ROYAL INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

RTO Code: 46036 | CRICOS Code: 04153F

# DEFERRAL, SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF STUDENT


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## 1.11. Deferral, Suspension or Cancellation of Student Policy and Procedure

### Policy Content

| Aspect | Details |
|---|---|
| Regulator | Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) |
| Standards Referenced | |
| Legislation / Requirements | |

### Purpose

To establish a structured and compliant process for the deferral, suspension or cancellation of student enrolment, whether initiated by the student or the RTO. This ensures alignment with visa regulations, support mechanisms, and appeals processes.

### Policy Statement

The RTO is committed to:

- Providing clear, documented procedures for deferral, suspension, and cancellation.
- Ensuring decisions are based on compassionate or compelling circumstances or documented misconduct.
- Protecting student rights by providing access to the complaints and appeals process before any enrolment changes take effect.
- Complying with all reporting obligations under the ESOS Act and related frameworks.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

- All current and prospective students (domestic and international)
- Student support, administration, compliance, and enrolment staff

### 1.11.1. Student-Initiated Deferral of Commencement

- **A student may request to defer the commencement of their course prior to the official start date, provided that the request is based on genuine compassionate or compelling circumstances.**
- **The deferral process applies only before the course has commenced and must be supported with verifiable documentation. Examples include but are not limited to:**
    - **Serious illness or injury, supported by a medical certificate stating the student is unfit to commence study.**
    - **Bereavement of an immediate family member, supported by a death certificate or official record.**
    - **A natural disaster, major political unrest, or emergency affecting the student's home country or family.**
    - **A traumatic incident involving the student (e.g. serious accident or crime involvement), supported by police or psychologist reports.**
    - **Delay in student visa approval beyond the course start date.**
- **Students must submit a formal Deferment Application Form along with the supporting documents to the Student Support Officer (SSO).**
- **The application must clearly explain:**
    - **The nature of the compassionate or compelling circumstance.**
    - **The impact of the situation on the student's ability to commence the course.**
- **Applications must be submitted at least 5 working days before the scheduled commencement date unless the situation was unforeseen.**
- **Students must not have any outstanding tuition fees at the time of submitting the deferral application. Where fees are outstanding, the request may be held pending financial resolution.**
- **Upon receipt, the Student Support Officer will:**
    - **Verify the validity and completeness of the application and documents.**
    - **Forward the application to the Admissions Department for assessment.**

- **The Admissions Department will assess the application within 5–7 working days and may seek clarification or further evidence if needed.**
- **The outcome of the deferral request will be:**
  - **Approved - the student is notified in writing of the new commencement date and the CoE (Confirmation of Enrolment) is updated accordingly in PRISMS (for international students).**
  - **Denied - the student is informed in writing with a detailed explanation and advised of their right to access the RTO's internal appeals process within 20 working days.**
- **All documentation, including the application, supporting evidence, assessment records and communication, is securely retained on the student's file in the Student Management System (SMS).**
- **The deferral period must not extend the course beyond the CRICOS-registered duration, unless supported by further valid evidence and approved by the RTO.**

**1.11.2. Student-Initiated Suspension During Studies**

- **A student who has already commenced their course may apply for a temporary suspension of their studies under circumstances deemed compassionate or compelling, consistent with the ESOS National Code 2018 and the RTO's obligations.**
- **Valid grounds for suspension include, but are not limited to:**
  - **Serious illness or injury, supported by a current medical certificate stating the student is unfit for class attendance.**
  - **Bereavement of a close family member, supported by documentation such as a death certificate.**
  - **Emergency situations such as natural disasters or civil unrest in the student's home country.**
  - **Traumatic incidents directly affecting the student, such as being a victim of crime or serious accident, verified by police or clinical reports.**
  - **Delays in accessing essential services, such as critical medical care or legal obligations.**

