INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DEFERMENT, SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Background

Under the requirements of the ESOS regulatory framework[1], if an international student (for the purposes of this policy, "a student") has enrolled in a course at Skyline Higher Education Australia ("SHEA"), they are not permitted to defer commencement of their study, or suspend their study, except on the grounds of illness evidenced by a doctor's certificate, or other exceptional compassionate circumstances beyond the control of the student. If a student defers or suspends their study on any other grounds, SHEA must report the student via PRISMS, as not complying with their visa conditions.

If a student is found to have engaged in academic or non-academic misconduct SHEA may suspend or cancel the student's enrolment. A student may also withdraw from a course and thereby cancel their study for their own reasons.

This policy and procedure is designed to provide a procedure for assessing, approving and recording deferment of the commencement of study, suspension of study or cancellation of study for international students, including maintaining a record of any decisions.

2. Student-initiated application for deferment or suspension of study

2.1 Overview

International students may apply to defer their study if they are unable to commence their course on the scheduled commencement date or for voluntary suspension of their study if they are unable to attend the course for a specified period of time, in compassionate or compelling circumstances.

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which are likely to have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing and could include, but are not limited to:

a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student will be unable to attend classes;
b. death or illness of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible, a doctor's or death certificate should be provided);
c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the international student's home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted, or will impact, on the student's study;
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 serious crime,
    iii. and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologist's reports);
e. where SHEA was unable to offer a pre-requisite subject;
f. inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.

International students may also defer or suspend their study with SHEA for other reasons; however, the student will be required to provide compelling documentary evidence to support their request.

International students are advised of the circumstances and consequences regarding deferment or suspension of study prior to enrolment and during the student orientation process. International students applying to defer or suspend their study will be reminded on the *International Student Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* that a successful application may

[1] Refer to *ESOS Compliance Framework*

affect their student visa. International students are advised to contact the Department of Home Affairs regarding the potential impact any deferment or suspension of study may have on their student visa prior to formally lodging an application to defer or voluntarily suspend their study.

The maximum time allowed for a deferment or voluntary suspension of study is one year.

2.2 Procedures for a deferment of study

2.2.1 The following procedure applies to international students applying for **a deferment of commencement of study**:

a) International students who wish to defer the commencement date of their course must advise the Registrar in writing on the *International Student Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* of their request accompanied by documentation clearly demonstrating the compassionate or compelling reasons why the deferment should be granted.

b) In the event that the request for deferment of study demonstrates compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above), the Registrar will approve the application and advise the student in writing of the decision within 5 working days.

c) The Administration Officer will update PRISMS to input the period of deferment granted.

d) If the request for deferment of commencement of study does not meet the requirements for compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above) the Registrar will not approve the application and will advise the student in writing within 5 working days of the reason for the decision and that the student has twenty working days to appeal the decision through SHEA's grievance handling procedures.

e) The request for deferment of commencement 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.

f) Students are advised to retain their original documents for their own records and to submit certified copies with any applications for deferment or suspension.

2.2.2 The following procedure applies to international students requesting **a voluntary suspension of their study**:

a) International students who wish to voluntarily suspend their study will advise the Registrar in writing on the *International Student Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* that they wish to apply for a voluntary suspension of their study. The Registrar or their delegate will make an appointment to meet with the student to discuss their request. The student will also be advised if there are any fees owing and discuss how payment will be settled. The Registrar will also check to see if there are any library books, learning resources or other items on loan to the student and make arrangements for their return.

b) In the event that the request for suspension of study demonstrates compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above), the Registrar will approve the application and will advise the student in writing of the decision within 5 working days.

c) The Administration Officer will update PRISMS to input the period of suspension granted.

d) 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 study;

- email the relevant personnel advising them that the student has suspended their study so that records can be updated and any necessary arrangements made;
- make a diary entry to set a reminder for when the student is due back.

e) If the request for suspension of study does not demonstrate compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above), the Registrar will not approve the request and will advise the student in writing within 5 working days of the reason for the decision and that the student has twenty working days to appeal the decision through SHEA's grievance handling procedures.

f) If the student chooses to access SHEA's grievance process, SHEA will maintain the student's enrolment until the grievance process is completed and SHEA will not notify any change to the student's enrolment status through PRISMS.

g) 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.

h) Students are advised to retain their original documents for their own records and to submit certified copies with any applications for voluntary suspension of their studies.

