

## Deferment and Leave of Absence Policy

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The primary objective of this policy is to provide guidance and instruction on the eligibility criteria for grant of a deferment or a leave of absence.
- 1.2 This policy also ensures that the assessment, approval and recording of a deferment or a leave of absence for overseas students is managed in accordance with standard 13 of the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007* (the National Code 2007).
- 1.3 Chapter 4, Part 4-1 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* establishes the point in which a domestic student incurs a FEE-HELP debt. This policy incorporates those provisions.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy applies to all students enrolled in the Certificate IV and Diplomas at all campuses of Deakin College and Deakin College Jakarta Campus, including domestic students, temporary residents and overseas students.
- 2.2 The Admissions Manager is responsible for the assessment, approval and recording of applications for deferment.
- 2.3 The Manager Student Services and the Campus Manager Geelong Campuses are responsible for implementation of all leave of absence aspects of the policy.
- 2.4 The Campus Director (Deakin College Jakarta Campus) is responsible for the assessment, approval and recording of applications for deferment and leave of absence.

### 3. Definitions

Key Term or Acronym	Definition
Appeal	A submission by a student for a review of a decision made by Deakin College of an academic or non-academic nature. See also <i>Deakin College Appeals</i> .
Census Date	The end of week 4 of each trimester on which a domestic FEE-HELP student incurs a financial debt to the Commonwealth of Australia.
CoE	Confirmation of Enrolment. A document registered with the Australian Government confirming a student's acceptance into a course for a

Key Term or Acronym	Definition
	specified duration.
Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances	Circumstances beyond the control of the student and have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing (refer to sections 4.1.2 and 4.5.3 for examples).
Course	A program of instruction that leads to an award of the institution.
Deferment	Applies to any student who has accepted a place in a course but does not intend to commence the course for the forthcoming period (compare <i>Leave of Absence</i> ).
Domestic Student	Defined as an Australian or New Zealand citizen or holder of a permanent residency visa, including a humanitarian visa.  For students at the Deakin College Jakarta Campus, this is defined as a citizen or permanent resident of Indonesia.
ESOS Act 2000	The <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i> . This Act regulates the delivery of education services to overseas students.
FEE-HELP	Financial assistance program under which the Commonwealth Government provides eligible fee-paying domestic students with loans to cover all or part of their higher education tuition fee costs.
Leave of Absence	A period of approved absence from a course in which a student is enrolled (compare <i>Deferment</i> ).
Deakin College Appeals	The final appeals body at Deakin College that considers appeals from students against any decision by Deakin College or Deakin College Jakarta Campus of an academic or non-academic nature.
National Code 2007	The <i>National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007</i> , established under section 33 of the ESOS Act 2000.  The National Code 2007 provides nationally consistent standards and procedures for providers who deliver educational services to overseas students.
Overseas Student	A student on an overseas student visa.
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Student Management System. A database developed by the Australian Federal Government for the

Key Term or Acronym	Definition
	purposes of compliance with the ESOS Act.
Temporary Resident	A person other than an overseas student who is: (a) temporarily residing in Australia for a specific purpose including skilled, temporary work, international relations, training and research; and (b) holds a visa permitting study in Australia.
Trimester	A defined and formal period of study of 13 weeks. Deakin College runs three compulsory trimesters annually.
Unit	A component of study within a course. Also referred to as a subject.

#### 4. Policy Statement

##### 4.1 Leave of Absence Eligibility: Overseas Students

4.1.1 To be eligible to apply for a leave of absence, an overseas student must hold a valid student visa and must either have enrolled at Deakin College or their enrolment must not have been cancelled by Deakin College.

4.1.2 Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and have an impact upon 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;
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies; or
- A traumatic experience such as involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident or, being the victim of a serious crime.

4.1.3 An overseas student must meet with Student Services prior to lodging an application for a leave of absence to discuss their individual circumstances. An appointment can be made at Reception.

4.1.4 Following the interview with Student Services, in order to formally apply for a leave of absence, an overseas student must submit a *Leave of Absence Form* with Student Services. Claims of compassionate or compelling circumstances must be supported by appropriate evidence, such as original or a certified copy of a death certificate, medical and psychological certificates, or police reports.

- 4.1.5 Students under the age of 18 years must provide a letter from their parent or legal guardian supporting the application for leave of absence.
- 4.1.6 Sponsored students are required to provide written endorsement from their Sponsor before a leave of absence application can be considered.
- 4.1.7 An outcome of the completed application will be advised in writing within 10 working days. Students must continue to attend classes until they are notified of the outcome of their application.
- 4.1.9 Overseas students are generally not permitted to remain in Australia for the duration of their approved leave of absence. Departure from Australia must be within 28 days from the date of approval of the leave of absence. Return to Australia must be no earlier than 28 days prior to the commencement of the next trimester.
- 4.1.10 Overseas students who are granted leave of absence are advised to seek advice from the Department of Immigration on how the potential change to their enrolment status may impact upon their visa and to check with the Australian Embassy or Consulate in their home country prior to their return to Australia to ascertain the status of their student visa.