- **The student must submit a completed Suspension Application Form, along with verifiable supporting documentation, to the Student Support Officer (SSO) as soon as reasonably practicable.**
- **The following rules apply to student-initiated suspensions:**
  - **The student must have no outstanding fees at the time of the application.**
  - **Applications that lack sufficient evidence or justification may be delayed or denied.**
  - **Suspension requests must include:**
    - **The intended duration of suspension.**
    - **Reason for suspension.**
    - **Supporting evidence with relevant dates.**
  - **Where possible, students are encouraged to meet with the SSO to explain the situation before lodging the application.**
- **Upon receipt of the suspension request, the SSO will:**
  - **Verify the completeness of the application.**
  - **Conduct an initial review and refer it to the Admissions Department.**
- **The Admissions Department will:**
  - **Assess whether the evidence provided is valid and meets the criteria of compassionate or compelling grounds.**
  - **Make a determination within 7 working days of receiving the application.**
- **Outcomes of suspension applications will be:**
  - **Approved – the student receives written confirmation of the approved suspension period, and the CoE is updated in PRISMS where applicable.**
  - **Denied – the student is notified in writing, including reasons for denial and guidance on how to access the internal appeals process within 20 working days.**

- **The maximum allowable suspension duration must not lead to a total course duration beyond the CRICOS-registered limit, unless specifically approved based on continued compassionate or compelling circumstances.**
- **During the suspension period:**
  - **The student must maintain regular contact with the RTO.**
  - **The RTO reserves the right to request updated documentation if the suspension extends beyond the approved timeframe.**
- **All documentation related to the request, including the final outcome, is securely stored on the student's file in the Student Management System.**

**1.11.3. Student-Initiated Cancellation of Enrolment**

- **A student may request cancellation of their enrolment where they no longer wish to continue studying with the RTO. This process applies to both domestic and international students and must be handled in accordance with RTO procedures, ESOS requirements, and the student's written agreement.**
- **Cancellation of enrolment must be:**
  - **Voluntary and initiated in writing by the student.**
  - **Accompanied by a completed 'Course Withdrawal/Cancellation Form', submitted to the Student Support Officer (SSO).**
  - **Supported by a meeting with the SSO, where feasible, to ensure the student fully understands the implications of withdrawal, including potential impacts on visa status for international students.**
- **Conditions for student-initiated cancellation include:**
  - **No outstanding tuition or other fees at the time of request. Unpaid fees may delay or prevent approval.**
  - **The student must provide a valid reason for their withdrawal, which may include:**
    - **Return to home country or relocation.**
    - **Transfer to another education provider.**
    - **Personal or financial hardship.**

    - **Change in academic or career plans.**
- **The SSO will:**
    - **Review the withdrawal form and verify that all relevant sections are completed.**
    - **Ensure the student has been advised of their rights to seek advice, including potential eligibility for refunds under the RTO's Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy.**
    - **Submit the application to the Admissions Department for formal review and processing.**
- **The Admissions Department will:**
    - **Assess the application and determine whether to approve or deny the request within 10 working days of receipt.**
    - **Ensure all associated documentation is retained in the student's file, including any supporting evidence.**
- **Outcome of the request:**
    - **Approved - the student is issued a written notice confirming the cancellation of enrolment, effective from the specified date. International students are advised to contact Department of Home Affairs to understand the visa implications.**
    - **Rejected - the student receives a written explanation of the decision and is informed of their right to lodge an internal appeal within 20 working days under the RTO's Complaints and Appeals Policy.**
- **Additional provisions:**
    - **The student must be reminded to refer to their written agreement for any financial implications, including refund eligibility and applicable administrative charges.**
    - **For international students, the cancellation is reported in PRISMS, and the RTO must ensure the student has been given sufficient opportunity to access internal appeal processes before reporting.**
- **Students who fail to complete the official cancellation process and who stop attending without notice may be subject to administrative**

**cancellation initiated by the RTO due to non-engagement, in line with attendance and course progress policies.**

**1.11.4. Provider-Initiated Deferral of Enrolment**

- **The RTO may initiate a deferral of a student's enrolment prior to the commencement of a course in circumstances where the RTO is unable to deliver the course as scheduled. This includes:**
  - **Course not available on the intended start date due to insufficient enrolments, trainer availability, or administrative decisions.**
  - **Location or delivery mode changes that make the course inaccessible to the student.**
  - **Organisational restructure or force majeure events (e.g. natural disasters) that prevent course commencement.**
- **In all provider-initiated deferrals:**
  - **The student must be issued a written notice of deferral, clearly outlining:**
    - **The reason for the deferral.**
    - **The revised start date of the course.**
    - **Options available to the student, including refunds or alternative course arrangements.**
- **The RTO must:**
  - **Ensure that no financial disadvantage is imposed on the student due to the deferral.**
  - **Offer the student the option to:**
    - **Defer to a future intake of the same course.**
    - **Transfer to an alternative course, if available and suitable.**
    - **Withdraw with a full refund, where no suitable alternative exists.**
- **The written notification must also advise the student of their right to:**
  - **Access the Complaints and Appeals Policy should they wish to dispute the deferral.**

