

What to expect at your DIBP interview

After you have lodged your application for a protection visa with the Department of Immigration & Border Protection (DIBP), you will wait a few months before receiving a letter inviting you to an interview.

This Fact Sheet provides information on what you should do before the interview and what happens during the interview for an application for a Protection visa.

1. Review your application for a Protection visa

Read over your application for a Protection visa very carefully. Most importantly you should read your statement of claims which explains why you fear returning to your country of origin.

If there are relevant events which have occurred in your country of origin, or in your own life *since you have submitted your application*, and this is not included in your application, ensure that you write this down and state it clearly to the DIBP officer at the interview.

If you have noticed any mistakes in your application since it was submitted, or if you want to add anything new, also write that down.

It is important to be clear and consistent in your interview so you can help the officer understand your story. Try to answer their questions as directly and comprehensively as possible, and *provide details*.

2. Do I need to bring anything to the interview?

You may want to bring your letter inviting you to the interview.

You will also need to bring your photo identification.

You may also want to bring any original documents you may want to have considered with the application.

3. How do I get to the interview?

If you are in NSW, your interview will usually be held at

Department of Immigration & Citizenship

26 Lee Street

Sydney NSW 2000

You will need to take the lift to Level 3. On level 3 there is a phone which you can use to dial the extension number specified in the letter inviting you to the interview.

4. Who will be at the interview?

Your DIBP officer will be the person interviewing you. They will be making the decision in your case. They will need to decide whether or not you are owed protection obligations by Australia.. There may also be an interpreter if you have requested one.

Any other person you have requested to attend the interview with you, for example, a support person or friend. Please note, that you must inform your DIBP officer before the interview if you wish to bring someone.

5. What happens during the interview?

The interview will be audio recorded and kept on your file. If you are not comfortable being recorded, you will be given an opportunity to say so. The DIBP cannot record you unless they have your consent. You will be given a copy of the interview record when DIBP has made a decision in your case.

At the beginning of the interview, the DIBP officer will go through some formalities, for example, you will be asked to show him or her your photo identification, you will be asked whether or not you know the interpreter and whether you object to that interpreter.

If there are problems with the interpreter at the interview and during the course of the interview, you should raise this immediately with the DIBP officer.

The DIBP officer will ask you some questions about why you fear returning to your country of origin. The DIBP officer will ask you questions about the events which you have detailed in your statement and also discuss other information with you that they may have obtained.

If you do not understand a question, say so. If you cannot remember an event very clearly, say so.

Towards the end of the interview, the DIBP officer will put to you any information DIBP has which the decision maker may rely on to refuse your application. It may seem as though the DIBP officer does not believe your evidence, but this is not necessarily the case. The DIBP officer is raising these issues with you to be fair and to allow you to respond to the information.

You may respond to this information at the interview but, you may wish to respond at a later date in writing. If the issues are quite complicated, it may be best to have more time to consider your response. If you wish to do this, you may want to ask the DIBP officer where s/he obtained that information from and that you would like to have time to respond after the interview.

At the end of the interview, you should ask your DIBP officer what issues arise in your case so that you may have an opportunity to address them. You will then be asked if there is anything else you wish to add. It is very important that you have put all of the important parts of your case to the DIBP officer.

6. What happens after the interview?

Once you have been interviewed, the DIBP officer can make a decision on your case any time after the interview.

If you are going to provide more documents or evidence to the DIBP officer you should ask for a date which they are to be due so that the DIBP officer will not make a decision till then.

7. What happens once I have a decision?

The decision in your case will be sent to you in a letter.

If it is a positive decision, the letter will also contain your visa evidence card. This is your protection visa.

If it is a negative decision, the letter will contain the reasons for the DIBP officer's decision as to why you should not be granted the protection visa. You will have the option to appeal the DIBP's decision with the Administrative Appeals (AAT). You should seek legal advice as soon as possible after receiving your decision, as you have only **28 days** from the date you received the letter to lodge an application at the AAT.

8. Further advice

If you need further advice you can contact the RACS Telephone Advice service between 10:00 and 12:00 on Tuesday for free telephone advice and to make a face to face appointment or for a referral to another legal service or private Migration Agent.

Please note: This factsheet contains general information only. It does not constitute legal or migration advice. If you would like more detailed information on any aspect, please refer to RACS fact sheets available at www.racs.org.au. RACS is independent of the Department of Immigration. All assistance is free. This factsheet was prepared in September 2016.