



Australian Government



Services  
Australia

# ABSTUDY travel information for boarding schools and hostels

A guide to pre-booking ABSTUDY travel with us or claiming a reimbursement after travel.

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# ABSTUDY travel

ABSTUDY secondary students who live away from home, and other approved travellers, can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance. This helps with the costs of different types of travel between home and school. We may sometimes approve ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for journeys from, or to, locations other than a person's usual home.

Education and boarding providers can help students who get ABSTUDY with travel requests.

They can either:

- ask us to pre-book travel before the trip
- claim a reimbursement after the trip.

There is information on the Services Australia website explaining [ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for boarding schools and hostels](#). If you need more help, you can call the National Business Gateway on **131 158** and select the option for ABSTUDY.



# Who can access ABSTUDY travel

Boarding schools and hostels can request ABSTUDY Fares Allowance to help with travel costs for approved travellers.

## Approved travellers

Approved travellers may be any of the following:

- a student approved for ABSTUDY boarding payments
- a student's parent or other family member
- a member of the student's community
- a supervisor travelling with a student
- a travel companion for an ill, injured, or disabled student
- an education institution representative travelling to an orientation or special purpose visit.

Travel type approved travellers may get

Travel type	Student	Family member	Community member	Supervisor	Traveling companion	Education institution representative
Start and end of year	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
School vacation	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Compassionate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Orientation visit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special purpose visit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency or disaster	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗



# ABSTUDY travel types

We can pre-book travel for ABSTUDY students and other approved travellers to travel between their home and your boarding school or hostel. Otherwise you can arrange the travel and claim a reimbursement after the trip.

If students are eligible, ABSTUDY Fares Allowance will pay for the following travel types:

- [start and end of year travel](#)
- [school vacation travel](#)
- [compassionate travel](#)
- [orientation visit travel](#)
- [special purpose visit travel](#)
- [emergency or disaster travel.](#)



## Start and end of year travel

Boarding schools and hostels can ask for ABSTUDY Fares Allowance to cover the cost of start and end of term travel for eligible students.

### What travel is covered

Eligible students can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for one journey from their permanent home to the term address at the start of the study year.

They can also get one journey from their term address to their permanent home if they either:

- stop studying
- finish study for the year.

### Who is covered

The following travellers can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for start and end of year travel:

- students
- supervisors
- travelling companions.

## School vacation travel

School vacation travel allows a secondary school student to be reunited with their family during school vacations.

### What travel is covered

Eligible students can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for:

- one return journey between their permanent home and the term address for each of the term vacation dates
- a maximum of 3 return journey per school year.

### Who is covered

The following travellers can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for school vacation travel:

- students
- supervisors
- travelling companions.



## Compassionate travel

Compassionate travel allows students to travel from their term address to their permanent home for compassionate reasons. It can also include close family members or community members visiting a sick or injured student at their term address.

You can book ABSTUDY compassionate travel if a student needs to go home during the term because:

- of the critical illness or injury of an immediate family member, such as a parent or guardian, grandparent, sibling
- of illness or injury of the student and they need to return home
- of the death or funeral of a family member
- the student needs to go to a community event under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander lore or kinship obligations.

A student who gets ABSTUDY may get help to travel home if they're expelled. We can only pay for this in specific circumstances, and when there's no other solution. This includes when all the following apply:

- the student is a possible risk to themselves or others, as defined in the relevant State or Territory requirements
- the school has taken steps as required by the relevant legislative requirements, including contacting parents and authorities like the police and Child Protection
- other local options have been exhausted, such as relocating the student with family members
- there is no other source of funding available.

To book travel for students who have been expelled, you need to email or call us on the National Business Gateway line. We'll email you the ABSTUDY expulsion checklist to complete. The principal or head of school must sign the checklist. You should then email the signed checklist to [ABSTUDY.travel](mailto:ABSTUDY.travel).

Compassionate travel is not available for suspended students.

## What travel is covered

Eligible students can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for a return journey between their term address and their permanent home.

We will approve a maximum of two return journeys per student per year. Under exceptional circumstances, travel beyond this may be approved.

## Who is covered

The following travellers can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for compassionate travel:

- students
- family members
- community members with significant ties to the student
- supervisors
- travelling companions.



