

Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure



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1 PRELIMINARIES

Commencement

This policy and procedure commences on 30 April 2024

Purpose

This policy and procedure aims to provide a framework for assessing, approving and recording deferment of the commencement of study, suspension of study, or cancellation of study for students at the Polytechnic Institute Australia ('PIA'), in accordance with the requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act, National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 and Higher Education Support Act 2003.

Application

This policy and procedure applies to all students at PIA, and to all staff involved in assessing, approving and recording applications from students to defer, suspend or cancel their study.

2 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply in this document.

Cancellation: institute-initiated termination of enrolment.

Deferment: delaying commencement of the course, i.e. delaying first (initial) semester only.

Extension: increasing the duration and changing the expected completion date for a course.

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Suspension: not effectively enrolling in any units for the whole of any single subsequent semester (after having already enrolled in and completed at least one semester).

Withdrawal: student-initiated termination of enrolment.

3 POLICY

- 3.1 Under the requirements of the ESOS Act and National Code, if an international student has enrolled in a course, they are not permitted to defer commencement of their studies, or suspend their studies, except on the grounds of compassionate or compelling circumstances. If a student defers or suspends their studies on any other grounds, PIA has the right not to approve the request and may report the student as not complying with visa conditions.
- 3.2 A student who fails to disclose the details of previous higher education studies when applying to study at PIA may have their enrolment cancelled.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Registrar

The Registrar has responsibility to:

- Notify the relevant government departments via PRISMS when an international student
 - Defers commencement
 - Is granted a leave of absence
 - Withdraws
 - Is cancelled
- Interview students who wish to take a leave of absence
- Approve or deny requests for:
 - Deferment of commencement
 - Leave of absence
 - Withdrawal
- Issue warning letters for non-payment of fees
- Authorise all non-academic cases of provider initiated suspension or cancellation processes
- Inform students in writing of the approval or denial and the reason for denying requests of:
 - Deferment of commencement
 - Leave of absence
 - Withdrawal
 - Cancellation.
- Ensure international students are only cancelled after a Notice of Intent to Cancel has been issued and the grievance process is completed or has not been accessed in 20 working days.

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4.2 The Dean

The Dean has the responsibility to authorise all academic cases of provider initiated suspension or cancellation.

5 PROCEDURES

5.1 Deferment of Enrolment

5.1.1 Students may apply to the Registrar for a deferment of their enrolment.

5.1.2 Deferments will only be granted prior to course commencement and in the following limited circumstances:

5.1.2.1 Student visa delay (international students only); or

5.1.2.1 Compassionate or compelling circumstances (domestic and international students).

5.1.3 If a deferment application is approved, the student will receive a letter advising of the approval and confirming the new course dates, and the Student Acceptance Agreement will be amended to reflect the new course dates. All terms and conditions of the original student acceptance agreement will remain the same.

5.1.4 If an international student's enrolment is deferred for any reason and the student is studying on a student visa, PIA must notify the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs via PRISMS. The Registrar is responsible for such a notification.

5.1.5 International students must be made aware that any change to their enrolment may affect their student visa.

5.2 Student-initiated Suspension of Study

5.2.1 Student initiated suspensions will only be granted once the course has commenced and in the following limited circumstances:

5.2.1.1 Compassionate or compelling circumstances (domestic and international students); or

5.2.1.2 For the balance of the semester and renewable for one more semester.

5.2.2 Students must advise PIA in writing if they wish to apply for a voluntary suspension of their studies. The Registrar (or delegate) will interview the student to discuss their request.

5.2.3 The Registrar is required to collect demonstrable evidence to support a student-initiated suspension prior to considering approval.

5.2.4 The Registrar is required to consider the application and advise the student in writing of the decision within five (5) working days of the approval.

5.2.5 The Registrar will access PRISMS to advise the Department of Home Affairs of the period of suspension granted.

5.2.6 The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:

The student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the period of suspension of studies; and

The relevant personnel are emailed advising them that the student has suspended their study, so the student record can be updated.

5.2.7 If the request for suspension of studies is not granted, the Registrar will advise the student in writing within five (5) working days of the reason for the decision. The student will be advised that they have twenty (20) working days in which to appeal the decision through PIA's grievance handling procedures.

