

24 May 2024

Department of Home Affairs

Dear Colleagues,

Review of the points test

I am writing on behalf of Australia's 39 comprehensive universities, in response to the Review of the points test discussion paper released in April 2024. UA welcomes the Government's intent in the Migration Strategy to streamline and simplify the visa system to ensure it provides certain visa pathways for highly skilled migrants. Reforming the points test is part of this.

Universities are central to a migration system that supports Australia's future, both in terms of producing skilled international graduates and attracting global talent. Although the majority of Australia's university graduates are not seeking a permanent migration outcome, international graduates make excellent candidates for skilled migration and have the potential to make a valuable contribution to Australia's economy and society.

UA recommends that an Australian qualification, both in our cities and our regions, continues to be recognised and valued as part of the points test. We agree that high levels of English language proficiency support migrants to thrive in the workforce. It is vital that visa policy settings provide a clear pathway for these skilled migrants to enter the workforce in a timely manner, while ensuring the quality and integrity of the system is maintained.

Australian universities are innovative and at the cutting edge of emerging research and occupations. In order to support the mobility of talent needed for Australia's future growth, migration policies must be clear, agile and responsive to market shifts. This must be complemented with clear communication on changes to prospective migrants.

In reforming the points test, UA would support a more nuanced approach including:

- embedding a responsive review mechanism to ensure Australia remains at the forefront of innovation;
- utilising sliding scales;
- ensuring greater alignment with state and territory processes; and
- streamlining occupation lists.

The review of the points test comes during a period of significant and intense policy negotiations about the future of Australia's international education sector. UA will continue to seek the opportunity to co-design policy changes with the Government to ensure our sector can continue to deliver for Australia, our universities and our students.

In light of the current policy changes flagged and the timeframes proposed for these and other changes, UA would welcome a transition period for any changes associated with the points test of at least 12 months.

We are seeking certainty, stability and growth for international education, particularly given the importance of this sector to Australia's economy, and the financial stability of our universities.

We will continue to work closely with the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Education to ensure that Australia's world-class international education sector remains globally competitive and open to students from across the globe.

Yours sincerely,



Luke Sheehy
Chief Executive Officer, Universities Australia