#### **4.2 Leave of Absence Eligibility: Domestic Students and Temporary Residents**

- 4.2.1 To be eligible for a leave of absence, domestic students and temporary residents must have enrolled at Deakin College or their enrolment must not have been cancelled by Deakin College.
- 4.2.2 Domestic students and temporary residents must apply for a leave of absence by submitting a *Leave of Absence Application Form* to Deakin College Reception.
- 4.2.3 Where compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, domestic students and temporary residents may still schedule an appointment with Student Services so that counseling and other support services may be provided to them.

#### **4.3 Phasing Out of Courses**

- 4.3.1 Any student completing a course that will be phased out must consult with an Academic Manager before applying for a leave of absence.
- 4.3.2 The Academic Manager may be unable to permit leave of absence for reasons that the course will be phased out.

#### **4.4 Duration**

- 4.4.1 For all students, a leave of absence and deferment will be granted for one trimester at a time. The maximum leave of absence or deferment permitted is two trimesters.

4.4.2 For overseas students, in addition to 4.4.1, compassionate or compelling circumstances must exist and be supported by appropriate evidence. All other eligibility provisions of the policy will continue to apply.

#### **4.5 Return from Leave of Absence: All Students**

4.5.1 Students on an approved leave of absence must re-enrol in the following trimester, unless they successfully apply for a further trimester of leave. Instructions will be sent by Deakin College on re-enrolment.

4.5.2 Deakin College may apply re-entry conditions following a leave of absence, for example, intervention strategies where a student has not achieved satisfactory course progress in a previous trimester.

4.5.3 Overseas students will be issued with a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) once they have enrolled in the following trimester.

4.5.4 Any student who has not re-enrolled or who has extended their leave of absence without the formal permission of Deakin College will be deemed to have discontinued their studies and their enrolment will be cancelled by Deakin College.

4.5.5 Where 4.5.4 applies to an overseas student, Deakin College will also notify the applicable Australian Government higher education and immigration agencies through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) their discontinuation of studies.

4.5.6 Where 4.5.4 applies, the student may apply at a later time for readmission. The applicant will be re-assessed under the Deakin College *Admissions Policy*. Overseas students will also be subject to the genuine student criteria of the *Admissions Policy*.

#### **4.6 Deferment**

4.6.1 Any student who has accepted an offer to study at Deakin College but wishes to defer the commencement of their course must apply directly with the Admissions Manager prior to the commencement of enrolment, as provided on the letter of offer.

4.6.2 For any overseas student who has been issued with a CoE, Deakin College will defer the commencement only on compassionate or compelling circumstances, as provided under 4.1.2 of this policy.

4.6.3 In addition to 4.1.2 and 4.6.2, for any overseas student applying for a deferment, the inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to a delay in receiving a student visa will be accepted as compassionate or compelling circumstances.

4.6.4 Where 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 apply, claims of compassionate or compelling circumstances must be supported by appropriate evidence, such as original or a certified copy of a death certificate, medical and psychological certificates, or police reports.

- 4.6.5 Where 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 apply and no evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances is provided, Deakin College will report that student as a discontinuation of studies.
- 4.6.6 Overseas students under the age of 18 years must provide a letter from their parent or legal guardian supporting the application for leave of absence.
- 4.6.7 Sponsored overseas students are required to provide written permission from their Sponsor before a leave of absence application can be considered.

#### **4.7 Fees**

- 4.7.1 All full fee paying students who apply for leave of absence or deferment within the first four weeks of the trimester will have their fees transferred to the subsequent trimester. If the student subsequently withdraws, the Deakin College *Refund policy* applies from the date Deakin College received advice in writing regarding the leave of absence or deferment.
- 4.7.2 All full fee paying students applying for leave of absence from the fifth week of the semester will have all tuition fees applicable to that semester forfeited.
- 4.7.3 Domestic FEE-HELP students must apply for a leave of absence by the census date to avoid incurring a FEE-HELP debt.

#### **4.8 Academic Penalties**

- 4.8.1 Where a leave of absence is taken between weeks 5 and 8 of a trimester, a grade of W (withdrawn) will apply to that student's enrolment record. This grade does not incur an academic penalty.
- 4.8.2 Where a leave of absence is taken between weeks 9 and 13 of a trimester, a grade of WN (withdrawn fail) will apply to that student's enrolment record. This grade will incur an academic penalty and a student's course progress will be assessed at the end of the trimester by the APDC.

#### **4.9 Right of Review**

- 4.9.1 Students have the right of review of an unsuccessful application in accordance with the Deakin College *Grievance Procedures Relating to Academic Matters*.

<b>Policy Title</b>	Deferment and Leave of Absence Policy	
<b>Policy Owners</b>	Quality and Compliance Manager	
<b>Contact Persons</b>	Stase Kaintatsis, Quality and Compliance Manager (stasek@deakin.edu.au)	
<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	All Students at Deakin College; Academic Services	
<b>Approval Body</b>	Deakin College Academic Board of Studies	<b>Agenda item and meeting date approved</b> Meeting 3-2013: Item 5.1.1 13 December 2013
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000; National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (Standard 13); Higher Education Support Act 2003.</i>	
<b>Related Policies</b>	Admissions Policy; Grievance Procedures Relating to Academic Matters; Refund Policy; Satisfactory Course Progress Policy.	
<b>Related Guidelines</b>	N/A	
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