

Study Gold Coast

Working to support Students and Providers

In 2019, more than 35,000 international students chose the Gold Coast as their second home. The Gold Coast community is extremely grateful for the contribution these students make to the city, both financially and more broadly throughout our society.

The education sector injects \$1.9 billion into the local economy each year and supports 27,000 jobs. These students often work part-time and support our local industries such as tourism through the wonderful work they do in retail and hospitality.

International students play an integral role in shaping the personality of our city; the cultural influences that our residents and local students are able to experience, the lifelong friendships formed and the international partnerships forged as graduating alumni gain work experience in our city or return to their home countries and build successful careers.

The current COVID-19 crisis has caused major upheaval for all of us and none more so than our international student community. We know that many international students have lost their jobs and some are struggling to meet their living expenses. This is compounded by the fact that most are separated from family networks. Despite ongoing lobbying efforts by Study Gold Coast and the Australian international education sector, it is disappointing that to date, temporary visa holders have not been included in welfare assistance packages announced by the Federal Government.

Study Gold Coast is here to support the more than 200 international education and training providers in the city and our international student community. According to official data, as at February 2020 an estimated 20,000 international students remained in the city and it is expected that these numbers have dropped further since then. Study Gold Coast is determined to ensure that no international students fall through the cracks and they have access to the support they need during this difficult time we are all facing.

There are two layers of safety net for our international students:

1. Our providers are doing a wonderful job, transitioning learning online and providing health and wellbeing support to ensure the welfare of their enrolled students. A student's institution should be their first avenue if they're in need of support.

2. The second layer of support is via the [Gold Coast Student Hub](#), now offering all services online. All students in the city have access to free and unlimited counselling support with the ability to access assistance in relation to food, accommodation, how to get a job, an understanding of their rights, as well as health and wellbeing. This is a well established, full time service that has been operating for more than two years and is staffed by professional counsellors.

Study Gold Coast, our business community and member partners are working closely to support the long-term sustainability of the sector. Study Gold Coast has diverted funding to launch two programs to support our education and training provider members and their students. The first is an Advisory Panel to provide critical business expertise to institutions and the second is a Student Support Sponsorship Framework whereby providers can access funding to deliver welfare and support initiatives to their students. Both programs have been well received and we look forward to sharing good news stories as they become available.

The City of Gold Coast Council has also provided a raft of [immediate financial support](#) for local businesses including rent relief for businesses with commercial leases and interest free repayment agreements for infrastructure charges.

As we begin to emerge from the current crisis, our ability to rebuild the sector will be directly linked to how we care for international students during this time. Study Gold Coast is confident that we have a robust framework in place to ensure our international students feel safe and are supported in their second home in their time of need.

Gold Coast students can access more information via the [Help Centre](#) on our website and should they require assistance can book an appointment with one of our professional counsellors via the [Gold Coast Student Hub](#).