

VPS14 DEFERRAL, SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION/WITHDRAWAL OF ENROLMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE – INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Abbreviations:

ATMC (The Company)	Australian Technical and Management College
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CoE	Confirmation of Enrolment
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DET	Department of Education and Training
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
LMS	Learning Management System
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Student Management System
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SVTS	Skills Victoria Training System
The National Code	The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Policy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to ensure that there is a documented process for assessing, approving and recording a deferment of the commencement of study or suspension of study requested by an international student, including maintaining a record of any decisions.

2 Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to international students, staff and members of decision-making bodies.

3 Principles

- 3.1 The management of international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study is fair, equitable, reasonable, transparent, and consistent.
- 3.2 The management of international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study complies with Standard 9 of the National Code.
- 3.3 Provide clear, comprehensive, accurate and easily accessible information on international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study. This includes publishing the potential implications for Australian student visa holders on the ATMC website and in the Student Handbook; and

- 3.4 ATMC takes proactive and pre-emptive action to address systemic issues identified through the review of instances of International student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study.

4 Policy Statements

4.1 Fairness, Equity, Reasonableness, Transparency and Consistency

- ATMC is committed to ensuring its activities are free from bias and unlawful discrimination.
- ATMC's processes and practices relating to its students exemplify fairness and reflect due process.
- ATMC's management of students must be equitable. This takes into account the particular circumstances and characteristics of students.
- Decision-making must be reasonable.
- Decisions take appropriate account of all relevant information and circumstances.
- The deliberations will arrive at conclusions based on sound reasoning:
 - It is prompt,
 - Objective, and
 - Straightforward.
- Decision outcomes result from consistently applied criteria, allowing for the fact that a changing regulatory environment may lead different decision outcomes over time.
- Processes and practices relating to the management international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study exemplify these values. They also ensure compliance with Standard 9 of the National Code.

4.2 Communication

- Fairness, equity and transparency underpin the effective communication of information regarding International student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study. Such information also covers the potential implications of deferment, suspension or cancellation of studies for Australian student visa holders.
- ATMC ensures that clear, comprehensive, accurate and easily accessible information is available on the website, and in the Student Handbook.
- The Written Agreement signed by international students in the offer acceptance process includes an outline of the matters covered in this Policy and Procedure.

4.3 Review and Improvement

- ATMC's approach to the management of international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study is regularly reviewed, utilising feedback from students and staff, advice from external experts, and benchmarking with processes and practices at other institutions.

- Issues identified in the review process, including issues concerning compliance with mandated standards and the proper application of this Policy and Procedure, are expeditiously addressed.
- Identified opportunities for improvement are considered and pursued where feasible.

Procedure

5 Student-Initiated Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 International students may apply to defer their study if they are unable, or do not wish, to:
 - 5.1.1.1 Commence their course on the scheduled course commencement date.
- 5.1.2 International students may apply for voluntary suspension of their study for a specified period because of compassionate or compelling circumstances.
- 5.1.3 International students may voluntarily withdraw from a course at any time.
- 5.1.4 The maximum time allowed for a deferment or voluntary suspension of study is one year.
- 5.1.5 Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have a detrimental impact on the student's capacity or ability to progress through a course. Compassionate or compelling circumstances can include:
 - 5.1.5.1 Serious illness or injury where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes or study,
 - 5.1.5.2 Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents, with supporting documentary evidence,
 - 5.1.5.3 Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring a student's emergency travel to their home country or evidence from a psychologist that the situation in their home country has had a detrimental impact on the student's studies,
 - 5.1.5.4 A permanent or temporary disability which is supported by a medical assessment that recommends a break from study or a reduced study load,
 - 5.1.5.5 A traumatic experience which could include, but is not limited to, involvement in or witnessing of an accident or a crime committed against the student, or the student has been a witness to a crime, and this has had impact on the student. These cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports, and
 - 5.1.5.6 Inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.
- 5.1.6 The above are examples provided by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances.