    - **Seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs, in the case of overseas students, to assess the potential impacts on their visa.**
- **All deferrals must be:**
    - **Documented and recorded in the Student Management System (SMS).**
    - **Supported by a Deferral Report, which includes justification, alternative options offered, and confirmation of student response.**
    - **Reported to PRISMS (if applicable) with accurate data and evidence for international students.**
- **In cases where the deferral impacts multiple students (e.g., course cancellation due to low enrolments), a group notification may be issued, but individual follow-up and consent for deferral must still be documented.**
- **Deferrals initiated by the RTO are subject to ongoing review, and the RTO must ensure:**
    - **Students are informed promptly of any further changes to the revised course start date.**
    - **Affected students are provided with reasonable assistance, including administrative help, support services, and transitional guidance.**

**1.11.5. Provider-Initiated Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment**

- **The RTO reserves the right to suspend or cancel a student's enrolment in circumstances where the student has breached their obligations under enrolment conditions, the Student Code of Conduct, or regulatory requirements. Suspension or cancellation may occur for both domestic and international students.**

**Grounds for Suspension or Cancellation**

**Provider-initiated suspension or cancellation may arise from any of the following circumstances:**

- **Serious Misconduct:**
    - **Aggressive, threatening, or inappropriate behaviour toward staff, students, or others.**

    - **Harassment, bullying, or discriminatory actions.**
    - **Damaging, stealing, or unauthorised use of RTO property or resources.**
    - **Criminal behaviour or breach of Australian laws.**
- **Academic Misconduct:**
    - **Plagiarism, cheating, or falsification of records.**
    - **Consistent failure to meet academic obligations despite warnings or support.**
- **Breach of RTO Policies or Code of Conduct:**
    - **Refusal to follow RTO procedures or directions from staff.**
    - **Inappropriate use of RTO digital platforms or systems.**
- **Non-Payment of Fees:**
    - **Failure to meet financial obligations as outlined in the Student Agreement.**
- **Poor Academic Progress or Non-Engagement:**
    - **Failure to participate in scheduled classes, training, or assessments.**
    - **Lack of response to intervention strategies or communications from the RTO.**

**1.11.6. Procedure for Initiating Suspension or Cancellation**

- **Step 1: Initial Identification**
    - **The issue is identified and documented by RTO staff.**
    - **A preliminary review is conducted by the RTO Manager to determine validity.**
- **Step 2: Investigation and Validation**
    - **The student is invited to respond to the concerns raised.**
    - **Evidence is gathered (e.g., misconduct reports, payment records, academic reports).**
    - **The RTO ensures procedural fairness and impartiality.**

- **Step 3: Notification of Intention to Suspend or Cancel**
  - **A formal written notice is issued to the student, including:**
    - **Clear description of the reason(s) for the proposed suspension or cancellation.**
    - **Evidence supporting the RTO's position.**
    - **Details of the student's right to respond, appeal, or provide further evidence.**
    - **Advice that the student has 20 working days to initiate an internal complaint or appeal.**
- **Step 4: Review of Student Response**
  - **If the student lodges an appeal, the suspension or cancellation is placed on hold until the outcome of the internal appeals process is finalised.**
  - **If no appeal is lodged within the specified timeframe, the decision proceeds.**
- **Step 5: Final Decision**
  - **The final outcome is communicated in writing to the student.**
  - **If enrolment is suspended or cancelled, the RTO:**
    - **Records the outcome in the Student Management System.**
    - **Maintains full documentation on the student's file.**
    - **For international students, reports the outcome in PRISMS in accordance with Section 19 of the ESOS Act.**
- **Step 6: Visa and Support Advice (International Students)**
  - **The student is advised to contact the Department of Home Affairs for guidance on how the suspension or cancellation may affect their student visa.**
  - **The RTO ensures that international students have access to support services and receive guidance on alternative options (e.g., re-enrolment or referral).**
- **Step 7: Suspension or Cancellation Enforcement**

