

Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy and Procedures (International Students)



Name of Policy	Attendance Policy
Version	11.0
Comply with	Standard 13 of the National Code 2007
Date created	January 2008
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Responsible person	Student Admin Manager

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Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy and Procedure (International Students)

1. Policy objective

This policy provides guidelines for suspending, deferring or cancelling student enrolment with the Institute.

2. Responsibility

Student Administration Manager will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy and to ensure that staff and students are aware of its application and procedures.

3. Scope

This policy applies to international students enrolled in courses offered by the Institute.

4. Definitions

Deferral: postponement of commencement of course by prospective students who have been offered a place in courses offered by the Institute and have not yet commenced studies.

Suspension: temporary postponement of enrolment during a course.

Cancellation: cessation of enrolment in course (course withdrawal).

Unauthorised leave of absence: leave not formally approved by the Institute.

5. Policy and procedures

Student enrolment can be deferred, suspended or cancelled in limited circumstances by the Institute or by the student.

(a) Deferral, Suspension or Cancellation Initiated by the Institute

5.1 The Institute may defer commencement of a course when a course is not offered.

5.2 The Institute may suspend a student's enrolment during the course in the following instances:

- Student misbehaviour, as outlined in the Student Code of Behaviour and Discipline Procedures
- When implementing its intervention strategy for unsatisfactory course progress and the unit the student needs to undertake is not offered until a later date
- The student has provided documented evidence that compassionate or compelling circumstances preclude the student from attending classes.

5.3 The Institute may cancel a student's enrolment in the following instances:

- Student engages in serious misconduct as outlined in Student Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy and Procedures.

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- Continued unsatisfactory course progress, continuous absence from scheduled classes (in line with the Attendance Policy)
- Non-payment of outstanding fees.

5.4 In cases where suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment is initiated by the Institute, students will be notified and given 20 working days to access the Institute's internal complaints and appeals process (ref. Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures).

5.5 The change in enrolment status will not be made until the internal appeals process is completed.

5.6 Once the deferral, suspension or cancellation is processed, the Department of Education and Training will be notified via PRISMS.

5.7 Students will be informed that deferral of commencement, suspension or cancellation of enrolment has to be reported to the government agency issuing the student's visa which may affect the status of their student visa.

(b) Inactive Withdrawal

5.8 If a student fails to return from a deferment, suspension or holiday period or is absent without explanation for a period of two weeks, Student Services will attempt to contact the student and/or his/her agent and/or guardian (if applicable) to gather information about the student's absence.

5.9 If contact has been made and satisfactory evidence for the absence is presented with an expected return date, no further action will be taken by Student Services.

5.10 If no contact has been possible over a period of two weeks since the student's last attendance was reported to Student Services, then the student and his/her agent and/guardian (if applicable) will be informed by letter sent to their last known address, informing the student that they will be reported through PRISMS as an Active/Inactive Withdrawal for Cessation of Studies.

5.11 As per the Tuition Protection Service (TPS) policy, if a student fails to enrol and/or commence their course within 5 working days (one week) of the scheduled course commencement date without notifying to the Institute, the Institute deems it as an Inactive Withdrawal from the course by the student. The Institute will then report to TPS Director via PRISMS for non-commencement of their course.

5.12 The Inactive Withdrawal does not apply to those students who have been granted deferment or suspension of their enrolment for that study period.

(c) Deferral Initiated by the Student

International students may defer commencement of a course in the following circumstances:

- Lack of availability of a unit
- Delay in obtaining a student visa.

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- Compassionate or compelling circumstances (see below for details)

- 5.13 Students must request a deferral of the commencement of their course by writing to an Admissions Officer prior to course commencement. Deferral can be granted for up to 12 months. Students who defer cannot enrol unless their deferment has been cancelled.
- 5.14 Once the deferral is processed, the student will receive a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) letter and have a new enrolment agreement written to reflect the new commencement date.

(d) Suspension or Cancellation Initiated by the Student

International students who wish to suspend or cancel their enrolment during their course must obtain written approval from the Institute.

Students taking unauthorised leave of absence will have their attendance recorded as absent.

Students may be granted a temporary suspension or cancellation of enrolment on the grounds of compassionate or compelling circumstances.

- 5.16 To demonstrate that compassionate or compelling circumstances prevented class attendance, students must:
- Submit a suspension of studies application to Student Services
 - Provide documented evidence of the compassionate or compelling circumstances that prevented class attendance. See below for acceptable evidence.