3. Student-initiated cancellation of study

3.1 Overview

An international student may voluntarily withdraw from a course at any time. In this case the student's enrolment will be cancelled and the following procedure will apply.

3.2 Procedure for student-initiated cancellation of enrolment

The following procedure relates to processing a student-initiated cancellation of enrolment:

a) The student will advise the Registrar in writing on the *International Student Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* of their intention to withdraw from their course.

b) A copy of the request and any supporting documentation along with any comments related to the request are placed on the student's file.

c) The cancellation of the student's enrolment will be formally processed and the Administration Officer will update PRISMS with the change in the student's enrolment status.

d) The student will be advised to seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs regarding the potential impact of the enrolment cancellation to their student visa.

e) A student who has successfully completed one or more subjects that form part of an AQF qualification, will be eligible to receive an academic transcript upon request, provided there are no outstanding fees or other debts payable to SHEA

f) The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:

- the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation of enrolment, if applicable;
- email relevant personnel advising them that the student's enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated and any necessary arrangements are made.

4. SHEA-initiated suspension of study or cancellation of enrolment

4.1 Overview

All international students are subject to the potential for SHEA-initiated suspension of study or cancellation of enrolment for:

a) making statements in their application for admission that are later shown to be false or misleading; or
b) including documents in their application for admission that are later shown to be false, misleading, counterfeit or otherwise fraudulent; or
c) failing to meet minimum academic standards; or
d) academic misconduct; or
e) non-academic misconduct; or
f) failure to pay the required amount to undertake or continue the course as stated in the written agreement; or
g) any combination of the above.

A false or misleading statement is one that occurs when a person tries to deceive someone as to a particular fact. Intent to deceive a person by false or misleading statements constitutes fraud and is a criminal act. The commitment of such acts further constitutes non-academic misconduct.

False, misleading, counterfeit or otherwise fraudulent documentation attempts to misrepresent information or events in order to deceive someone as to a particular fact. Intent to deceive a person by providing false, misleading, counterfeit or otherwise fraudulent documentation constitutes fraud and is a criminal act. The commitment of such acts further constitutes non-academic misconduct.

The *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure [POL025]* requires that students attain the following minimum academic standards in order to be deemed to be maintaining satisfactory academic progress in a course:

a) Not more than one failure in a particular subject; or
b) Not fail one or more subjects attempted in a study period.

Where a student first fails to meet these standards, they are identified as being at risk. The detailed procedure for managing such students is defined in the *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure [POL025]*. In summary an intervention strategy is put in place and students are further advised that conditions may be placed on their enrolment if they do not meet academic standards. International students will also be advised of the possibility that they may be in contravention of their visa conditions if they do not meet academic standards.

A student who is permitted to continue their enrolment in the course, but with conditions imposed, who again fails to attain the minimum academic standards or breaches the conditions imposed, will have their enrolment terminated due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

An international student who is permitted to continue their enrolment in the course, but with conditions imposed, who again fails to attain the minimum academic standards in the following study period or breaches the conditions imposed, will have their enrolment terminated at the end of that study period due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

The *Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure [POL018]* describes academic misconduct as deliberately or inadvertently claiming ownership of an idea or concept without acknowledging the source of the information. This includes when:

a) other people's work and/or ideas are paraphrased and presented without a reference;
b) other students' work is copied or partly copied;
c) other people's designs, codes or images are presented as the student's own work;
d) phrases and passages are used verbatim without quotation marks and/or without a reference to the author or source;
e) lecture notes are reproduced without due acknowledgement;

f) A student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage in an examination or in other written or practical work required to be submitted or completed for assessment (cheating);
g) A student working with others to produce work which is then presented as work completed independently by the student;
h) a student knowingly allows their work to be copied.

The *Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures [POL021]* outlines what constitutes non-academic misconduct as behaviour that:

a) creates significant disruption to the learning environment;
b) creates an atmosphere of hostility, intimidation, ridicule, anxiety or disrespect for others;
c) contradicts published rules, regulations, procedures or common standards of safety;
d) endangers or threatens to endanger the health or safety of others;
e) damages, defaces or destroys SHEA's property.

International students are made aware of the circumstances in which their study may be suspended or their enrolment cancelled for misconduct prior to enrolment and during the student orientation process.

