



home affairs

Department:
Home Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Ms Noma Zondo
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Dear Ms Zondo

TEMPORARY REGISTRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON THE STRENGTH OF VALID VFS RECEIPTS ISSUED FOLLOWING SUBMISSION OF STUDY VISA APPLICATIONS, THE OUTCOMES OF WHICH ARE BEING AWAITED

The Department of Home Affairs formally requests the assistance and support of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) in advising public universities to permit the provisional registration of international students. Specifically, we recommend that universities accept valid VFS receipts as sufficient proof that a formal study visa application - whether for renewal, extension, or change of conditions - has been lodged and is currently awaiting an outcome.

This request is consistent with the Preamble to the Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002), which emphasizes the expeditious issuance of visas through simplified procedures and ensures the South African economy retains access to the essential contributions of foreign nationals. By implementing this measure, the Department aims to safeguard academic continuity and mitigate the operational risks posed by administrative processing delays.

It is proposed that this temporary arrangement remains effective until the end of the first semester for both new and renewal applications. Furthermore, students whose applications are currently pending at the appeals stage should be allowed to register on the strength of their VFS receipts until the conclusion of the second semester. In all instances, students must be required to submit their official visa outcomes to their respective institutions immediately upon receipt.

While we recognize the frustration and strain these delays cause for both students and universities, this first-semester measure is intended to maintain academic stability without compromising regulatory compliance. Please note that this concession is granted strictly for academic registration purposes and does not authorize international travel using a VFS receipt.

We appreciate your leadership in communicating this guidance across the sector and remain available to assist with any further inquiries.

Yours sincerely,

L.T. MAKODE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 27 January 2026