- **The student's access to learning systems, classes, and RTO premises may be restricted or terminated, depending on the severity and type of breach.**
- **Where extenuating circumstances exist (e.g., student poses a threat to safety or wellbeing), suspension or cancellation may take immediate effect, prior to completion of the appeals process.**

### 1.11.7. Suspension or Cancellation Response Procedure

**When a potential suspension or cancellation is identified, the RTO follows a structured and fair procedure to ensure due process is observed and student rights are upheld.**

**Response Process:**

- **Incident Identification and Reporting**
  - **A reportable incident or breach is identified by RTO staff or received via formal complaint.**
  - **The Student Support Officer (SSO) or RTO Manager records the nature and details of the concern in writing.**
- **Preliminary Validation**
  - **The SSO and/or RTO Manager reviews all relevant information and documentation to validate the concern.**
  - **Further statements or supporting evidence may be sought from involved parties, including students or staff witnesses.**
- **Consultation with Leadership**
  - **The issue is escalated to the PEO (Principal Executive Officer) or designated executive member for determination of severity.**
  - **Where needed, legal or regulatory advice may be sought.**
- **Student Notification of Intention**
  - **The student is formally notified in writing of:**
    - **The intention to suspend or cancel their enrolment.**
    - **Specific reasons for the action, referencing evidence.**

    - **Their right to appeal the decision within 20 working days, as per the Complaints and Appeals Policy.**
- **Opportunity for Response or Appeal**
  - **The student may submit a written appeal or request an internal hearing.**
  - **If an appeal is lodged:**
    - **The RTO will pause the suspension/cancellation until the appeal outcome is finalised, except where extenuating circumstances apply (e.g., threats to wellbeing or safety).**
- **Final Decision and Notification**
  - **Once the appeal is reviewed or if no appeal is received within 20 working days:**
    - **The RTO issues a final written outcome, confirming the suspension or cancellation.**
    - **The student is informed of further appeal rights (external).**
- **Recordkeeping**
  - **All documentation relating to the matter- including incident records, correspondence, decisions, and appeal outcomes is securely stored in the student's record in the Student Management System.**
  - **Records must be retained for a minimum of 2 years from the date of decision, in line with SRTO 2025 compliance requirements.**
- **Reporting to Regulatory Bodies (International Students)**
  - **If the student is an overseas student, the RTO will:**
    - **Update PRISMS (Provider Registration and International Student Management System) as required.**
    - **Advise the student to contact Department of Home Affairs regarding their visa status.**
- **Post-Cancellation Support and Follow-up**
  - **The student is helped in relation to:**
    - **Course exit arrangements.**

- **Release documents, transcripts, and access to complaints services.**
- **Any residual welfare or referral services where applicable.**

### 1.11.8. Procedure for Re-enrolment Following Suspension or Cancellation

**Where a student has previously withdrawn, been suspended, or had their enrolment cancelled either by their own request or as an outcome of disciplinary or academic intervention the RTO may allow the student to re-enrol, subject to specific conditions.**

**Re-enrolment Application Process:**

- **Lodgement of Re-enrolment Request**
  - **The student must complete and submit a new Application for Enrolment to the Student Support Officer (SSO), identifying the prior withdrawal, suspension, or cancellation.**
  - **Any previous breaches of policy or misconduct must be disclosed in the application.**
  - **Where applicable, supporting evidence should be included (e.g., medical clearance, statement of changed circumstances).**
- **Internal Review and Case Assessment**
  - **The RTO Manager will coordinate an internal review of:**
    - **The student's academic history, prior conduct, and reason for withdrawal or cancellation.**
    - **Compliance records including fees, attendance, and progress data.**
  - **Relevant departments (e.g. Admissions, Compliance, Finance) may be consulted to assess suitability for re-entry.**
- **Re-enrolment Approval Criteria**
  - **Re-enrolment may be approved only where:**
    - **The reason for the prior suspension or cancellation has been fully resolved or no longer applies.**

    - **The student demonstrates a clear intention to engage responsibly with training requirements.**
    - **A study plan, intervention strategy, or conditions of re-entry (if required) can be reasonably supported by the RTO.**