- 5.1.7 ATMC staff involved in the relevant decision-making process must exercise their professional judgement in determining if there are compassionate and compelling circumstances.
- 5.1.8 ATMC staff must assess each application on its individual merits. When determining whether compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, all documentary evidence provided to support the claim is considered.
 - 5.1.8.1 Copies of these documents, together with a detailed record of why the decision was made is retained in the student's file.
- 5.1.9 International students are advised of the circumstances and consequences regarding deferment, suspension, or cancellation of study prior to enrolment and during the student orientation process.
- 5.1.10 International students applying to defer, suspend or withdraw from their study will be reminded to use the Deferral Form for International Students; and that a successful application may affect their student visa.
- 5.1.11 International students are advised to contact the DHA regarding the potential impact any deferment, suspension or withdrawal of study may have on their student visa prior to formally lodging an application to defer, voluntarily suspend or withdraw from their study.
- 5.1.12 The maximum time allowed for a deferment or voluntary suspension of study is one year.

5.2 Deferring Commencement

- 5.2.1 International students wishing to defer the commencement date of their course must apply to the VET Manager in writing using the Deferral Form prior to the relevant course start date. The Application must be accompanied by documentation clearly demonstrating the compassionate or compelling reasons why the deferment should be granted.
- 5.2.2 Students are advised to retain their original documents for their own records and to submit certified copies with any applications for deferment or suspension.
- 5.2.3 In the event that the request for deferment of study demonstrates compassionate or compelling circumstances, the VET Manager will approve the application and advise the student in writing of the decision within five (5) working days.
- 5.2.4 Administrative staff will report the period of deferment granted on PRISMS
- 5.2.5 If the request for deferment of commencement of study does not meet the requirements for compassionate or compelling circumstances, the VET Manager will not approve the application, and will advise the student in writing within five (5) working days of the detailed reason for the decision.
- 5.2.6 If the request for deferment is not approved, the student is advised that they have twenty (20) working days to appeal the decision, in accordance with the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

- 5.2.7 The request for deferment of course commencement, any accompanying evidence and a copy of the written advice to the student of the decision will be placed on the student's file.

5.3 Voluntary Suspension of Study

- 5.3.1 Voluntary suspension of study is known as Leave of Absence at ATMC. International students wishing to take a Leave of Absence from their study must apply to the VET Manager in writing using the correct form. The form must be accompanied by documentation clearly demonstrating the compassionate or compelling reasons why the leave should be granted.
- 5.3.2 Students are advised to retain their original documents for their own records and to submit certified copies with any applications for deferment or suspension.
- 5.3.3 The VET Manager will make an appointment to meet with the student:
- 5.3.3.1 To discuss their request
 - 5.3.3.2 Advise the student if there are any fees owing to ATMC and discuss how payment would be settled or transferred, and
 - 5.3.3.3 Will also check if there are any library books, learning resources or other items on loan to the student and discuss potential arrangements for their return.
- 5.3.4 In the event that the request for Leave of Absence demonstrates compassionate or compelling circumstances, the VET Manager will approve the application and will advise the student in writing of the decision within five (5) working days.
- 5.3.5 The Administrative staff will report the period of leave of absence granted on PRISMS within thirty-one (31) days.
- 5.3.6 The VET Manager will:
- 5.3.6.1 Ensure that the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the period of suspension of study,
 - 5.3.6.2 Email the relevant staff advising them that the student has suspended their study so that records can be updated, and any necessary arrangements made, and
 - 5.3.6.3 Make a diary entry to set a reminder for when the student is due back.
- 5.3.7 If the request for Leave of Absence does not demonstrate compassionate or compelling circumstances, the VET Manager will not approve the request and will advise the student in writing within five (5) working days of the detailed reason for the decision.
- 5.3.7.1 The VET Manager must consider whether other ATMC student support resources may be appropriate. If so, the VET Manager must ensure these support resources are made available for the student.

- 5.3.8 If the request for Leave of Absence is not approved, the student is advised that they have twenty (20) working days to appeal the decision, in accordance with the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 5.3.9 If the student chooses to appeal, ATMC will maintain the student's enrolment, and will not notify any change to the student's enrolment status through PRISMS, until the appeal process is completed.
- 5.3.10 The request for Leave of Absence, any accompanying evidence, and a copy of the written advice to the student of the decision will be placed on the student's file.

