

1.1.7 Deferment, Suspension, Cancellation and Withdrawal Policy

This policy applies to Acknowledge Education (AE) / Stott's College and the International College of Hotel Management (ICHM). Hereinafter referred to collectively as "The Colleges".

1.0 Rationale

This document sets out the limited circumstances under which a student of Acknowledge Education (AE) / Stott's College, or ICHM may defer, suspend, cancel or withdraw a student's enrolment in any course at the College. This policy applies to both Domestic and International enrolments and is supported by specific procedures relevant to any additional operational requirements which may apply - such as but not limited to funding, student loans etc.

2.0 Scope

This document applies to all domestic and international students undertaking ELICOS, VCE, Vocational Education and Higher Education courses at AE / Stott's College, and/or ICHM (The Colleges). In the instance of international students this policy is to be considered in conjunction with Appendix 1 of 1.3.6 International Students Reporting on PRISMS Policy for instructions on how to report deferment, suspension, cancellation and withdrawal of international students.

3.0 Relevant Legislation

- Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS Act) 2000
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Victoria)
- Higher Education Support Act (2003)
- VET Student Loans Act (2016)

4.0 Policy Statement

The Colleges are committed to supporting students to maintain their enrolment and progress in their studies, while also fulfilling their obligations under applicable regulatory frameworks. This policy outlines the circumstances under which students - both domestic and international - may defer, suspend, withdraw from, or have their enrolment cancelled by the institution.

For the purposes of this policy:

Deferral refers to any student-initiated request to delay the commencement of studies before the course start date.

Suspension refers to any temporary interruption to enrolment that occurs after the course has commenced, whether initiated by the student (e.g. for compassionate or compelling reasons) or by the provider (e.g. for misconduct).

Cancellation refers to the Colleges ending the enrolment of a student.

Withdrawal refers to a student deciding to withdraw from their course enrolment (student default).

For domestic students, this policy aligns with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, the Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025, and the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA).

For international students, this policy aligns with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, particularly Standards 8 and 9. Where different obligations apply based on a student's visa status, these are clearly distinguished throughout the policy.

The Colleges recognise that deferment, suspension, and withdrawal may be initiated by the student or the provider, and that decisions must be fair, evidence-based, and consistently applied. This policy also outlines the required reporting obligations, including the use of PRISMS for international students and the associated visa implications.

5.0 Deferrals and Suspensions

- 5.1 Students can defer commencement of their course or temporarily suspend their enrolment once they have commenced studies under certain limited compassionate and compelling circumstances. Demonstrable evidence is required for these circumstances. Medical certificates, or equivalent, used as evidence must be signed by an Australian registered health practitioner or registered overseas equivalent.
- 5.2 Deferral requests must be made in writing prior to the start date of a student's CoE. Requests from students to suspend their studies after commencement must be made prior to the date of the suspension and not in retrospect, unless there are compelling or compassionate circumstances that prohibited them from submitting a suspension request in time.
- 5.3 Compassionate or compelling circumstances must exist beyond the student's control, which is supported with valid evidence. The Colleges will verify evidence provided. 'Compassionate or compelling' circumstances in this context are those beyond the control of the student and which have a significant impact upon the student's course progression or wellbeing. These include:
 - 5.3.1 serious illness or injury, where a valid medical certificate states that the overseas student was unable to attend classes for a significant period of time;
 - 5.3.2 hospitalisation of the student, including giving birth;
 - 5.3.3 bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (a death certificate to be provided);
 - 5.3.4 major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies;
 - 5.3.5 a traumatic experience, which could include:



5.3.5.1 involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident

5.3.5.2 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)

5.3.5.3 An international student's inability to obtain a student visa

5.3.5.4 Circumstances that are beyond the student's control and that make it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements of study.

5.4 AE may also seek to cancel or suspend the student's enrolment. The Colleges will initiate cancellation of student enrolment if the student:

5.4.1 Fails to pay fees (non-payment of fees);

5.4.2 Does not achieve satisfactory course progress as outlined in the Course Progress Policy and Procedure;

5.4.3 Breaches a condition of their student visa;

5.4.4 Misbehaves (when a student has committed a serious action such as criminal activity or offences, or misbehaves repeatedly after suspension);

5.4.5 Fails to engage in any agreed academic intervention strategies;

5.4.6 Fails to progress their course satisfactorily or meet course attendance requirements.

5.5 Where the Colleges initiate the suspension or cancellation, students will be provided with the opportunity to appeal this decision by the Colleges to suspend or cancel their studies within 20 days of receiving notification of its intention. Students should refer to the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure for further information.