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- 5.2.8 The request for voluntary suspension of study, any accompanying evidence and a copy of the written advice to the student of the decision will be placed on the student's file.
- 5.2.9 If the student chooses to access PIA's grievance process, the Institute will maintain the student's enrolment until the grievance process is completed and the Institute will not notify the Department of Home Affairs of any change to the student's enrolment status through PRISMS.
- 5.2.10 If an international student's enrolment is suspended for any reason and the student is studying on a student visa, PIA must notify the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs via PRISMS. The Registrar is responsible for such a notification.
- 5.2.11 International students must be made aware that any change to their enrolment may affect their student visa.
- 5.3 PIA-initiated Suspension of Study
- 5.3.1 All students are subject to the potential for PIA-initiated suspension of study or cancellation of enrolment in the event of either academic or non-academic misconduct, unsatisfactory academic performance or non-payment of tuition fees.
- 5.3.2 Suspension due to unsatisfactory academic performance is covered by PIA's Course Progression Policy and Procedure. Students will be made aware of the circumstances in which their studies may be suspended for misconduct prior to enrolment.
- 5.3.3 The following outlines the process of a PIA-initiated suspension:
- 5.3.4 The Dean may consider suspending a student's studies or cancelling their enrolment for misconduct and will collect supporting evidence in order to make their decision.
- 5.3.5 In the event that the Dean approves the request to suspend a student's studies, the student will be informed in writing of the intention to suspend them, including the reasons for the decision, and the intention to notify the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs of the change in enrolment status. In addition, the student will be advised that if they wish to appeal the decision, they have twenty (20) working days in which to access PIA's grievance handling process.
- 5.3.6 A copy of the letter and supporting evidence, along with the Dean's documented decision, is placed on the student's file.
- 5.4 Student Withdrawal
- 5.4.1 A Student may withdraw from a unit of study or a course they have enrolled in at any time during the teaching period.
- 5.4.1.1 Where a student withdraws prior to census date this is considered a withdrawal **without** academic penalty.
- 5.4.1.2 Where a student withdraws after census date this is considered a withdrawal with academic penalty
- 5.4.2 A formal withdrawal is done by completing the withdrawal form that is located on PIA website under forms and submitting to PIA student services by email: admin@pia.edu.au
- 5.4.3 All Requests for withdrawal must be submitted formally through Student Services. Until formal withdrawal has occurred the student remains liable for all fees associated with their enrolment.
- 5.4.4 Students will be notified of the outcome within five (5) working days from the date of receipt of application.

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5.5 Abandonment of Studies

- 5.5.1 A student may only take a leave of absence through formal application as referred to under Student initiated suspension.
- 5.5.2 Students who take a leave of absence without approval will be categorised as having abandoned their studies, irrespective of the duration of time absent.
- 5.5.3 Students who are categorised as having abandoned their studies forfeit their right to a refund.
- 5.5.4 Students who are categorised as having abandoned their studies will be issued with a notification of intention to report a change in their enrolment status to the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs as they are in breach of their visa conditions.
- 5.5.5 The Registrar will advise the student in writing of the notification of intention to report. The student will be advised that they have ten (10) working days in which to appeal the decision through PIA's grievance handling procedures.

5.6 PIA-initiated Cancellation of Enrolment

- 5.6.1 PIA may cancel a student's enrolment on the basis of the following:
 - 5.6.1.1 misconduct by the student; or
 - 5.6.1.2 the student's failure to pay an amount he or she was required to pay to PIA to undertake or continue the course as stated in the written agreement; or
 - 5.6.1.3 a breach of course progress or attendance requirements by the student. (International student's compliance with Standard 8 (Overseas student visa requirements)); or
 - 5.6.1.4 a failure to disclose the result of previous higher education studies in Australia when applying for admission.
- 5.6.2 A student's enrolment may be immediately cancelled without the opportunity for an appeal where the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk.
- 5.6.3 A student whose behaviour is determined to be in breach of PIA student code of conduct may have their enrolment cancelled or suspended, with the right to an appeal subject to the misbehaviour not impacting on the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others.
- 5.6.4 In the instance where tuition fees are outstanding a warning letter will be issued by the Registrar to the student providing seven (7) working days to make a payment or enter into a payment arrangement with PIA.
- 5.6.5 If no payment or arrangement is made, or if the payment arrangement is broken, PIA will inform the student via written means of the intention to cancel the student's enrolment on the basis of non-payment of tuition fees, and the intention to notify the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs of the change in enrolment status.
- 5.6.6 In addition, the student will be advised that if they wish to appeal the decision, they have twenty (20) working days in which to access PIA's grievance handling process.
- 5.6.7 If the student chooses to access PIA's grievance process, the Institute will maintain the student's enrolment until the internal grievance process is completed and will not notify the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs of any change to the student's enrolment status through PRISMS, except in extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student.

