

International Students

Policy

1. Deferral and suspension of studies

- Requests from students for deferral and suspension of studies will only be granted in compassionate or compelling circumstances which are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact on the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:
 - serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes.
 - bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (supported by a death certificate where possible).
 - major political upheaval, pandemic, or natural disaster either requiring emergency travel or making it dangerous or impossible to travel to Australia.
 - a traumatic experience that has impacted on the student which could include involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident or witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime (supported by police or psychologists' reports).
 - inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.
 - where SHIC is 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.

These circumstances are an example of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances; however, each case will be assessed on its individual merits.

- When determining whether compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, SHIC considers documentary evidence provided to support the claim, and stores copies of these documents in the student's file.
- SHIC will inform all students that deferment, suspension of enrolment may affect his or her student visa.
- Students wishing to suspend their enrolment must apply in writing to SHIC a minimum ten (10) working days prior to the requested suspension date unless evidence of extenuating circumstances preventing them from contacting SHIC is provided.
- Where a student-initiated deferral or suspension of enrolment is granted, SHIC will suspend an enrolment for an agreed period of time - to a maximum of 12 months. If the deferral is required for longer than 12 months, the student's application will be re-assessed. If the suspension period has expired and the student does not return, the student's enrolment will be cancelled.
- Students falling into this category will be reported as a Student Course Variation in PRISMS in accordance with Section 19 (1) of the ESOS Act with the following timeframes:
 - within 31 days of the decision for all other students.

2. Provider initiated suspension, cancellation or non-commencement of studies

- SHIC may suspend or cancel a student's enrolment including, for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

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- Misconduct by the student such as breach of Student Code of Conduct (as outlined in the Student Handbook or plagiarism, collusion or cheating on assessment tasks).
- The student's failure to pay an amount he or she was required to pay SHIC as stated in the written agreement.
- A breach of course progress or attendance requirements by the overseas student, which will occur in accordance with Standard 8 (Overseas student visa requirements) and as specified in SHIC's *Course Progress and Attendance Policy & Procedures*.
- Non-commencement of a course on the agreed start date without a revised course offer from SHIC.
- Where SHIC suspends or cancels a student's enrolment, before imposing a suspension or cancellation, SHIC will inform the student in writing of that intention and the reasons for doing so and advise the overseas student of the following:
 - To seek advice from DHA on the potential impact on their student visa (via the website or help line).
 - Of their right to appeal through the provider's internal complaints and appeals process, in accordance with Standard 10 (Complaints and Appeals), within 20 working days.
 - Where a student's safety is at risk, SHIC may immediately suspend or cancel a student without providing this advice and the 20-working day appeal period.
- Where a student chooses to access SHIC's internal appeals process in relation to this decision, the cancellation or suspension will not take effect or be reported in PRISMS until the internal appeals process is completed, unless the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk. Where a student chooses to access an external appeals process, DHA will still be notified via PRISMS.
- Unless an internal appeal is in process or granted, all provider-initiated suspension, cancellations or deferrals of studies will be reported as a Student Course Variation and a Student Default in PRISMS in accordance with Section 19 (1) and (2) of the ESOS Act within the following timeframes:
 - within 31 days of the decision for all other students and
 - as soon as practicable where the student has breached course progress/attendance requirements.

3. Student initiated cancellation of studies

- SHIC will inform all students that cancellation of enrolment may affect his or her student visa.
- Students may initiate cancellation of their studies at any time during their course, by completing a *Withdrawal Form*.
- Students who wish to withdraw within six months of their course to transfer to another provider will be processed as per SHIC's *Course Transfer Policy and Procedure*.
- This will be reported as a Student Course Variation and a Student Default in PRISMS in accordance with Section 19 (1) of the ESOS Act i.e. -
 - within 31 days of the decision for all other students.

4. Records

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- All records relating to deferrals, suspensions and cancellations will be kept on the student's file. This will include all decisions made.
- All cases will be logged on the *Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Register* and forwarded to the Admin Manager /CEO upon updating.

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