5.4 **Reduced Study Load**

- 5.4.1 The Reduced Study Load process refers to an international student who is enrolled at ATMC and requests to reduce their study load from a full-time study load for a study period for compassionate or compelling reasons.
- 5.4.2 International students wishing to reduce their study load must apply to the VET Manager in writing using the Application for a Reduced Study Load Form, accompanied by documentation clearly demonstrating the compassionate or compelling reasons why the reduced study load should be granted.
- 5.4.3 Reduced Study Load requests may only be granted on limited grounds. These grounds include if a reduced enrolment load condition has been mandated in a Student Support Plan for students at risk of unsatisfactory course progress; if compassionate and compelling circumstances apply and can be evidenced by supporting documentation; and if extra study has been undertaken and completed by the student.
- 5.4.4 Reduced Study Load applications should be submitted by the semester census date. Retrospective Reduced Study Load applications may be approved in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.4.5 The VET Manager will confirm the outcome of the Reduced Study Load, including detailed reasons for the decision, within five (5) days of the Reduced Study Load application being received. A copy of the outcome is kept on the student's record.
- 5.4.6 If the request for Reduced Study Load is not approved, the student is advised that they have twenty (20) working days to appeal the decision, in accordance with the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
 - 5.4.6.1 The VET Manager must consider whether other ATMC student support resources may be appropriate. If so, the VET Manager must ensure these support resources are made available for the student.

5.5 **Voluntary Withdrawal from a Course**

- 5.5.1 Students wishing to voluntarily withdraw from their course will advise the VET Manager in writing using the Application for Withdrawal for International Students Form of their intention to withdraw.

- 5.5.2 A copy of the request and any supporting documentation, along with any comments from the VET Manager, is placed on the student's file.
- 5.5.3 The cancellation of the student's enrolment is formally processed. The Administration staff will report the withdrawal on PRISMS within thirty-one (31) days.
- 5.5.4 The Administration staff will:
 - 5.5.4.1 Ensure that the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation of enrolment.
 - 5.5.4.2 Email relevant staff advising them that the student's enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated, and any necessary arrangements are made.

5.6 **ATMC-Initiated Suspension and Cancellation of Study**

- 5.6.1 The cancellation of enrolment process refers to the initiation of cancelling an international student's enrolment in their course by ATMC.
- 5.6.2 ATMC may initiate cancellation of an international student's enrolment on the following grounds, but not limited to:
 - 5.6.2.1 Misbehaviour by the student,
 - 5.6.2.2 Student's failure to pay an amount they are required to pay ATMC to undertake or continue the courses stated in their Letter of Offer; or
 - 5.6.2.3 A breach of course progression requirements by the student.
- 5.6.3 ATMC's decision to initiate cancellation of an international student's enrolment will be in accordance with and follow the procedures of:
 - 5.6.3.1 The Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure,
 - 5.6.3.2 The Refund Policy and Procedure,
 - 5.6.3.3 The Attendance, Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure, and
 - 5.6.3.4 The Student Code of Conduct.
- 5.6.4 Students are advised in writing of ATMC's intention to cancel their enrolment and the detailed reasons for this decision.
- 5.6.5 Students are advised in writing of their right to appeal this decision through the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 5.6.6 Students have twenty (20) working days from the date their intention to cancel has been received to submit their appeal.
- 5.6.7 The cancellation of the international student's enrolment cannot take effect until the internal appeals process is completed, unless the international overseas student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk.

6 Responsibilities

6.1 The Chief Executive Officer

- 6.1.1 Effectively discharging the decision-maker role assigned to the CEO in this Policy and Procedure and aligned Policies and Procedures,
- 6.1.2 Ensuring that the system in place for managing international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study complies with mandated standards;
- 6.1.3 Ensuring that the system in place for managing international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study is regularly reviewed, identified deficiencies expeditiously addressed, and opportunities for improvement pursued where feasible.

6.2 The VET Manager

- 6.2.1 Effectively discharging the decision-maker role assigned to the VET Manager in this Policy and Procedure and aligned policies and procedures.

6.3 Staff

- 6.3.1 Acting in accordance with this Policy and Procedure; and
- 6.3.2 Seeking any advice required to properly and effectively meet their responsibilities in relation to this Policy and Procedure.