5.6 For international students only:

5.6.1 The Colleges will inform international students of the effect that the deferral, suspension or cancellation of enrolment may have on their student visa.

5.6.2 The Colleges will report any course variation for international students to the Department of Education via PRISMS within the timeframes prescribed by the ESOS Act.

5.6.3 If the international student is under the age of 18, the cancellation of a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) does not cancel a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW), and the Colleges are still responsible for welfare arrangements until the CAAW ends on the nominated date or other arrangements have been made for the student's welfare and accommodation.

5.7 For domestic students only:

5.7.1 The Colleges will report any course variation for Skills First-funded students via SVTS, for VET students via AVETMISS Reporting, and for Higher Education students via TCSI reporting.

5.7.2 If the student withdraws from a part of the course on or before the census date, the student will not incur a VSL or HELP debt for the part of the course they attended and a refund for any up-front payment of tuition fees will be managed in line with the refund policy and procedure.

5.8 Short Term Leave

- 5.8.1 Students who require to be absent for a short period of time during a study period must demonstrate compassionate or compelling circumstances as defined in Section 5.3 above.
- 5.8.2 Applications for short-term leave must be submitted to (registrar@ae.edu.au) in writing with supporting documentation as outlined in Section 7.1.2 below.
- 5.8.3 Students will be marked as absent for classes that they miss during the granted short-term leave.
- 5.8.4 Students must continue attending class until an outcome for their request is received in writing.
- 5.8.5 The Colleges must inform an overseas student that any leave of absence may affect their student visa.

6.0 Non-Commencement & Cancellation by AE

6.1 Non-Commencing Students

A student is considered a non-commencing student if they fail to enrol in and/or attend their scheduled course by the agreed commencement date and have not received an approved deferral or suspension by the end of week 2 of any study period.

In the instance of a non-commencing international student the Colleges will notify the student and report on the ECOE, 14 days for students under 18 or 31 days for students 18 years or over as in accordance with ESOS and National Code requirements.

6.2 Course Cancellation - Insufficient Enrolments

If AE does not receive sufficient confirmed enrolments to commence a course, it may cancel the scheduled intake. Where practicable, this decision will be made at least one week before the commencement date. Affected students will be notified promptly and offered suitable alternative arrangements where available, which may include commencing in a later intake, transferring to another approved campus or class, or another suitable study option. Students who do not wish to accept an alternative arrangement may withdraw and receive a refund in accordance with AE's Refund Policy and any applicable legislative requirements.

Where a commenced class is no longer viable due to low student numbers, AE may discontinue that class provided students can continue their studies through an equivalent approved delivery arrangement without disadvantage. Where international students are affected, AE will comply with all obligations under the ESOS Act 2000, the National Code 2018, and any applicable provider default and refund requirements.

7.0 Deferrals or Suspensions under Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances

7.1 For international and domestic students:

- 7.1.1 Deferment or suspension of studies can be requested by a student on compassionate or compelling circumstances. Compassionate or compelling circumstances are defined in 5.3



above.

- 7.1.2 Students will be required to provide evidence of the compassionate or compelling circumstances, as follows:
- 7.1.2.1 Medical certificates provided as evidence must:
 - be issued by a registered specialist doctor;
 - state that the student has a medical condition and is unfit for class;
 - state the length of time the student will be unfit for studies;
 - include the doctor's contact details.
 - 7.1.2.2 Death certificates provided as evidence must be certified and translated into English if applicable.
 - 7.1.2.3 Evidence of an upheaval or disaster must be within reasonable proximity to the student's family.
 - 7.1.2.4 Evidence of a traumatic experience must include a police report or report from a psychologist or qualified professional and must include the contact details of the writer.
 - 7.1.2.5 In cases of mental health, the student must provide evidence of counselling and/or psychiatric treatment. This evidence must show that the student is receiving ongoing treatment for their illness. It should also show how and when this treatment plan will enable the student to resume full studies, noting that for overseas students a new CoE may not be able to be issued until such time that they can provide medical evidence clearing them to return to study.
- 7.1.3 Deferral / Suspension timeframes - Students must submit a request for deferral prior to end of week 2 of any study period for assessment. After this date, students may be liable for any tuition fees relating to enrolled units.
- 7.1.4 The colleges will inform an overseas student of the impact of deferring their enrolment on their student visa. As required under Section 19 of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000, the Head of Student Administration must notify the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Education, via PRISMS, where the student's enrolment is deferred, and keep complete records in the student's file. Refer to **1.3.6 International Student Reporting on PRISMS Policy and Appendix.**
- 7.1.5 Current students complete the course variation application form via Workflow which can be accessed through their student portal. Future students can download the form from the website and submit it to the Registrar by email: registrar@ae.edu.au.
- 7.1.6 All applications for deferment or suspension will be considered within 10 working days and the student notified of the outcome.
- 7.1.7 The final decision to grant or deny a deferment or suspension of studies lies with the Provost, Head of Student Administration or Head of Quality and Risk. Students have the right to appeal this decision. Students should refer to the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure for further information.