Note that suspension due to unsatisfactory academic performance is covered by the *POL025 Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure*.

4.2 Procedure for a SHEA-initiated cancellation of enrolment due to alleged fraud in applications for admission detected before admission

The following procedure relates to processing a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to alleged fraud in admission applications detected prior to admission:

The student will be notified that SHEA intends to:

a) withdraw the student's Letter of Offer;
b) withdraw their Confirmation of Enrolment;
c) deny them admission to SHEA on the grounds of alleged fraudulent statements or documentation; and
d) notify the Department of Home Affairs of the alleged fraud.

Under the *Student Admissions Policy and Procedure [POL026]* the student may request a review of a decision to refuse admission. The review procedure is detailed in that policy.

If the review finds in the student's favour the student will be notified that their Offer and Confirmation of Enrolment still stand, that admission will be permitted and that the Department of Home Affairs will *not* be notified.

If the review does not find in the student's favour or if the student elects not to review the decision, SHEA will send a formal notification to the student:

i. withdrawing the Letter of Offer;
ii. cancelling their Confirmation of Enrolment;
iii. notifying them that the Department of Home Affairs will be informed of the fraud.

The cancellation of the student's enrolment will be formally processed and the Administration Officer or their delegate will update PRISMS with the change in the student's enrolment status.

The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:

i. the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation of enrolment, if applicable;

ii. email relevant personnel advising them that the student's enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated, and any necessary arrangements are made.

Where fraud in admission applications is detected after admission, this will be treated as non-academic misconduct and the procedure relating to processing a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to misconduct will apply.

4.3 Procedure for a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to unsatisfactory academic performance

The following procedure relates to processing a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to unsatisfactory academic performance (summarising the *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure [POL025]):*

a) If an international student fails to meet the minimum academic standards in a second consecutive study period, the Course Coordinator will request that the student provide a written statement within ten working days, outlining reasons why they should be permitted to continue their enrolment in the course.

b) The Course Coordinator shall consider the written statement and may
   i. formally notify the student of the intention to terminate the student's enrolment due to unsatisfactory academic progress; or
   ii. permit the student to continue with or without specific conditions.

c) The Course Coordinator will provide a written decision to the student within ten working days of receiving the written statement, outlining their decision.

d) A student who does not submit a written statement by the due date shall be sent a formal notification of the intention to terminate their enrolment due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

e) A student who is permitted to continue their enrolment in the course, but with conditions imposed, who again fails to attain the minimum academic standards or breaches the conditions imposed, will be notified of the intention to terminate their enrolment due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

f) When an international student is formally advised of the intention to terminate their enrolment due to unsatisfactory academic progress, they will also be advised that they should seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs on the potential impact on their student visa if they are reported for failure to meet minimum academic standards.

g) The student will also be advised that they have twenty working days to access SHEA's grievance handling process (*Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure [POL024]*), if they wish to do so.

h) The student has a right to continue their studies in the course during the period for lodging a grievance or appeal and, if the student lodges a grievance/appeal, during the period the grievance or appeal is being considered. SHEA will maintain the student's enrolment until the internal grievance process is completed, unless the overseas student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk.

i) After all grievance and appeals processes are finalised, or if the student has chosen not to access the grievance handling process within twenty working days, the student's enrolment will be formally cancelled, with appropriate documentation along with any comments from the Registrar placed on the student's file.

j) The cancellation of the student's enrolment will be formally processed and the Administration Officer or their delegate will update PRISMS to advise the change in the student's enrolment status.

k) The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:
    i. the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation of enrolment, if applicable;
    ii. email relevant personnel advising them that the student's enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated and any necessary arrangements are made.

4.4 Procedure for a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to misconduct

The following procedure relates to processing a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to misconduct:

a) The Course Coordinator will present to the Dean their intention to suspend a student's study or cancel their enrolment for misconduct together with supporting evidence.
b) The Dean will consider the request to suspend the student's study and supporting evidence and advise the Course Coordinator of their decision.
c) In the event that the Dean approves the request to suspend a student's study or cancel their enrolment, the Registrar will write to the student informing them of their intention to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment, the reasons for the decision, the intention to notify the change in enrolment status, and advice to the student that if they wish to appeal the decision they have twenty working days to access SHEA's grievance handling procedure (*Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure [POL024]*). The student will also be advised to seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs on the potential impact of the decision on their student visa.
d) A copy of the letter and supporting evidence along with the Dean's documented decision is placed on the student's file.
e) If the student chooses to access SHEA's grievance procedure, SHEA will maintain the student's enrolment until the internal grievance process is completed and will not notify any change to the student's enrolment status through PRISMS, except in extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student or where the wellbeing of others is likely to be at risk
f) Extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student may include, but are not limited to, the following. The student:
    i. is missing;
    ii. has medical concerns, severe depression or psychological issues which lead SHEA to fear for the student's wellbeing;
    iii. has engaged or threatens to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student or others; or
    iv. is at risk of committing a criminal offence.
g) Any claim of extenuating circumstances will need to be supported by appropriate evidence.
h) SHEA is not required to continue providing learning opportunities throughout the twenty working days allowed to appeal the decision and during the internal grievance process. Based on the nature of the misconduct, SHEA will decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to allow the student to continue to attend class, or make alternative study arrangements for the student, or to deny the student access to study opportunities. In making such a decision SHEA will consider whether denying the student learning opportunities throughout the twenty-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.
i) 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 Administration Officer will update PRISMS with the change in the student's enrolment status. Note that SHEA does not have to wait for the outcome of an external appeal before notifying the change to the student's study status.

j) The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:

   i. the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation of enrolment, if applicable;
   ii. email the relevant personnel advising them that the student's study has been suspended or their enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated and any necessary arrangements made;
   iii. make a diary entry to set a reminder for when the student is due back, if applicable.

4.5 Procedure for a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to non-payment of tuition fees

The following procedure relates to processing a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to non-payment of tuition fees.

a) If an international student fails to pay the required amount to undertake or continue the course as stated in the written agreement, the student will be notified in writing of the intention to terminate their enrolment for not paying the agreed tuition fees.

b) The student will be advised that they should seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs on the potential impact on their student visa if they are reported for failure to meet minimum payment requirements.

c) The student will also be advised that they have twenty working days to access SHEA's grievance handling process (Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure [POL024]), if they wish to do so.

d) The student has a right to continue their studies in the course during the period for lodging a grievance or appeal and, if the student lodges a grievance/appeal, during the period the grievance or appeal is being considered. SHEA will maintain the student's enrolment until the internal grievance process is completed, unless the overseas student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk.

e) After all grievance and appeals processes are finalised, or if the student has chosen not to access the grievance handling process within twenty working days, the student's enrolment will be formally cancelled, with appropriate documentation along with any comments from the Registrar placed on the student's file.

f) The cancellation of the student's enrolment will be formally processed and the Administration Officer or their delegate will update PRISMS to advise the change in the student's enrolment status.

g) A student who has successfully completed one or more subjects that form part of an AQF qualification, will be eligible to receive an academic transcript upon request, provided there are no outstanding fees or other debts payable to SHEA.

h) The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken: i) The student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation of enrolment, if applicable; ii) Email

relevant personnel advising them that the student's enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated, and any necessary arrangements are made.

Note: The Department of Home Affairs' policy is that if a student's study is suspended for a period of 28 days or longer, the student must return home (unless special circumstances exist). Students should be advised to liaise with the Department of Home Affairs regarding this requirement.

5. Publication

International students and staff are advised of this policy through publication on SHEA's website (www.shea.edu.au).

6. Related documents

- International Student Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study
- Letter to Grant Deferment or Suspension of Study
- Letter to Refuse Deferment or Suspension of Study
- Letter to Advise Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment
- POL018 Student Academic Integrity Policy
- POL024 Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure
- POL025 Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure
- POL026 Student Admissions Policy and Procedure
- POL021 Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy
- POL033 ESOS Compliance Framework Policy

7. Version control

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Executive Management Committee	12 October 2022	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Executive Management Committee	6 September 2023	Minor edits
2.0	Executive Management Committee	17 July 2024	Added procedure for a SHEA-initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to non-payment of tuition fees
2.1	Registrar	9 July 2025	Minor changes to align this policy with Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure
2.2	Executive Management Committee	11 September 2026	Minor amendments arising from 2026 compliance mapping exercise against the National Code to align with Standards 2 and 9
2.3	Executive Management Committee	29 October 2026	Changes to policy as a result of consideration of report from National Student Ombudsman

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