## Emergency or disaster travel

Boarding schools and hostels can request ABSTUDY Fares Allowance when students need to travel during an emergency.

To get emergency or disaster travel help, the emergency event must be outside the control of the student, their parent or guardian, education, or boarding provider.

### What travel is covered

The Department of Social Service (DSS) decides what is reasonable in the circumstances of the emergency event as part of the approval.

There is no limit to emergency or disaster travel.

### Who is covered

The following travellers can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for emergency or disaster travel:

- students
- supervisors
- travelling companions.



## Orientation visit travel

Orientation travel helps students transition to new secondary boarding schools or hostels. Eligible students can travel to attend orientation activities, enrolment interviews or other selection processes.

Travel can occur:

- before they start secondary boarding
- before they move between secondary boarding schools.

A student can get help with travel if they're required to attend an interview or other selection process before they're accepted at the boarding school or hostel.

A student can also get help with travel if they intent to board away from home to attend secondary school and are either:

- from a remote Aboriginal community
- from a town in a remote location and it is likely that the student would experience serious problems of adjustment.

## What travel is covered

Eligible students can get a return journey between their home community and orientation location.

There is no limit to orientation visit travel.

## Who is covered

The following travellers can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for orientation activities:

- students
- family members
- community members with significant ties to the student
- supervisors
- travelling companions
- education institution representatives.



## Special purpose visit travel

Special purpose visit travel promotes family or community involvement in school activities. It is also available to students who would benefit from a visit from family or community members.

A boarding student will be eligible for special purpose visit travel if they are experiencing serious problems adjusting and a visit would help. Serious problems of adjustment include:

- prolonged homesickness
- poor attendance at classes
- behavioural problems which affect the student's academic performance
- behavioural problems that are in serious breach of the school's or boarding education institution's standards of behaviour.

Students will also be eligible for special purpose visit travel if any of the following apply:

- for their graduation from secondary studies
- to attend NAIDOC Week events
- to participate in school events such as plays, award ceremonies, parent-teacher interviews and sporting events.

## What travel is covered

Eligible students can get a return journey for a reasonable number of approved travellers, between the approved traveller's home community and the term address location for each event.

This is for a maximum of three events per calendar year. This limit does not apply to approved travellers travelling for NAIDOC week or graduation events.

## Who is covered

The following travellers can get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance for special purpose visit travel:

- students
- family members
- community members with significant ties to the student
- supervisors
- travelling companions
- education institution representatives.



# ABSTUDY pre-booked travel

## Responsibilities

### Your responsibilities

You're responsible for the following when you request ABSTUDY travel:

- submitting the request in the required [time frame](#)
- discussing the student's travel with their family
- letting us know if the student needs extra baggage requirements
- making sure the student has a travel [supervisor](#) if they need one
- making sure the student has a [Safe Travel Plan](#) for the trip
- helping the student safely complete their trip
- letting students know about their [responsibilities](#) as ABSTUDY travellers
- making sure parents or guardians know the students travel arrangements and itinerary
- letting parents or guardians know about their [responsibilities](#)
- letting other approved travellers know about their [responsibilities](#).

### Parent or guardian responsibilities

There are certain responsibilities a parent or guardian must meet when students get ABSTUDY Fares Allowance. Parents or guardians must contact us at least 7 weeks before the student needs to travel. If they are traveling for compassionate reasons they must contact us as soon as possible.

Parents or guardians should also:

- let you know if the student is travelling for the first time
- let you know if the student needs a supervisor to go with them
- not tell someone to collect the student mid-trip, as they could miss travel and owe money
- take the student to their travel arrangements and collect them when they return.

### Student responsibilities

Students travelling must do all of the following:

- have their itinerary and Safe Travel Plan with them at all times
- have photo ID that matches the name on their ticket
- bring any medications they need



- have a contact number for their school, including one for after hours
- report any travel changes or delays to their school straight away
- dress to meet the travel carrier's rules, for example, students must wear shoes
- make sure their baggage meets the travel carrier's weight and size allowances
- follow the travel carrier's rules at the transport terminal, including getting there early.