Definitions:

Deferment	Only applies prior to a student commencing their selected course of study, it is when a prospective student delays the commencement date of their study. Deferment cannot be applied for or be approved once a student has commenced their chosen course of study.
Suspension	When a student, who has already started yet has not completed their study, requires a leave of absence. If approved, their training plan is suspended with the clear intention that the student will recommence at an agreed date in the future (i.e. temporary suspension).
Cancellation/ withdrawal	When a student is removed from the current course enrolment before they have formally completed the planned training. This student will not be eligible for any subsequent courses for which they may also be registered. A cancellation/withdrawal can be initiated by the student or ATMC
Compulsory study period	A compulsory study period is one in which the student must enrol unless granted a deferment or suspension from enrolment or leave of absence under Standard 9 (Deferring, suspending or cancelling the student's enrolment). A compulsory study period does not include periods in which the student can elect to undertake additional studies.
Critical incident	A traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury.
Enrolment	Is where a student has been issued with a CoE to confirm acceptance by ATMC and is occupying a place in the CRICOS registered course for which the student was accepted and is progressing towards the completion of the course requirements. The period of

	enrolment includes scheduled breaks between study periods
Leave of absence	Is where a student has a requirement to miss scheduled training for reasons other than specified for a deferment or suspension of studies

Legislation

- CRICOS Standards Fact Sheets
- [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#)
- [National Code of Practice 2018](#) – Standards 9 and 10
- [National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011](#)
- Relevant State Government funding agreements
- [Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015](#)

ATMC Related Documents

- Attendance Policy and Procedure
- Cancellation/Withdrawal Application Form
- Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Deferral or Suspension Form
- International Student Selection, Admission and Enrolment Policy and Procedure
- Notification of Non-Attendance Form
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Leave Application Form
- Refund Application Form
- Refund Policy and Procedure

Version Control

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Acceptable reasons for deferral, suspension or leave of absence – requested by student:

ATMC may decide to accept an application from a student for deferral of commencement, suspension or cancellation/withdrawal of study on the following grounds:

Acceptable reason	Procedure
Where ATMC was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit, or the overseas student has failed a prerequisite unit and therefore faces a shortage of relevant units for which they are eligible to enrol.	Deferment or cancellation/withdrawal
Inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.	Deferment or cancellation/withdrawal
Inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the overseas student was unable to attend.	Deferment or cancellation/withdrawal
Inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided).	Deferment or cancellation/withdrawal
Inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country causing a delay and this has impacted on the overseas student's commencement of studies.	Deferment or cancellation/withdrawal
Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided).	Suspension or leave of absence
Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student's home country causing anxiousness of the student and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies.	Suspension, leave of absence or cancellation/withdrawal of studies
Traumatic experience whilst studying which could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; • Witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports); • Is a witness or is a victim of any fatality or serious injury; • Is a victim of a serious traffic collision (local & off shore); • Is witness to a murder or suicide; • Is a witness or victim of physical / sexual assault or domestic 	Suspension, leave of absence or cancellation/withdrawal of studies

Acceptable reason	Procedure
<p>violence;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a victim of severe verbal or psychological aggression; • Victim of a fire; • Victim of explosion or bomb threat; • Victim or witness of a hold up or attempted robbery; • Victim or witness of serious threats of violence; • Has been affected by storms or natural disasters (local); • Is affected by drug or alcohol abuse. 	

Appendix 2

Acceptable reasons for leave of absence, suspension or cancellation / withdrawal – requested by the student:

ATMC may decide to accept an application from a student for a leave of absence or suspension or cancellation / withdrawal of study for the following reasons:

Reason provided by student for approval	Procedure
Student wanting to return home to visit family for non-emergency reasons e.g. family reunion, wedding of immediate family member where the time period is less than four (4) weeks	Leave of absence application
Student wanting to have break from studies for that will exceed the published holiday period by ATMC	Suspension where the time period is more than four (4) weeks or leave of absence where the time period is less than four (4) weeks
ATMC not able to offer a pre-requisite unit required to start or complete a course of study	Suspension, leave of absence or cancellation/withdrawal of studies
Experiencing financial difficulties whilst studying	Suspension or cancellation/withdrawal
Experiencing dissatisfaction of study conditions	Cancellation/withdrawal or transfer to another provider
Poor academic progress causing the student to not to be able to continue current enrolment	Cancellation/withdrawal of enrolment or re-enrolment