

## **P14 - STUDENT APPLICATION TO DEFER, TEMPORARILY SUSPEND STUDIES OR EXTEND COURSE DURATION**

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### **1 PURPOSE OF POLICY**

Registered training providers must inform potential students prior to their enrolment of the grounds on which their enrolment may be deferred or suspended.

### **2 SCOPE**

This policy applies to students enrolled within all vocational education and training programs offered by Australian Hospitality Skills Recognition (AHSR) and Australian Skills Management Institute (ASMI)

It does not address provider-instigated suspension or cancellation of a student due to misbehaviour; that is addressed under separate policies.

### **3 TERMINOLOGY**

Within this document, the following meanings apply:

- **Defer** – postpone commencement of studies;
- **Suspend** – to temporarily put commenced studies on hold;
- **Cancel** – permanently cancel (terminate) an enrolment;

### **4 DEFERMENT OF COMMENCEMENT - POLICY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

#### **4.1.1 LOCAL STUDENTS**

Students may apply for a delay in the commencement of their studies. The application needs to be in writing, addressed to the Director of Operations, and include sufficient supporting evidence to enable assessment of whether the circumstance(s) justify a deferment, based on the potential impact that the delay may have on the applicant's studies. Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the assessment process; documentary evidence will be retained on the student's file.

If the student is under 18 years of age, AHSR/ASMI must receive written approval from the parent or guardian of the deferred commencement date.

In all cases, documentary evidence relating to the application for deferral and the assessment process will be retained on the student's file.

## **4.1.2 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Before making an application to defer their commencement, international students should refer to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) website (<http://www.immi.gov.au/>), or telephone the Helpline 131 881, or visit the local DIBP office for advice on how the potential change to their enrolment may impact on their visa.

Students already granted a student visa may apply for a delay in the commencement of their studies on the grounds of compassionate or compelling circumstances (see Section 7 below). The application needs to be in writing, addressed to the Administration Office, and include sufficient supporting evidence to enable assessment of whether the circumstance(s) justify a deferment, based on the potential impact that the delay may have on the applicant's studies and visa. Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the assessment process.

Student visa holders who fail to arrive to commence their studies on the due date, and within 5 working days cannot be contacted or do not advise AHSR/ASMI of an alternative start date acceptable, will be reported to the DIBP via PRISMS.

AHSR/ASMI may defer a student's enrolment on the grounds of compassionate or compelling circumstances or misbehaviour. Where a deferment has been approved AHSR/ASMI must inform the student that deferring his or her enrolment may affect the student visa, and notify DET via PRISMS.

In all cases, documentary evidence relating to the application for deferral and the assessment process will be retained on the student's file.

## **5 TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF STUDIES**

### **5.1 POLICY (LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS)**

AHSR/ASMI designates holiday periods for each year. Students do not need to apply for leave for these periods; their course will be automatically suspended for that time. These dates are shown within the On-campus and Online Academic Calendars published on the web site.

Other than these designated holiday periods, AHSR/ASMI may approve applications for temporary suspension of studies (i.e. special leave) on the grounds of compelling and compassionate circumstances (see Section 6 for examples) or student misbehaviour.

If the local student is under 18 years of age, AHSR/ASMI must receive written approval from the parent or guardian of the temporary suspension of studies.

Where an International suspension has been approved AHSR/ASMI must inform the student that suspending his or her enrolment may affect the student visa, and notify DET via PRISMS.

- if the suspension is not initiated by the student, AHSR/ASMI must inform the student of the intent to suspend the enrolment and include notification that he or she has 20 working

days to access the complaints and appeals process. Refer to the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure for further information.

In all cases, documentary evidence relating to the application for temporary suspension of studies and the assessment process will be retained on the student's file.

## **5.2 TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF STUDIES APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

### **5.2.1 NON-VET FEE-HELP COURSES**

Students within courses that are not approved for VET FEE-HELP may apply for special leave if they have good reason for doing so (i.e. compassionate or compelling circumstances - see Section 6 for examples). To make an application, the student needs to complete an Application for Special Leave, which is available from Student Services and on Study Smart. The completed form should be submitted to the Director of Studies at least 10 working days in advance of the proposed commencement date of the requested leave period.

AHSR/ASMI may grant or decline any student's request for special leave, based on the potential impact that the temporary suspending of his/her studies may have on the applicant's studies or visa (if applicable). Documentary evidence will be retained on the student's file.

Before making an application for special leave, international students should refer to the DIBP website (<http://www.immi.gov.au/>), or telephone the Helpline 131 881, or visit the local DIBP office for advice on how the potential change to their enrolment status may impact on their visa.

### **5.2.2 VET FEE-HELP COURSES**

Should a student who is enrolled in a qualification approved for VET FEE-HELP choose to temporarily suspend his/her study or withdraw from a VET FEE-HELP Unit of Study, he/she must complete and submit the correct form to AHSR/ASMI before the close of business of the next Census Date applicable. The Withdrawal form can be accessed through the Student Services and Study Smart.

If AHSR/ASMI does not receive the completed form on or before the Census Date, the student will incur a debt with the Australian Government, and his/her FEE-HELP balance will be reduced unless special circumstances apply. (The Statement of VET Tuition Assurance and the Student Review Procedures for Re-crediting a FEE-HELP Balance can be found at <http://www.australianhospitalityskills.edu.au/about-enrolling/vet-fee-help>.)

AHSR and ASMI may grant or decline any student's request for special leave, based on the potential impact that the temporary suspending of his/her studies may have on the applicant's academic progress. Documentary evidence will be retained on the student's file.

## **6 EXTENSION OF COURSE DURATION**

Requests for extension(s) to the completion of study date are at the discretion of the delegated AHSR/ASMI officer, Director of Operations.

International Students:

- 1) AHSR/ASMI may only extend the duration of the student's study where it is clear that the student will not complete the course within the expected duration, as specified on the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), as the result of:
  - a) compassionate or compelling circumstances (see section 7)
  - b) an intervention strategy was implemented as the student was a risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress, or
  - c) an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted
- 2) Where there is a variation in the student's enrolment load which may affect the student's expected duration of study in accordance, records of the variation and the reasons for it are to be kept on the student file. The student must be reported via PRISMS and/or a new CoE issued when the student can only account for the variation(s) by extending his or her expected duration of study. The new expected duration of study specified in the student's CoE must not exceed the CRICOS registered course duration, unless approved under point 1 above.

## **7 COMPASSIONATE AND COMPELLING CIRCUMSTANCES**

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or well-being. These could include, but are not limited to:

- a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- b. bereavement of a close family member such as a parent or grandparent (where possible a death certificate should be provided);
- c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies; or
- d. a traumatic experience which could include:
- e. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident, or
- f. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime,
- g. and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports);
- h. where AHSR/ASMI was unable to offer a prerequisite unit; or
- i. inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.

Please note that the above are only some examples of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances. The Director of Operations will use his/her professional judgment to assess each case on its individual merits. He/she will consider documentary evidence provided to support the claim, and will retain copies of these documents in the student's file.

## 8 IMPACT OF SPECIAL LEAVE OR DEFERMENT—LOCAL STUDENT

In most qualifications, subjects need to be undertaken in a specific order. Students who take special leave may find that the sequencing of their schedule is negatively affected, resulting in an uneven study load or the need to extend their enrolment.

Version	Details	Date
1.0	Initial document creation	15 March 2015
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