Students must also:

- follow supervisor instructions
- behave as per education institution standards and expectations
- travel at the time booked, unless changes have been approved by Services Australia
- travel non-stop during their trip, unless pre-approved by Services Australia in a special circumstance
- stay at the transport terminal when waiting for a connecting leg of their journey
- keep tickets, receipts, or other proof of extra travel costs to claim after the trip.

## Other approved traveller responsibilities

Other approved travellers travelling must do all of the following:

- always have their itinerary with them
- have photo ID that matches the name on their ticket
- bring any medications they need
- have a contact number for the student's school, including one for after hours
- report any travel changes or delays to their school straight away
- dress to meet the travel carrier's rules
- make sure their baggage meets the travel carrier's weight and size allowances
- follow the travel carrier's rules at the transport terminal, including getting there early.

Other approved travellers must also:

- behave as per the travel carrier's rules, standards, and expectations
- travel at the time booked, unless changes have been approved by Services Australia
- travel non-stop during their trip, unless pre-approved by Services Australia in a special circumstance
- stay at the transport terminal when waiting for a connecting leg of their journey
- keep tickets, receipts, or other proof of extra travel costs to claim after the trip.



# ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form

The [ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form](#) must be used to request, amend, or cancel pre-booked ABSTUDY travel arrangements with Services Australia.

## Details you must provide

The booking form asks for:

- the reason for travel
- the school or hostel contact details
- the name and date of birth of the person travelling
- the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the person travelling
- the type of traveller - such as student or supervisor
- 2 emergency contacts for each traveller
- preferred travel dates.

It also asks for:

- destinations
- whether the student has a [Safe Travel Plan](#)
- if the person will be travelling with anyone else, known as a 'linked traveller'
- the travel mode - such as air or bus.

You should make sure each student's name matches the photo ID they'll be carrying on the trip.

## Extra information

You can use the comments section of the booking form to give more information about the trip. For example, we need to know if the traveller:

- will have excess baggage
- needs accommodation
- declines to use a certain mode of transport, like a small plane
- needs transfers.

## Linked travellers

Linked travellers are people with ABSTUDY travel bookings who are travelling together. For example, if a supervisor will travel with several students, you need to link each student booking with the supervisor's booking.

It's important to fill in the linked traveller's sheet on the booking form so we know to book their journeys together.

## Helpful tips

Make sure you:

- enter all phone numbers using 10 digits with no spaces or brackets
- enter all dates in the format DD/MM/YYYY
- don't copy or paste information into the form
- don't delete or insert rows
- complete all relevant fields on both the Booking Information and Travel Arrangements sheets

- check and update your contact details prior to submitting each travel request.

We'll contact your emergency contacts in the event of a disruption. They are responsible for enacting the [Safe Travel Plan](#).

We'll use the afterhours contacts if there are schedule changes prior to departure, for example on a weekend for travel Monday.

## ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form User Guide

You can read the [How education providers can book travel with ABSTUDY](#) user guide on the Services Australia website for help on how to complete the booking form.

You can also watch the [ABSTUDY guide for providers: How to make a new travel booking](#) tutorial on YouTube.

## Submit the ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form

Fill in all the details in the booking form and email it to [ABSTUDY.travel](mailto:ABSTUDY.travel).

Include all students and other approved travellers who are travelling for the same event in the ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form found on our [website](#). The request should be submitted for all travellers in the same email.

### Timeframes

Send us the form at least 7 weeks before the travel date to request travel for 10 or more travellers.

Send us the form at least 10 days before the travel date for less than 10 travellers.

For urgent travel requests, call the National Business Gateway line on **131 158** and choose the ABSTUDY option. We'll book travel as quickly as possible, depending on availability.



# Safe Travel Plans

Safe Travel Plans are mandatory for Services Australia to pre-book ABSTUDY travel for students who are:

- in primary or secondary school
- under 18 years of age.

A Safe Travel Plan is an agreement between a student, their parents and their school or hostel. It gives everyone clear instructions on what to do if something unexpected happens during the trip.

Safe Travel Plans ensure students can travel safely between their boarding school or hostel and their home.

If there are travel disruptions or cancellations, the Safe Travel Plan gets activated.

Attach the student's Safe Travel Plan to their itinerary. They need to carry it when travelling.

A [Safe Travel Plan template](#) is available on the Department of Social Services website.