- **Notification of Decision**
  - **The student will be advised in writing of the outcome within 10 working days of the application.**
    - **If approved, the student will receive a Letter of Offer, outlining any conditions of re-enrolment and next steps for orientation or transition back into study.**
    - **If declined, the student will be informed of the reasons for refusal and advised of their right to appeal the decision through the RTO's complaints and appeals process.**
- **Recordkeeping**
  - **All application documents, decisions, correspondence, and related evidence are to be filed in the Student Management System under the student's new or continuing profile.**
  - **These records are retained for 2 years from the date of decision, ensuring traceability and compliance under the Standards for RTOs 2025.**
- **PRISMS Update (for International Students)**
  - **If the student is an international student, the Admissions Department must ensure that a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) is issued through PRISMS following re-acceptance into the course.**
  - **The student must be advised to consult with Department of Home Affairs regarding any visa implications prior to recommencing.**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

| Role/Position | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| RTO Manager | - Approves or declines student deferral, suspension, or cancellation applications. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | **- Ensures decisions are made in line with policy and regulatory standards.**<br>**- Reviews re-enrolment requests and approves based on student history and current eligibility.**<br>**- Coordinates with Admissions and Compliance teams for decision consistency.** |
| **Student Support Officer (SSO)** | **- Receives and reviews student applications for deferral, suspension, or cancellation.**<br>**- Meets with students to discuss compassionate or compelling circumstances.**<br>**- Ensures applications are complete and supported with valid evidence.**<br>**- Submits documentation to the Admissions Department.**<br>**- Maintains ongoing communication with students regarding process outcomes.** |
| **Admissions Department** | **- Processes approved deferral, suspension, cancellation, and re-enrolment applications.**<br>**- Issues written notifications to students within prescribed timelines.**<br>**- Maintains all application records in the student file and management system.**<br>**- Updates PRISMS for changes to international student enrolments.** |
| **Compliance Officer** | **- Ensures all processes meet requirements under the ESOS National Code and Standards for RTOs 2025.**<br>**- Provides advice on policy compliance and appeal rights.**<br>**- Supports the review and audit of documentation relating to suspension, cancellation, or deferral cases.** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Trainers/Assessors** | **- Report student behaviour, engagement, and academic concerns that may lead to deferral or suspension recommendations.**<br>**- Support the implementation of any approved intervention strategies for re-engaged students.** |
| **Finance/Accounts Officer** | **- Verifies that all student financial obligations have been met before deferral, suspension, or cancellation is processed.**<br>**- Provides advice on refund eligibility in case of cancellations.** |
| **PEO (Principal Executive Officer)** | **- Provides final decision-making in complex or high-risk cases.**<br>**- Confirms alignment of decisions with provider obligations and reputational considerations.** |

**Record Retention**

- **All documentation related to deferral, suspension, and cancellation requests, including student applications, supporting evidence, correspondence, meeting notes, decisions, appeal records, and final outcomes must be securely stored in the Student Management System and student files.**
- **Records must be retained for a minimum of two (2) years from the date the student ceases to be enrolled at the RTO, in compliance with *SRTO 2025* and the *ESOS National Code 2018*.**
- **Access to records is restricted to authorised personnel only, and records must be stored in accordance with RTO's document control and data protection policies.**

**Continuous Improvement**

- **All cases of deferral, suspension, or cancellation will be reviewed and analysed by the Compliance and Quality Assurance Team during quarterly management meetings.**

- **Recurrent patterns, risk indicators, or systemic issues identified through student behaviour, complaints, or process inefficiencies will be used to inform improvement strategies.**
- **Improvements may include updates to staff training, communication materials, intervention strategies, or procedural documents.**
- **A log of actions taken and improvements made will be maintained in the Continuous Improvement Register, which is monitored by the RTO Manager and reviewed annually.**

**Confidentiality and Privacy**

- **All personal and academic information provided by students during the deferral, suspension, or cancellation process is handled in strict confidence in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and RTO's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.**
- **Information will only be disclosed to relevant staff members directly involved in assessing the application or managing compliance obligations.**
- **The RTO ensures that data handling practices are transparent, secure, and clearly communicated to students, including informing them of their right to access their personal information and request corrections if needed.**
- **Where required by law or regulation (e.g., PRISMS reporting), the RTO may disclose limited student data to government bodies.**