(e) Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances

- 5.17 Compassionate or compelling circumstances are ones beyond the student's control and impact upon the student's attendance or course progress. Such circumstances, and documented evidence required, include but are not limited to:

Circumstance	Acceptable evidence ⁴
Serious illness or injury	Medical certificate ¹
Death of close family members such as parents or grandparents	Death certificate and evidence of relationship ²
Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel	Australian Government official advice ³ or other reliable source and; evidence of residency in affected area ²
Witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime or accident	Police report outlining involvement in a serious crime or accident; or medical reports
Other traumatic experience	Police or medical reports
RGIT was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit	No evidence required from student
Delay in visa processing	Correspondence from relevant Australian government department responsible for issuing student visa processing

FOOTNOTES:

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1. Medical documentation or a psychological report must include health professional's opinion regarding student's ability to attend classes for an extended period of time or recommendation of a reduced study load or break from study. Documentation must include the practitioner's name and contact details on official letterhead, the consultation date, student's details and the health professional's clinical opinion as to the period of the student's inability to study.

Medical certificates and reports may include doctor, dentist, psychologist or counsellor reports appropriate to the medical condition cited.

2. Evidence of relationship: this may include a letter from a highly regarded, independent member of the community that supports the relationship claims.
3. Evidence sourced from the relevant Australian Government Department responsible for Foreign Affairs of civil war/significant political unrest; or current media articles covering the event.
4. Statutory Declarations will be accepted in certain circumstances. However, such evidence will be scrutinised within the context of the student's overall academic history, progress and attendance. For students with poor progress and/or attendance, statutory declarations will not be accepted.

If it is found that a student is repeatedly requesting suspensions of studies on the basis of statutory declarations which casts doubt on the genuineness of such declarations, the student will no longer be permitted to use statutory declarations as supporting evidence.

(f) Additional Notes

In assessing suspension of studies applications, RGIT may also consider the student's:

- Previous requests for a suspension of studies
- Academic progress history
- Attendance history
- Teacher reports
- Other relevant evidence that assists the institute in assessing the application.

RGIT keeps records of documents submitted, as well as outcomes of decisions made. These records are kept in the student file.

Students may appeal the final decision following the usual process (ref. Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures).

(g) Circumstances not considered Compassionate and Compelling

5.19 The following circumstances will not be considered as compassionate and compelling:

1. Circumstances which are considered to be within the control of a student or which are to be expected in the normal course of the student's academic life.
2. Claims unable to be supported by documented evidence. For example, student claim that they were confused about a term end date and went on holiday early.
3. Claim that the student did not know about RGIT policy and procedures unless the student demonstrates that policy and procedures were never made available to the student.

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4. Inability to pay tuition fees and financial hardship are not considered compassionate/compelling circumstances as it is a student visa condition to have sufficient funds for study and living purposes. Students who experience financial strain that results negatively on their studies should contact Student Services for support in the first instance.
5. Work schedule conflicts with class schedule resulting in student not attending classes. This is not regarded as a circumstance beyond a student's control. International student visa holders must not rely on the proceeds of paid employment in Australia to support their studies or living costs.

(h) Retrospective Suspension of Studies

5.20 A retrospective suspension of studies application is one submitted after the student has taken unapproved leave. Unapproved leave is defined as leave taken without the student being granted a formal suspension of studies.

Backdating of suspension of studies applications will not be accepted except in special circumstances beyond student control. For example, a student who is in a coma as a result of a trauma and unable to contact the school may apply for a retrospective suspension of studies upon their recovery. On the other hand, a student who goes overseas for a holiday without approval and applies for a suspension of studies upon their return will have their application rejected.

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(i) Student Request for Course Suspension

- 5.23 To obtain approval for a suspension, students must submit the Suspension of Enrolment Form to Student Administration **before** the requested suspension date.
- 5.24 Students must attach all supporting documentation with the application.
- 5.25 Students will be advised to consult with the government agency issuing the student's visa to determine if the change in enrolment status will affect their visa.

(j) Student Request for Course Cancellation/Withdrawal

- 5.26 Students who seek to withdraw from a course should first seek advice from the Institute.
- 5.27 Students must request cancellation of enrolment of their course by submitting an Enrolment Cancellation Form to the Student Administration Officer.
- 5.28 Students must attach all supporting documentation and a current student card with their application.
- 5.29 Students will be advised of the refund policy and whether they will be financially liable for any fees as a result of the course withdrawal.
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- 5.32 Once the cancellation request is assessed, the student will be notified of the outcome.

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5.33 Once the cancellation is granted, the Institute will notify Department of Education and Training via PRISMS.

6. Associated Documents

- Enrolment Suspension Form
- Enrolment Cancellation Form
- Student Code of Behaviour and Discipline Procedures

7. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description of modifications
1	June 2008	Original
2	June 2009	No changes made
3	December 2009	Minor formatting
4	December 2010	Annual Review
5	December 2011	Annual Review
5.1	May 2012	Domain change
6	December 2012	Overall editing and update
7	July 2013	Overall editing and update
7.1	October 2013	Section names changes plus Inactive Withdrawal as per TPS policy
8.0	January 2015	Formatting, layout and review in light of new RTO Standards
10.0	Feb 2015	More details on documentation required for suspensions
11.0	June 2016	Overall editing and update