For more details on Safe Travel Plans, see the [Department of Social Services website](#).



# Supervisors

We recommend all students under 18 years of age travel with a supervisor. A supervisor is a responsible adult aged over 18, for example:

- a parent or guardian
- a person from the student's community
- a staff member from the school or hostel.

Students must travel with a supervisor where any of the following applies:

- they're younger than 12
- they're younger than 18 and are travelling over the weekend
- the travel provider says they need to
- their [Safe Travel Plan](#) doesn't include an alternative plan to deal with disrupted travel
- they've missed 2 or more pre-booked trips during the year without a valid reason
- they haven't met their travel responsibilities on previous trips.

We also encourage ABSTUDY students who are 12 to 17 to travel with a supervisor if:

- they're travelling to a school for the first time
- the journey involves more than one mode of travel, for example a charter flight and a commercial flight
- there are long wait times between travel connections
- they will need to stay overnight on the way
- they need support for emotional or psychological challenges.

Students may also only need a supervisor to meet them at connection points and help continue to the next leg of travel.



## Destinations other than permanent homes

A student can usually only get ABSTUDY travel only between their permanent home and study location. The permanent home is the location at which the student's parent or guardian normally resides.

In certain circumstances, Services Australia can approve ABSTUDY travel for a journey from, or to, a location other than the permanent home. The travel must be for one of the following:

- for reuniting a student with their immediate family who have temporarily moved
- if Services Australia approve a traveller travelling along their usual route to stop their travel before they reach school or home
- if Services Australia approve a traveller to start their travel from a location along their usual route that is not their usual starting point
- to attend a funeral where the parents have left their permanent home to start arrangements early, and there is no family to supervise the student or to arrange transport for the student to the temporary location of the parents
- if the student is unable to travel to or from their permanent home due to adverse weather events outside of their control, for example cyclones, flooding or road closures or flight groundings
- an emergency or disaster.

Depending on the situation, you may need to provide proof of these circumstances.

The cost for a journey from, or to, an alternate location must not be more than the amount approved for the previous travel. In exceptional circumstances, in consultation with DSS, ABSTUDY travel may be approved under ABSTUDY Additional Assistance where the travel costs are more than the amount for previous travel.

To request travel to a location other than the permanent home, please include details in your email and attach any supporting documents when you [submit your travel request](#).



# Changing ABSTUDY pre-booked travel

If you need to change travel due to exceptional circumstances, we can rebook it for you.

Exceptional circumstances may include when the student or other approved traveller can't travel due to:

- illness or injury of themselves or an immediate family member
- the death or funeral of an immediate or extended family member, like a parent, guardian, grandparent, or sibling
- taking part in a significant cultural event
- a change in travel destination because their parents or guardians have recently moved
- participating in extracurricular activities after we have booked their travel such as for a sports carnival.

Depending on the situation, you may need to provide proof of these circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances don't include:

- participation in a planned school or sporting event where the date of the activity is known prior to lodgement of a travel request
- wanting to attend a festival, show or social event
- requests to travel with a friend or school mate

We can't rebook travel if the change is for a reason other than exceptional circumstances. In this case, you or the student's family will need to book and pay for the travel. We may [reimburse you for the cost of travel](#) later.

We usually need at least 24 hours' notice to change travel arrangements. If the request to change travel is not received at least 24 hours before departure, a [penalty may be applied](#).

## Requesting a change

If you need to change ABSTUDY travel, use the [ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form](#).

In tab 1 of the booking spreadsheet, choose Amendment in the box next to Action.

In tab 2, put in the new travel dates. In the comments section:

- add any new information about accommodation, transfers, or meals
- tell us why you're requesting the change.

If we've booked travel for a supervisor, you'll also need to request to change their travel.

In tab 3 you don't need to do anything unless there will be a new supervisor. If so, you'll need to change the linked traveller details. You'll also need to request a booking for the new supervisor.

You can also watch the [ABSTUDY guide for providers: How to change a travel booking](#) video tutorial on YouTube to help complete the ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form.

Fill in all the details in the booking form and email it to [ABSTUDY.travel](mailto:ABSTUDY.travel).

## Cancelling ABSTUDY pre-booked travel

If you need to cancel travel due to exceptional circumstances, we may be able to rebook it for you. Carefully consider this. If the journey is cancelled, then another booking for the same journey may not be accepted.

