

# Enrolment Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Procedures - International Students

## Section 1 - Preamble

- (1) The University has policies and rules which apply to deferring course commencement. [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 2 - Coursework Awards - General Provisions](#) governs the circumstances under which such a deferment may be granted and the conditions which apply to coursework students. Rules [7](#), [8](#), and [9](#) apply to Higher Degree by Research candidates.
- (2) The University also has policies and rules which apply to Leave of Absence. [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 2 - Coursework Awards - General Provisions](#) governs the circumstances under which the University will grant Leave of Absence (Leave of Absence) and the conditions which apply thereto. An application for Leave of Absence may be submitted through My Enrolment, the online portal to the University student records system.
- (3) The circumstances under which the Department of Home Affairs (DOHA) may agree to vary a student's visa for deferring course commencement or the taking of Leave of Absence are more limited than allowed for by the University's rules. Conditions are also imposed on the University by the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (the National Code) in relation to these matters. Refer to Standard 9 of the [National Code 2018](#) for further information.
- (4) The [National Code](#) also imposes requirements on the University in relation to cancelling a student's enrolment.
- (5) A consequence of these external requirements is that the deferring, suspending or cancelling of a student's enrolment may affect the status of the student's visa. Advice to this effect will be provided to students in the University's pre-acceptance information, orientation programs and International Student Guides, and reiterated by International Student Advisers when communicating with students seeking to defer or suspend enrolment, when they give notice of such intention.
- (6) DOHA assess each student's situation individually in accordance with their policies relating to student visas. When issuing a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) the International Student Advisers will advise students in writing, who are deferring commencement or temporarily suspending study, that they contact the local DOHA office for advice on how the potential change to enrolment status may impact upon their visa. They will also alert them to the potential for guidance from the DOHA website or telephone helpline 131 881.
- (7) The University will make its decisions regarding the assessing, approving and recording of deferment, suspension, or cancellation of student enrolments in accordance with the procedures outlined in this document.
- (8) These procedures are intended to ensure the University's actions in relation to deferring course commencement, the taking of Leave of Absence, and suspending or cancelling the enrolment of international students are compliant with the requirements Standard 9 of the [National Code](#).
- (9) These procedures are to be read in conjunction with, and use the same definitions as used in, the [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 2 - Coursework Awards - General Provisions](#).

# Section 2 - Procedures

## Part A - Deferring Course Commencement

(10) University [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 2 - Coursework Awards - General Provisions](#) permits a student to defer commencement of course for up to 12 months.

(11) Standard 9 of the [National Code](#) requires that for International Students, deferment of course commencement can only be granted for compassionate or compelling circumstances (i.e. Circumstances generally beyond the control of the student and that have an impact on the student's capacity or ability to progress through a course. These could include: serious illness or injury, bereavement of close family, political upheaval or natural disaster at home requiring emergency travel, or other traumatic experience that has impacted on the student's studies. Unavailability of units may be regarded as compelling grounds). Refer to the Compassionate and [Compelling Circumstances for Onshore International Students - Guidelines](#) for assessing student applications for deferment.

(12) The request to defer commencement must be made in writing to the Director, Admissions and provide evidence of the compassionate or compelling circumstances on which the request is based.

### Before Acceptance

(13) International Students who have been issued an offer of enrolment to a course, but have not yet accepted that offer (and thus no CoE has been raised), may request to defer commencement to a later study period.

(14) A deferment will be approved where the Director, Admissions is satisfied that the student has a genuine intention to commence study, has a compelling or compassionate reason for wishing to defer and is able to provide evidence that supports the grounds that are the basis for the claim.

(15) Where a deferment of commencement pre-acceptance is approved a new Letter of Offer will be issued by the the University.

(16) A written response to the students request will be provided by International Admissions within 10 working days.

(17) Where a request to defer pre-acceptance is refused the applicant will be advised in writing of the reasons for the refusal.

(18) Where a request to defer before acceptance is approved the International Admissions team member who handled the student's application is responsible for advising the student in writing that they have been granted approval to defer to a later study period and issuing a new Letter of Offer.

(19) The International Admissions team member who handled the application is also responsible for ensuring all correspondence and other relevant documentation regarding the request to defer commencement is retained on the applicant's file.

### After Acceptance

(20) International students who have accepted an offer of enrolment and have been issued a CoE may request to defer commencement to a later study period up to the census of their first study period.

(21) The request to defer commencement must be made in writing to the Director, Admissions and state the grounds on which the request is based.