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- 5.6.8 Any claim of extenuating circumstances will need to be supported by appropriate evidence. Extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student may include, but are not limited to, the following. The student:
- is a missing person;
 - has medical concerns, severe depression or psychological issues which lead PIA to fear for the student's wellbeing;
 - has engaged or threatens to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student or others; or is at risk of committing a criminal offence.
 - It is noted that financial hardship is not considered extenuating circumstances for international students as ability to cover tuition fees is a condition of the student visa.
- 5.6.9 The National Code does not require PIA to continue providing learning opportunities throughout the twenty (20) working days allowed to appeal the decision and during the internal grievance process. Based on the nature of the misconduct, PIA will decide, on a case by case basis, whether to allow the student to continue to attend class, or to make alternative study arrangements for the student, or to deny the student access to study opportunities. In making such a decision PIA will consider whether denying the student learning opportunities throughout the twenty (20) day appeal period and during the internal grievance process may disadvantage the student in their subsequent studies, should the grievance process find in their favour.
- 5.6.10 If the student chooses not to challenge the suspension of study or cancellation of their enrolment, or has unsuccessfully exhausted all internal appeal processes, the suspension of study or cancellation of enrolment will be formally processed and The Department of Home Affairs advised of the change in the student's enrolment. PIA does not have to wait for the outcome of an external appeal before notifying the Department of Home Affairs of the change to the student's study status.
- 5.6.11 The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:
- the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the period of suspension or cancellation of enrolment, if applicable;
 - the relevant personnel are emailed advising them that the student's studies have been suspended or their enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated, and the student's computer access, e-mail account and library borrowing rights suspended until the student recommences their studies or cancelled, as applicable; and
 - a diary entry is made to set a reminder for when the student is due back, if applicable.
- 5.6.12 If an international student's enrolment is cancelled for any reason and the student is studying on a student visa, PIA must notify the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs via PRISMS. The Registrar is responsible for such a notification.
- 5.6.13 International students must be made aware that any change to their enrolment may affect their student visa.
- 5.6.14 All issues surrounding course progression are dealt within the Course Progression Policy and Procedure.
- 5.7 Extension of Duration of Study
- 5.7.1 Some students who have been suspended or who have deferred their studies may require an extension to the duration to complete their course, if they cannot complete the course requirements as specified on the Confirmation of Enrolment. This may be as a result of the following:
- compassionate or compelling circumstances;
 - the implementation of PIA's intervention strategy has meant the student is not able to meet satisfactory course progress; or

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- an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted under the National Code.

5.7.2 Where the suspension or deferment has resulted in a variation in the student's enrolment load, which may affect the student's expected duration of study in accordance with National Code Standard 9.2, PIA is to record this variation and the reasons for it on the student file. PIA will report the student via PRISMS and/or issue a new electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCOE) when the student can only account for the variation by extending his/her expected duration of study. Except in circumstances as specified above, the expected duration of study specified in the student's eCoE must not exceed the CRICOS registered course duration.

5.8 Authorisation

5.8.1 All non-academic cases of student's deferment, suspension or cancellation are authorised by the Registrar.

5.8.2 All academic cases of student's suspension or cancellation are authorised by the Dean.

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Documents

- Student Acceptance Agreement
- Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure
- Course Progression Policy and Procedure

Applicable External Standards and Codes

Standards/Code	Standards/Clauses
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	1.1
The National Code 2018	9.1-9.6

7 FEEDBACK

PIA staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@pia.edu.au.

8 POLICY MANAGEMENT

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority / Owner (Role)	Chief Executive Officer
Administrator / Responsible for Implementing	Registrar
Approval Date	30 April 2024
Next Review Date	30 April 2027

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Document History

Month and Year	Version	Amendments
October 2014	1.0	Policy created and endorsed
April 2024	4.1	Including Termination for non-disclosure of previous studies
May 2024	4.2	The formatting was updated, including the addition of the document history.