7.2 For international students only:

- 7.2.1 Students are advised that changes to their enrolment may affect their visa and are recommended to contact the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) or phone the DHA helpline on 131 881.
- 7.2.2 Deferment or suspension will be recorded on PRISMS.
- 7.3 For VSL students only:
 - 7.3.1 When the student defers, the Colleges will issue a progression form for the student's completion. The student is to complete the option that indicates they have deferred their studies. When the student resumes study or access to a loan, the student completes the progression form indicating the date of resumption of studies/loan access.

8.0 Withdrawal from Studies

- 8.1. The Colleges recognise that circumstances can reduce the student's capacity to complete their studies and that therefore students may choose to withdraw from a course.
- 8.2. Students should complete the application form and submit it to the Registrar via Workflow or by email: registrar@ae.edu.au. Where appropriate, the student will be offered options available to assist them in completing their studies.
- 8.3. The Colleges will report the student's change in enrolment:
 - 8.3.1. on the student management system and inform the course coordinator regarding the student's decision to withdraw.
 - 8.3.2. via PRISMS for international students; course variation will be reported by the Registrar.
 - 8.3.3. via SVTS For Skills First funded students; withdrawal, and hours of participation for each commenced unit will be submitted by the Quality Assurance team.
 - 8.3.4. through TCSI for VSL students; report data for the VSL Data Collections units will be submitted by the Quality Assurance team within 7 days of the student's withdrawal.
 - 8.3.5. through TCSI for HELP students; report data must be updated within 7 days of the student's withdrawal by the Quality Assurance team.
- 8.4. Where a student fails to enrol in and/or fails to return to commence a compulsory study period – without an approved deferment, suspension, or formal withdrawal – they are considered to have ceased their studies. This is treated as a student-initiated indirect withdrawal.
- 8.5. AE will issue reminder and warning notifications to students who are not enrolled in a consecutive compulsory study period, advising that their CoE may be cancelled if they do not act.
- 8.6. For HE, VET and VCE/ELICOS students over 18, if the student does not re-enrol within the required timeframe (prior to census date), the CoE will be cancelled in PRISMS as Student Notifies Cessation of Study within 31 days.
- 8.7. For Skills First-Funded Students, if the student withdraws after commencing a unit, the hours will still count towards their Skills First funding entitlement, even if they do not complete the unit. This may affect the student's eligibility for future government-subsidised training. Students must be informed of this impact before the withdrawal is finalised.

For Skills First students, AE must:

- Update the student's Training Plan to reflect the withdrawal or deferral.
 - Issue a revised Statement of Fees showing the change in tuition, government contribution and student contribution.
 - Provide the student with a copy of these updated documents.
- 8.8. For students under 18, if the student does not re-enrol within the required timeframe (within 14 days), the CoE will be cancelled in PRISMS as Student Notifies Cessation of Study within 14 days (immediately).

9.0 Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment Initiated by the colleges

- 9.1 The colleges may suspend or cancel a student's enrolment including, but not limited to, on the basis of:
- 9.1.1 misbehaviour by the student
 - 9.1.2 the student's failure to pay an amount he or she was required to pay the colleges to undertake or continue the course as stated in the written agreement
 - 9.1.3 a breach of course progress or attendance requirements by the overseas student, which must occur in accordance with Standard 8 (Overseas student visa requirements).

The final decision to cancel studies lies with the Head of Student Administration.

9.2 If the Colleges initiate a suspension or cancellation, the Colleges will:

- 9.2.1 inform the student of that intention and the reasons for doing so, in writing
- 9.2.2 advise the student of their right to appeal by following the **complaints and appeals policy and procedures**, in the instance of an overseas students this will be done accordance with Standard 10 (Complaints and appeals) of the National Code, within 20 working days.