(22) A deferment will be approved where the Director, Admissions is satisfied that the student has a compelling or compassionate reason for wishing to defer and is able to provide evidence that supports the grounds that are the

basis for the claim.

(23) A written response to the students request will be provided within 10 working days by the International Admissions team member responsible for case managing the original application for enrolment.

(24) The response will detail the outcome and if refused will detail the reasons for the refusal. Where a student's request for deferral has been approved the student will be informed that deferring enrolment may affect their student visa. The notice of approval will also advise the student to withdraw from any units they may be enrolled in during the period of deferral.

(25) Where a request to defer post-acceptance is approved the International Admissions team member who handled the student's application is responsible for advising DOHA using PRISMS (Provider Registration and International Student Management System) that the student has been granted approval to defer to a later study period.

(26) In reporting the deferment on PRISMS:

- a. If the status of the CoE on PRISMS is "approved":
  - i. choose "non-commencement of studies" - can enter reason, or
  - ii. choose "Change to CoE details" - can alter course start date of CoE.
  - iii. both options cancel the old and create a new CoE.
- b. If the status of the CoE on PRISMS is "Visa Granted":
  - i. choose "deferment of commencement",
  - ii. if the period of deferment does not alter the course end date then a deferment will be recorded and the CoE remains in force.
  - iii. If the end date is affected the CoE is likely to be cancelled and a new CoE will have to be raised.
- c. If the status of the CoE on PRISMS is "Studying" and the student has successfully completed one unit:
  - i. The student is effectively seeking Leave of Absence and should be considered under the procedures for assessing Leave of Absence detailed below.
  - ii. If no compelling or compassionate reason is offered to support the request then the CoE may be cancelled and the student returns home, and applies for a new visa when they wish to return, if necessary.

(27) The Student Administration Services team member who handled the student's application is also responsible for ensuring all correspondence and other relevant documentation regarding the request to defer commencement is retained on the students file.

## **Part B - Leave of Absence**

(28) Students are expected to complete their course of study without interruption. However where this is not possible the University makes reasonable provision for students who cannot do so to temporarily suspend their studies(refer to the [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 2 - Coursework Awards - General Provisions](#)).

(29) The University rules for Leave of Absence require that a student not be granted leave until they have completed at least one unit in their course of study with the University.

(30) The rules require an application for Leave of Absence is to be made via the online Leave of Absence Form in My Enrolment.

(31) Regardless of the grounds for granting Leave of Absence by the University under its Rules DOHA will only approve Leave of Absence on the basis of compassionate or compelling circumstances.

(32) Wherever possible, students will be supported by the University to manage their compassionate or compelling circumstances in an attempt to avoid a Leave of Absence or reduce the duration of leave, including but not limited to the support detailed in the [Support for Student Policy](#).

(33) All students applying for Leave of Absence are to be advised that deferring, suspending or cancelling their enrolment may affect their student visa. This advice will be given in the pre-acceptance information package distributed to new students, in the international orientation programs, and through the University's Southern Cross Global website. This advice should be reiterated to students when making application for Leave of Absence, preferably in writing.

(34) Students applying for a Leave of Absence will be advised that suspending their studies may impact their ability to complete their course within the expected duration of the COE. Students who return from Leave of Absence should be encouraged to make up missing units where possible or they may be required to apply an extension to their COE, in accordance with the [Course Progress and Completion Within Expected Durations of Study Policy](#).

(35) A written response to the student's application will be provided within 10 working days by the International Student Support Team.

(36) The response will detail the outcome. Where a student request for leave has been approved, the student will be informed that suspending enrolment may affect their visa. The notice of approval will also advise students to withdraw from any units they may be enrolled in during the period of suspension.

(37) The application for Leave of Absence will be refused if no compelling or compassionate reason is offered to support the request. If the student chooses to leave, then the COE will be cancelled and the student will be required to re-apply for their course if they wish to return.

(38) Students with approved Leave of Absence will normally be required by DOHA to leave Australia for the period of the Leave of Absence where it exceeds 28 days.

(39) The Department of Education approved Leave of Absence does not result in a visa being cancelled and so the student does not need to apply for a new visa on return to Australia after the Leave of Absence has expired.

(40) Leave of Absence or exclusion from class will be counted as absences for the purpose of estimating attendance where that is required e.g. the University's English Language Centres.

(41) The University will hold a student's place in a course for them for the period for which it granted leave of absence, which may be longer than the DOHA approved period. However, they will only be able to resume study in the course if granted a new visa.

