address critical incidents that meet the requirements of standard 5.26 for inbound and outbound exchange programs. |  |
| 5.27 | Evidence that the school has procedures in place to ensure that the VRQA is notified of the details of all outbound students prior to their departure from Australia.  An outbound student policy and procedure that provides for :   * a parent written agreement or student exchange contract with the SEO giving consent to:   + the SEO having responsibility for the student’s accommodation, support and general welfare for the duration of the exchange program, and   + the SEO having the authority to cancel the student’s exchange program and arrange the prompt safe return of the student to Australia, due to:   + global, national or regional emergency circumstances   + Australian national, state or territory government directives   + the student’s physical or mental health circumstances, and/or   + the student’s serious breaches of the SEO code of conduct   that require the SEO to exercise its responsibilities for the student’s welfareinformation be provided to parents about child protection laws in the destination country   * students be registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Smartraveller website prior to departure (where available) * outbound exchange students to only travel to the host country with international airlines that provide full transfer facilities and have age-appropriate procedures in the event of flight delays or interruptions * maintaining up-to-date emergency contact information for airlines, Australian embassies or high commissions and other relevant agencies for host and transit countries * students to be met on arrival in the destination country and assisted in their journey to the host family * parents or guardians of all outbound exchange students to receive confirmation of the student’s safe arrival at the host family as soon as practicable.   An example of the information provided to parents about child protection laws in the destination country |  |
| 5.28 | A Student Safety Card policy and procedures as evidence that the organisation meets the requirements of standard 5.28 for inbound and outbound exchange programs. |  |
| 5.29 | A policy and procedure for reporting incidents and allegations of sexual or physical abuse that meet the requirements of standard 5.29. |  |
| 5.30 | A complaints and appeals policy and procedures that address the requirements of standard 5.30 for inbound and outbound exchange programs. |  |
| 5.31 | A privacy policy that addresses the requirements of standard 5.31 for inbound and outbound exchange programs. |  |
| 5.32 | An internet and social media policy and procedures that address the requirements of standard 5.32 for inbound and outbound exchange programs. |  |
| 5.33 | Evidence of a process for periodically evaluating the student exchange program, including seeking post-program feedback from students, host families, schools and parents or guardians, and implementing improvements in response to the evaluation outcomes. The program evaluation should include a review of third-party arrangements. |  |
| Child Safe Standards | Evidence of policies and procedures to ensure the SEO is compliant with the Child Safe Standards. |  |

Part D – PEO Declaration

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| I declare that the information submitted in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| PEO name |  |
| PEO signature |  |
| Date | \_ \_ / \_ \_ / 202\_ |