9.3 When there is any deferral, suspension or cancellation action taken for an overseas student, the colleges will:

- 9.3.1 inform the overseas student of the need to seek advice from Immigration on the potential impact on his or her student visa
- 9.3.2 report the change to the overseas student's enrolment under section 19 of the ESOS Act.

9.4 The Registrar is responsible for recording and reporting the suspension of studies on RTO Manager, and reporting in PRISMS for international students.

9.5 The suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment shall not take effect 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.

10.0 Suspension or Cancellation for overseas students under the age of 18

- 10.1 Where the colleges have taken on responsibility for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for a student who is under 18 years of age, and the college

suspends or cancels the enrolment of the overseas student, the Colleges will continue to approve the welfare arrangements for that student until any of the following applies:

- 10.1.1 the student has alternative welfare arrangements approved by another registered provider
- 10.1.2 care of the student by a parent or nominated relative is approved by Immigration
- 10.1.3 the student leaves Australia
- 10.1.4 the colleges have notified Immigration under Standard 5.3.6 of the National Code that they are no longer able to approve the student's welfare arrangements or under Standard 5.5 that it has taken the required action after not being able to contact the student.

11.0 Notification and Record Keeping

11.1 For international and domestic students:

- 11.1.1 Where the suspension or cancellation is not initiated by the student, the Colleges will inform the student in writing of its intention to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment, including the reasons for doing so, and notify the student that they have 20 working days to appeal the intention via the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures.
- 11.1.2 If the student accesses the registered provider's internal complaints and appeals process, suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment under this standard cannot take effect until the internal appeals process is completed, unless extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student apply, including:
 - 11.1.2.1 the student refuses to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements (for students under 18 years of age);
 - 11.1.2.2 the student is missing;
 - 11.1.2.3 the student has physical or mental health concerns, including severe depression, which cause fear for the student's wellbeing;
 - 11.1.2.4 the student has engaged or threatened to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student or others; or
 - 11.1.2.5 the student is at risk of committing a criminal offence.

11.2 For international students only:

- 11.2.1 The Colleges will notify the Department of Home Affairs through PRISMS of deferment, suspension or cancellation of enrolment. The information will be electronically transferred to DHA.
- 11.2.2 The Colleges will also inform the student of the potential effect of the deferment, suspension or cancellation on his or her visa. The student should be advised to contact DHA.

12.0 Related Documents



Document Name

1.1.6 Provider Transfer Policy and Procedure
1.3.3 Course Progression Policy and Procedures
1.3.6 International Student Reporting on PRISMS Policy and Appendix
2.3.1 Student Code of Conduct
2.3.8 Welfare Arrangements for International Students Aged Under 18 Policy and Procedure
2.4.1 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures
6.2.5 International Students Refund of Fees Policy and Procedure
7.3.3 Student Record Management policy and procedures
VCE-POL-14 Course Progress Monitoring Policy and Procedures

13.0 Document Information

Document Name	Deferment, Suspension, Cancellation and Withdrawal Policy and Procedure
Document Number	1.1.7
Purpose	Student Course Variations. Compliance with National Code
Audience	☒ Staff ☒ Students ☒ Public
Category	Enrolment
Subcategory	Course Variation
Approval Date	05/08/2025
Effective Date	01/08/2025
Last Date of Approval	08/05/2026
Next Review Date	08/05/2028
Policy Advisor	Head of Student Administration, Head of Quality and Risk
Approving Authority	Governing Board
Contact	Quality Assurance Regulator.compliance@ae.edu.au

14.0 Change Log

Date	Version	By	Notes
19/04/2012	1.3		Last review/edit
17/04/2013	2.0	RF	New format, reviewed, made notice requirements more explicit
20/06/2014	2.1	BS	Change to AE, change gov. dep. names
30/06/2016	2.2	BS	Change logos, format document
10/01/2019	190110	BS	Remove DIPB
14/01/2022	2.3	TW	Update to current policy template
28/12/2023	3.0	GG	Update of policy to all regulatory context domestic and international
27/07/2025	4.0	SP	Review of policy in line with Standard 10 of the National Code



05/05/2026	4.1	HQR	• Multiple updates to strengthen compliance with National Code. • Strengthened policy around Compassionate and Compelling Grounds • Incorporated short-term leave policy • Incorporated non-commencement policy • Amended position titles • Amended to cover AE and ICHM (Relevant ICHM policies and Procedures to be superceded by this policy) • Change approving authority from 'Quality Assurance' to Governing Board
03/06/2026	4.2	EHB	Revisions to allow for retirement of Domestic VET student Cancellations, Withdrawals and Deferrals Policy.