SOUTHERN ACADEMY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Southern Academy of Higher Education (SAHE)

Deferral and Suspension Policy and Procedure

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1. Policy Statement

The Deferral and Suspension Policy and Procedure (the 'Policy') outlines the circumstances for the application of deferment, suspension, or cancellation of enrolment either Student-initiated or imposed by the Southern Academy of Higher Education ('SAHE' or the 'Academy') and the subsequent reporting requirements via Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).
The Policy provides a framework to ensure that deferrals, suspension and cancellations are processed fairly and in consideration of the student's enrolment status. Adherence to this Policy will ensure compliance with Standard 9 of the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

1.1 Definitions

For definitions, please refer to the '*Dictionary of Terms*'.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all students, including those who have accepted but not yet commenced Studies, students on leave of absence and those who are currently enrolled in units of study offered at SAHE.

3. Policy Principles

A student may request to defer, suspend or cancel their enrolment in a program at any time during their study at SAHE.

3.1 Student applications for deferment, suspension or cancellation will be considered on the following grounds:

a. delay in visa approval; or
b. due to compassionate and compelling circumstances outlined in Section 4: *Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances*.

3.2 SAHE may defer, suspend or cancel the enrolment of a student in a program on the following grounds:

a. student misconduct (please refer to the *Student Code of Conduct*);
b. unsatisfactory academic progression (please refer to *Academic Progression and Graduation Policy*);
c. non-payment of outstanding fees (please refer to the *Refund Policy*); and
d. student visa non-compliance (please refer to *Visa Compliance – Study Australia* for further details).

4. Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances

4.1 Compassionate and compelling circumstances are circumstances that were/are:

a. beyond the student's control, which a reasonable person would consider not due to the student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the student was not responsible. The circumstances must be unusual, uncommon, or abnormal;
b. not making their full impact on the student until on, or after their offer was accepted or studies commenced;
c. impracticable for the student to commence or complete their studies;
d. having an impact upon the student's program progress or wellbeing.

4.2 Compassionate and compelling circumstances must be supported by documentary evidence. Circumstances may include but are not limited to:

a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;

b. bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided);

c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies;

d. a traumatic experience which could include:

i. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or

ii. witnessing or being the victim of a reportable crime, and these experiences have impacted the student (cases should be supported by police or psychologist's reports).

5. Procedures

5.1 Student-Initiated Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation

a. If a student wishes to defer or cancel their enrolment in a program of study, they must submit a completed and signed '*Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation Request Form'* including all supporting evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances outlined in this Policy.

b. SAHE may approve the requested deferral, suspension or cancellation of the enrolment of a student if it believes there are compassionate or compelling circumstances;

c. The student will be notified of the outcome of the application in writing within 10 working days.

d. A student may appeal the outcome of an application within 10 working days of the decision.The maximum period for deferment prior to commencing the program is twelve months. The maximum period for suspension of enrolment during the program of study is six months.

e. If there are changes in fees during the deferred period, the student must pay for the difference in fees.

f. SAHE will inform the international student of the need to seek advice from Immigration on the potential impact on their student visa, including the need to obtain a new student visa, in the case of a deferral or cancellation.

5.2 SAHE Initiated Suspension or Cancellation

a. SAHE may defer the commencement of a program of study for up to twelve months when it is not offered at the proposed date, site, or other such reasons. In such cases, a refund will be processed as required.

b. In the event SAHE initiates a suspension or cancellation of a student's enrolment, SAHE will notify the student in writing to the nominated email address of the intention to suspend or cancel their enrolment. The student may appeal within 10 working days of the decision.

c. In the first instance of suspension initiated by SAHE, the period will not exceed 14 days.

d. The student may not be provided with an opportunity to appeal if the student is missing or fails to start the program within 2 weeks of program commencement without formal notification;

e. Where a student chooses to appeal the decision, the student's enrolment will continue until the appeals process is completed.

f. All documentation and evidence during this process will be kept in the student's file.