(42) If a student fails to re-enrol after a period of Leave of Absence the student should be reported on PRISMS as "student notified cessation of studies" and there is no need to notify the student of the proposal to report nor to allow 20 days for an appeal to be lodged.

## **Part C - Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment**

(43) The University may suspend or cancel a student's enrolment for misconduct as described in the [Rules - Student Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct Rules](#).

(44) The University may cancel the enrolment of a student who does not pay fees when they are due - refer Section 5 of the [Rules - Fees, Charges and Sanctions](#).

(45) Where a student fails to re-enrol in at least one unit by the commencement of a compulsory study period, an International Student Advisor will attempt to contact the student to facilitate enrolment or discuss suspension options.

(46) Where a student fails to enrol in at least one unit in a compulsory study period or apply for Leave of Absence prior to census date, the University will regard a student as having abandoned their course (refer [Rules Relating to Awards - Rule 2 - Coursework Awards - General Provisions](#)) and thereby will be deemed to have notified the University of their cessation of studies. The student's cessation will in due course be reported on PRISMS as 'student notified cessation of studies' and there is no need to notify the student of the proposal to report not to allow 20 days for an appeal to be lodged.

(47) Should the University initiate the suspension or cancellation of a student's enrolment, it will:

- a. notify the student in writing of its intention and allow the student 20 working days to access the complaints and appeals process, unless extenuating circumstances apply; and
- b. if the student is under 18 years of age, apply relevant provisions of the [Welfare Arrangements of International Students Aged Under 18 Policy](#).

(48) Students have the right to apply for review of the decision within 20 working days of notification of the decision. The application for review should be directed to the Director, Student Support. The Decision of the Director, Student Support is final within the University.

(49) Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review process will be advised of their right to access an external review process through either [NSW Ombudsman](#) or [National Student Ombudsman](#).

(50) The student's enrolment will be maintained until the internal appeals process is completed. The University will not finalise the refusal status in PRISMS until:

- a. 20 working days has passed after the date of notification of refusal and the student has not requested a review of the determination; or
- b. The request for review has been determined and the student notified of the outcome.

(51) If extenuating circumstances apply, including medical concerns, severe depression or psychological issues, endangers or threatens to endanger other students, or is at risk of committing a criminal offense, the 20 working day appeal period may be reduced or extended. A claim of extenuating circumstances needs to be supported by evidence.

(52) The University will report the students changed enrolment status on PRISMS once the internal process is complete, even if the student pursues an external appeal process.

(53) Students whose enrolment is cancelled will be advised to apply for a refund of any fees as detailed in the [Refunds and Remission Procedures](#).

(54) The relevant campus International Student Adviser is responsible for ensuring students are reported on PRISMS when a decision is made to suspend or cancel their studies and for ensuring that all relevant correspondence and documentation is retained on the students files.

## **Part D - Reporting on PRISMS**

(55) The University will inform the Department of Education via PRISMS when a student's enrolment is deferred, suspended or cancelled.

(56) If the University advises the Department of Education through PRISMS that it is deferring or suspending a student's enrolment for a period without affecting the end date of the CoE there is no change to the CoE or the student's enrolment status on PRISMS ie. the student's CoE status will still be listed as 'studying'. However, the notice of deferment or suspension will be recorded in PRISMS and sent on to DOHA. This information will be kept for future reference.

(57) If the University advises the Department of Education through PRISMS that it is deferring or suspending a student's enrolment for a period which will affect the end date of the CoE PRISMS will cancel the original CoE, and immediately offer the University the opportunity to create a new CoE with a more appropriate end date. If the University does not know when the student will return, it can choose not to create a new CoE at that point, but to wait until the student has notified the provider of the intended date of return before creating the new CoE.

(58) If the University notifies the Department of Education through PRISMS that it wishes to permanently cancel (terminate) the student's enrolment then once this process is complete, the student's CoE status will be listed on PRISMS as 'cancelled'.

(59) If the student appeals the decision to defer, suspend or cancel his or her studies, the University will not notify the Department of Education of a change to the student's enrolment status until the internal complaints and appeals process is completed.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	23rd October 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	23rd October 2027
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice President (Students) and Registrar
<b>Approval Date</b>	23rd October 2024
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Brendon Nelson Vice President (Students) and Registrar
<b>Head of Work Unit</b>	Donna Moffitt Director, Student Administration Services +61 2 66203214
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Jacky Zhang Manager, International Student Support Services <hr/> Student Care and Support