Exceptional circumstances may include when the student or other approved traveller can't travel due to:

- illness or injury of themselves or an immediate family member
- the death or funeral of an immediate or extended family member, like a parent, guardian, grandparent, or sibling
- needing to take part in a significant cultural event
- the travel destination changing because their parents or guardians recently moved
- needing to participate in extracurricular activities after we booked their travel such as a sporting carnival.

Depending on the situation, you may need to provide proof of these circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances do not include such things as:

- participation in a planned school or sporting event where the date of the activity is known prior to lodgement of a travel request
- wanting to attend a festival, show or social event
- requests to travel with a friend or school mate

We usually need at least 24 hours' notice to cancel travel arrangements. If the request to cancel travel arrangements is not received at least 24 hours before departure, a [penalty may be applied](#).

## Requesting a cancellation

If you need to cancel ABSTUDY travel, use the [ABSTUDY Travel Authorisation Booking Form](#).

In tab 1 of the booking spreadsheet, choose Cancellation in the box next to Action.

In tab 2, tell us in the comments section why you're cancelling.

In tab 3 you don't need to do anything.

If we've booked travel for a supervisor, you'll also need to request to cancel their travel.

When you've filled in all the details in the booking form, email it to [ABSTUDY.travel](mailto:ABSTUDY.travel).



## Disrupted travel

If a disruption occurs outside of business hours, the education institution, boarding provider, supervisor or student must contact the travel management company afterhours number on **1300 659 110**. This can be found in the Contact Details and Amendments section at the top of each traveller's itinerary.

## Penalties for missed ABSTUDY pre-booked travel

There are penalties for students who miss travel we've booked.

For every trip they miss without a valid reason, they may get a debt of up to \$100. We'll continue to book travel for these students, but they may get further debts for every trip they miss.

Make sure your students know:

- what their travel arrangements are
- that missing travel can result in a debt.



# ABSTUDY travel reimbursements

You can claim a reimbursement if you've booked and paid for an ABSTUDY student's, or another approved traveller's, journey.

If you book and pay for an ABSTUDY student or other approved traveller to travel to or from home, we can reimburse some or all of the cost. The amount we pay will be the lesser of:

- the most reasonable cost of travel
- the actual cost of the trip.

To claim a reimbursement, you will need to:

- complete the [ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking form](#)
- complete an [ABSTUDY Fares Allowance Claim form \(SY032\)](#)
- provide copies of paid invoices or receipts.

## ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking form

To claim a reimbursement for the travel costs for an ABSTUDY student or other approved traveller, use the [ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking Form](#).

### Completing the ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking form

The [ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking form](#) is an Excel spreadsheet with 3 tabs.

You need to complete all the sections in tab 1 and tab 2.

Use the comments section in tab 2 to provide any other details we need to know. This includes anything you spent on accommodation or meals.

You only need to fill in tab 3 if there's a linked traveller. This is someone travelling with the student if you also booked and paid for their travel.

Watch the [ABSTUDY guide for providers: How to request a travel reimbursement](#) video on YouTube to learn how to fill in the form.

## Helpful tips

Make sure you:

- enter all phone numbers using 10 digits with no spaces or brackets
- enter all dates in the format DD/MM/YYYY
- don't copy or paste information into the form
- don't delete or insert rows
- complete all relevant fields on both the Booking Information and Travel Arrangements sheets.

If you're seeking a reimbursement for multiple students, put all their details on the same ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking form. You only need to send one ABSTUDY Fares Allowance Claim form.

We usually only approve travel between the student's home and term address. We sometimes approve travel to or from other locations. You'll need to send us additional information so we can assess this.

## Submitting the ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking form

Email the forms and copies of paid invoices or receipts to [ABSTUDY.travel](mailto:ABSTUDY.travel) when you've completed the following:

- [ABSTUDY Reimbursement Authorisation Booking form](#)
- [ABSTUDY Fares Allowance Claim form \(SY032\)](#)

## Time frames

You have at least a year after the travel to claim a reimbursement. The last day you can claim is either:

- 12 months after the start date of the travel
- 31 March in the year after the school year when the travel occurred.

[servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au)