

Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Studies Policy and Procedure



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Document Number	Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Studies Policy
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Owner	General Manager & Academic Manager
Review Cycle	Annual
Applicable To	All staff, students, agents, and contractors

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the circumstances in which a student may defer, suspend, or cancel their enrolment with Shafston, and the circumstances in which Shafston may initiate suspension or cancellation of a student's enrolment. This policy ensures compliance with Standard 9 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018).

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Cancellation	Cessation of enrolment in a course.
CoE	Confirmation of Enrolment.
Deferral	Postponement of the commencement of studies.
DESE	Department of Education, Skills and Employment.
DHA	Department of Home Affairs.
EQI	Education Queensland International.
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Student Management System.
Principal Course	Where the student visa has been issued for multiple courses, the highest-level course to be undertaken; usually the final course of study.
Suspension	Temporary postponement of enrolment during a course.

3. Policy

Requests from students for deferral and suspension of studies will only be granted in compassionate or compelling circumstances — those beyond the control of the student that have a significant impact on their course progress or wellbeing. These could include:

- Serious illness or injury, evidenced by a medical certificate stating the student was unable to attend classes;
- Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (death certificate required where possible);
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel;

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- A traumatic experience such as involvement in or witnessing of a serious accident or crime, evidenced by police or psychologist reports;
- After undertaking ELICOS studies, the student has not yet met the English language benchmark required for entry into their desired course, and Shafston agrees to defer commencement;
- Where Shafston is unable to offer a prerequisite unit or course;
- Delay in receiving a Student Visa preventing commencement on the scheduled date.

Each case will be assessed on its individual merits with reference to documentary evidence provided. Copies of supporting documents will be stored in the student's file.

Additional policy provisions:

- Where a student-initiated deferral or suspension is granted, the maximum period is twelve (12) months. If the student does not return after the suspension period expires, enrolment will be cancelled;
- All deferral applications will be assessed within five (5) working days;
- The final decision rests with the Academic Manager. Students have a right of appeal via the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure (OPOL009);
- Deferments will be recorded in PRISMS within 14 days for students Under 18, and within 31 days for students over 18;
- All records relating to deferrals, suspensions, and cancellations will be retained in the student's file.

4. Circumstances NOT Considered Compassionate or Compelling

The following are not considered compassionate or compelling circumstances at Shafston:

- Requests for early departure or late return from vacation, including inability to secure cheap flights;
- Returning home for festivals or family gatherings that occur during term time;
- General preference or change of plans without extenuating circumstance.

4A. Supporting Documentation Requirements

Copies of the following supporting documentation must be attached to any deferral, suspension, or cancellation application as applicable:

Medical certificate;

Death certificate;

Airline tickets — students must leave Australia at the commencement of the suspension period unless too ill to travel;

Receipt of tuition fees paid;

Any other supporting documentation relevant to the claim.

Supporting documents must be presented with deferral requests that result in more than eight weeks' break between study or that result in the course end date exceeding the Student Visa end date.

Where payment of full course fees for the deferral period has been made in full, Shafston may accept a partial payment of tuition fees to secure the student's place in the deferred term under extenuating circumstances. This will be solely at the discretion of Shafston.

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5. Provider-Initiated Suspension or Cancellation

Shafston may suspend or cancel a student's enrolment on the following grounds:

- Student misbehaviour or misconduct (including plagiarism, collusion, and cheating);
- Failure to pay fees as required under the written agreement;
- The course or packaged courses are no longer offered by Shafston;
- Breach of course progress or attendance requirements under Standard 8 of the National Code 2018;
- Student Visa non-compliance.

Before imposing a suspension or cancellation, Shafston will inform the student in writing of the intention, the reasons, and the student's right to appeal through the internal complaints and appeals process within twenty (20) working days. The suspension or cancellation will not take effect until the internal appeals process is completed, unless the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is at risk.

6. Visa Implications

When any deferral, suspension, or cancellation is actioned, Shafston will advise the student to seek guidance from DHA regarding the potential impact on their Student Visa. Changes will be reported to DESE via PRISMS under Section 19 of the ESOS Act. Students may contact DHA via homeaffairs.gov.au or on 131 881 (within Australia).

7. Procedure

7.1 Student-Initiated Deferral

Students submit a completed Application for Deferral Form with supporting documentation to the Student Support Officer (SSO). The SSO will:

- Assess the request against the compassionate and compelling circumstances criteria;
- For students Under 18: obtain written evidence of parent/legal guardian support;
- Notify DESE via PRISMS of the approved deferral;
- Notify EQI via email for HSP/PEP students Under 18;
- Issue a new CoE and updated CAAW letter (if applicable) reflecting the new commencement date;
- Advise the student of the decision within ten (10) working days;

Where the deferral is approved and does not affect the CoE end date (i.e., a short period of deferment), a new CoE will not be required but a notice of deferral will be recorded in PRISMS;

The student will be required to sign and return a new written agreement reflecting the new commencement date;

Process refunds as applicable in accordance with Shafston's Refund Policy;

Record the deferral in the Student Management System (aXcelerate) and include all documentation in the student's file.

- Where refused, advise in writing including reasons and right of appeal within twenty (20) working days.

7.2 Student-Initiated Suspension

Students must apply in writing at least ten (10) working days prior to the requested suspension date (retrospective suspension may be granted in emergencies). The SSO will process the request following the

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same assessment criteria and notification steps as for deferrals. CAAW letters must be placed on hold for students Under 18.

If it is unclear when the student will return, the SSO will wait until the student has advised of their intended return date before creating a new CoE;

If the student does not return after the approved suspension period, enrolment will be cancelled and DESE notified via PRISMS;

All decisions on suspension are to be advised to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the application;

Record the suspension in the Student Management System (aXcelerate) and include all documentation in the student's file.

7.3 Student-Initiated Cancellation (Withdrawal)

Students complete an Application for Withdrawal Form and meet with the SSO. Where the student is Under 18, written evidence of parent/legal guardian support is required. Upon approval, PRISMS will be updated, EQI notified (if applicable), refunds processed per the Refund Policy, and the student advised in writing that DHA has been informed.

The SSO will organise a meeting with the student and/or parent/guardian to discuss reasons for the withdrawal;

Ensure that the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation as relevant;

Inform all relevant personnel that the student's enrolment has been cancelled;

Record the cancellation in the Student Management System (aXcelerate) and include all documentation in the student's file.

7.4 Provider-Initiated Suspension or Cancellation

The SSO informs the Academic Manager of the at-risk student and initiates an intervention strategy. The student is informed in writing and the process is managed in accordance with the Academic and General Misconduct Policy. DESE is notified via PRISMS within 14 days of suspension. All documentation is retained in the student's file.

Where the student is Under 18, written evidence that the student's parent(s)/legal guardian supports the action must be obtained;

The Academic Manager will investigate the misbehaviour and arrive at an appropriate decision which may include: issuing a warning, charging for damage caused, requesting a formal apology, or suspending/cancelling enrolment;

Record all provider-initiated actions in the Student Management System (aXcelerate).

8. Transfer Restrictions

Overseas students cannot transfer to another registered provider before completing six calendar months of their principal course without Shafston's written release, except where:

- The releasing provider or course has ceased to be registered;
- A sanction imposed by the ESOS agency prevents the student from continuing;
- A government sponsor considers the change to be in the student's best interests and provides written support.

After six calendar months of the principal course, students may transfer without meeting these conditions.

Refer to the Student Transfer and Release Policy and Procedure for full details.

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9. Relevant Legislation

- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act);
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 — Standard 9;
- Standards for RTOs 2025.

Document Control

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END OF POLICY

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