6. Reporting on PRISMS (International Students)

SAHE will inform the Department of Education (DOE) via PRISMS when a student's enrolment is deferred, suspended or cancelled.

a. Where the Academy advises the DOE of deferment or suspension of a student's enrolment for a period that does not change the end date of the program there is no change to the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) or the student's enrolment status on PRISMS i.e. the student's CoE status will still be listed as 'studying'. However, the notice of deferment or suspension will be recorded in PRISMS and sent to the Department of Home Affairs (DOHA). This information will be kept on record for future reference.

b. If the Academy advises the DOE that it is deferring or suspending a student's enrolment for a period that will affect the end date of the CoE, PRISMS will cancel the original CoE, and immediately offer the Academy the opportunity to create a new CoE with a more appropriate end date.

c. If the Academy does not have a confirmation of when the student will return, it can choose to wait (up to 1 year) until the student has notified the Academy of the intended date of return before creating the new CoE.

d. If the Academy notifies the DOE that it wishes to permanently cancel (terminate) the student's enrolment then once this process is complete, the student's CoE status will be listed on PRISMS as 'cancelled'.

7. Records

All records relating to deferral, suspension and cancellation will be kept in accordance with the *Records Management Policy*.

8. Appeals

A student may appeal the outcomes of their application for deferral, suspension or cancellation of their enrolments in accordance with the *Student Grievance Management Policy*.. For international students, the Academy will not cancel or suspend the international student or notify the Department of Home Affairs of any change to the student's enrolment status through PRISMS while their internal appeal is in process except in extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the international student in accordance with Standard 9.6 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

Appendix I: Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation Application Form

Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation Application Form

Personal Details				
Name				
Contact Details	Phone			
	Address			
	Email			
Visa Status	Domestic Student	☐	International Student	☐

Please Note

- *Processing time for deferment, suspension and cancellation requests shall be within 10 working days upon receipt of the student's application form.*
- *The maximum deferment period is twelve months prior to program commencement.*
- *The maximum suspension period is six months for a three-year program duration once the program has commenced.*
- *Deferment, suspension or cancellation requests can only be approved under compassionate or compelling circumstances.*
- *Supporting documentation must be attached to the application form.*
- *Students may only be absent for their approved suspension period.*
- *All outstanding fees will be reviewed before a suspension request can be granted.*

Request Details

☐ Deferment of commencement of studies (*postponement prior to commencement of the program*)

☐ Suspension of my studies (*temporary postponement of enrolment during studies*)

☐ Cancellation of my enrolment (*cessation of enrolment in the program*)

I am requesting deferment, suspension or cancellation from	Start Date		End Date	

Reason for deferment / suspension / cancellation:

**Please attach relevant documents in support of your application*

Student Declaration
• I declare that the information supplied on this form and the information given in support of my application is correct and complete. • I understand that my deferral, suspension or cancellation will be reported to the Department of Education (DOE). • I declare that I am aware that the decision to grant my deferral, suspension, or cancellation of enrolment may affect my student visa. • Where my application to defer, suspend or cancel my enrolment is for more than 28 days, I may be required to return to my home country unless approved by the Department of Home Affairs (DOHA). • I understand that if the period of deferment or suspension is such that I will not be able to complete this program by the proposed program end date indicated on the original Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), a new CoE will be issued with the extended study period to allow me to complete my program. • It is my responsibility to check with DOHA regarding my visa period and whether a new visa is required to cover the extended duration. • I understand that the submission of this form has no bearing on my existing financial obligations towards SAHE.

Student Signature		Date	

Office Use Only

Status				
Approved ☐			Refused ☐	
Student notified ☐			PRISMS updated ☐	
Comments				
Approved by	Name		Position	
Signature			Date	

Please return this form using the details above

Version Control

Version	v1.2
Review	The Academic Board will review this Policy in accordance with the Southern Academy of Higher Education *Policy Documents Review Schedule*.
Approving Body	Academic Board
Approval and Effective Date	4 May 2023
Policy Custodian	Dean
Policy Contact	Dean
Higher Education Standards Frameworks (Threshold Standard) 2015 (Cth)	B1.1 "Higher Education Provider" Category Standard 1.1; ss 2 Standard 1.2; ss 1 – 2 Standard 1.5; ss 7 Standard 7.2; ss 2
Benchmarking Institutes	Southern Cross University University of New South Wales Curtin College The University of Adelaide
Related Document	Dictionary of Terms Academic Progression and Graduation Policy Admissions Policy and Procedure Refund Policy Student Code of Conduct Student Grievance Management Policy
Related Legislations	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2017 Australian Qualifications Framework 2013 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000