



ANUSA's statement on the 485 Visas

The ANU Students' Association (ANUSA) calls on the federal government to urgently reconsider the proposed reforms to the age limit of the Temporary Graduate Visa 485 (TGV). ANUSA is an advocate for all students at the ANU, including undergraduate, postgraduate and HDR students. The proposed change (see page 69 of the Migration Strategy) to lower the upper age limit for the 485 visa, from 50 to 35, is a decision that will impact current and prospective international students.

The proposed change to lower the upper age limit to 35, is an arbitrary and drastic change that will impact many international students but most acutely the Higher Degree Research (HDR) community. The age limit disproportionately impacts HDR students, many of whom begin their research degrees in their 30s. Recent research found that almost half of HDR candidates with visas were over the age of 30. The temporary graduate visa is a crucial mechanism for international students with unique skills to transition into postdoctoral positions at Australian universities as well as to specialised jobs in the Australian workforce.

Reducing the age limit means that international students who are likely to already have more skills and experience will be less likely to choose Australia as a place to study. This policy also unfairly impacts mature aged students who had previously decided to study in Australia will now 'age out' of the temporary graduate visa upon graduation.

As such this policy is inconsistent to Australia's goals of developing a "skilled workforce" and preventing the issue of older graduates being left 'permanently temporary'. Rather, this inconsistent immigration policy will only cause further damage to Australia's appeal as a destination for international students.

If this change to the age limit for the TGV does occur, the Australian community will lose out on valuable skills, experience, and contributions of international students. The policy fails to recognise the contributions of international students in Australia to the life and economies of their communities, beyond an arbitrary age limit, and will have vast unintended consequences on Australia's ability to retain talent.

Not only has the age limit for the TGV been reduced but so has the duration of the visa itself. Barriers to education in this country continue to rise for us all but chiefly international students, with fees rising in late 2022.

The new policy demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of the needs of our HDR international student community, evidenced by the lack of consultation done with Australian universities and international student bodies. Further, the decision to announce the policy in December, just before the holidays and universities' shutdown period, meant many students were unable to access university resources and migration support, leading to great uncertainty over the holidays. The new migration strategy has made one thing clear: that the government risks losing out on international student talent and experience, if this arbitrary age limit of 35 is imposed on the TGV.

If you are an ANU student and require advice on how this will affect your visa application, please make a free legal appointment with one of our lawyers here:

<https://anusalegalservices.leapweb.com.au/>