Student Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy

Policy Owner	CEO
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Implementation Responsibility	CEO
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1. Purpose

This policy outlines how Sydney Polytechnic Institute (SPI) will facilitate the enrolled students to defer the commencement of their course, temporarily suspend their studies or cancel enrolment from their courses.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in courses offered by SPI.

3. Definitions

Cancellation means the cessation of enrolment in the course (course withdrawal).

Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) is a document, provided electronically, which is issued by the registered provider to intending overseas students and which must accompany their application for a student visa. It confirms the overseas student's eligibility to enrol in the particular course of the registered provider (National Code 2018).

Deferral means the postponement of study requested by students prior to the commencement of their course; the duration of deferral can be granted for up to one year.

ESOS Act is the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Commonwealth) that sets out the legal framework governing the delivery of education to international students in Australia on a student visa.

Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) is a system that provides Australian education providers with the CoE facilities in compliance with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation.

Suspension means the temporary postponement of enrolment during the course.

4. Principles

Student enrolment can be deferred, suspended or cancelled in limited circumstances by SPI or by the student. A documented process will be implemented by SPI, to record the assessing and approving of a deferment of the commencement of the study, suspension of study or cancellation, accompanied by the reasons and decisions.

4.1 Deferral, Suspension or Cancellation Initiated by SPI

(1) SPI may defer the commencement of students' enrolment in a course when a decision has been taken by SPI to not offer the course in a particular trimester. In such cases, SPI must communicate with the student regarding their options.

(2) SPI may suspend a student's enrolment from a SPI course in the following instances:

- Student misconduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Unsatisfactory course progress following an approved Intervention strategy.

(3) SPI may cancel a student's enrolment in the following instances:

- The student demonstrates serious misconduct, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Continued unsatisfactory course progress, and/or failing to meet attendance requirements (please consult SPI *Student Progression Exclusion and Graduation Policy* for more details).
- Failure to pay the required fees to SPI as stated in the Offer Letter.

(4) In cases where deferral, suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment is initiated by SPI, the student will be notified in writing of intention as follows:

- Inform the student of SPI's intention to impose a deferral, suspension or cancellation of enrolment in writing, including the reasons for doing so;
- Advise the student of their rights to access the student grievance process (see SPI *Student Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure*) and Standard 10 of the National Code (Complaints and appeals) within 20 working days.

If the appeal is not upheld or the student withdraws from the appeal process, then SPI must, where appropriate, for the student:

- Inform the student that the deferral of commencement, suspension of enrolment or cancellation of enrolment will be reported to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA); which may affect the status of their student visas;
- Where the student is an international student:
    - Inform the international student of the need to seek advice from Immigration relating to their student visa;
    - Report the changes to the international student's enrolment via PRISMS within the applicable number of 31 days, as required by Standard 9.5.2 and section 19 of the ESOS Act.

(5) With the exception of extenuating circumstances which directly impact the student's health, welfare and safety, suspensions or cancellation of the student's enrolment will be implemented only once the grievance/internal appeal process is completed.

Subsequently, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) will not be informed of changes student's enrolment as a result of this process until the grievance/internal appeal process is completed and changes to enrolment are implemented.

Upon the implementation of such changes to students' enrolment (ie. deferral, suspension or cancellation), the DESE will be promptly notified via PRISMS by SPI.

(6) In cases where SPI initiates changes to students' enrolment, in the form of deferrals, suspensions or cancellations, the affected student has a right to appeal this decision, using the processes outlined in the "Student Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy" .

4.2 Deferral Initiated by the Student

(1) Students may defer commencement of a course in the following circumstances (documentary evidence must be provided):

- For international students, delay in obtaining a student visa.
- Compassionate or Compelling circumstances. Refer to 4.3 (4) for further information on compassionate or compelling circumstances.

(2) A request for deferral must be submitted in writing prior to the commencement date of the course that the student wishes to defer. Deferrals may be granted for up to one year from the date of request.

- Where a deferral is approved before student accepted the Letter of Offer, a new Offer Letter will be issued by SPI;
- Where a deferral is approved after the student accepted the Offer Letter, a new enrolment agreement will be provided to reflect the new commencement; the student will be informed that deferral of enrolment may affect their student visa, and will be advised to seek guidance from the immigration on the impact to the student visa.

4.3 Suspension or Cancellation Initiated by the Student

(1) Students who wish to suspend or cancel their enrolment during their course must obtain written approval from SPI.

(2) **Leave of Absence (LoA)**. Students may apply for a LoA, which allows a student to take temporary leave during a teaching period for up to 2 weeks (e.g., due to illness or injury), supported by documentation from qualified professionals.

- Leave of absence will only be approved for a period that has the minimal impact on the student's experience at SPI.
- For leave extending beyond 2 weeks, students must apply for a suspension of studies for the relevant period.

(3) An approval of suspension will be for a maximum period of 6 months except in extenuating circumstances.

(4) Students must successfully complete at least one unit of study before they are eligible to suspend their enrolment.

(5) In extenuating circumstances, a temporary suspension or cancellation of enrolment may be granted during the course on **compassionate or compelling grounds**. Applications must include supporting documentary evidence in English and, where possible, original form to support their application. Examples of such grounds may include, but are not limited to:

- Severe illness, injury or medical condition which warrants a medical certificate, stating that the affected student is not able to attend classes; or;
- Loss or bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents, and, where possible, the provision of a death certificate for supporting documentary evidence; or;
- Emergencies within the international student's home country (including the major political upheaval or natural disaster), necessitating emergency travel; or;
- Experience or involvement in a traumatic event (e.g. involvement in, or witnessing a serious accident, witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime), documented in

police or psychological reports.

(6) Student initiated deferral of commencement or suspension of enrolment cannot be granted retrospectively (after a period of absence) or if it was taken by the student without authorisation.

(7) Where the deferral, suspension or cancellation is granted and processed, SPI will notify DESE via PRISMS.

(8) For international students,

- where the temporary suspension of enrolment is for a period of 28 days or longer, the student must ensure that they adhere to any visa conditions.
- suspension of enrolment for more than six months, for any reason, may result in the cancellation of their student visa by DHA.
- any unauthorised absence will be reported to DHA.

4.4 For the deferment of the commencement of study or suspension of study requested by students, the assessment results with the reasons will be recorded as per SPI *Records and Information Management Policy*.

5. Procedures

5.1 Suspension of Enrolment requested by the Student

(1) Requests in the form of a completed Suspension of Enrolment Form must be submitted to the Student Services Centre no less than 10 working days prior to the requested date of suspension.

(2) Applications must include all supporting documents, evidence and any other relevant supporting material.

(3) Students studying in Australia under a student visa, if appropriate, should consult with the DHA regarding implications on their visa status as a result of deferral, cancellation or suspension of enrolment.

(4) With the exception of compassionate or compelling extenuating circumstances, suspension of enrolment may not be approved if the student has outstanding or overdue fees.

(5) Applications for suspension will be assessed within 10 working days from the date of receipt. Students will be informed of the outcome at the end of this process via written notice in their email.

5.2 Cancellation of Enrolment requested by the Student

(1) Students considering a withdrawal from their course should first consult the SPI Student Service Centre.

(2) Students must submit a completed Enrolment Cancellation Form to the Student Services Centre.

(3) Applications must be submitted with all supporting documentation, evidence and materials.

(4) Students will be informed of their financial liabilities and, if applicable, refund options as a result of their withdrawal. Further information regarding this can be found in the *Tuition Fees, Payment and Refund Policy*.

(5) Students studying in Australia under a student visa should consult the DHA regarding the

implications of enrolment changes on their visa status prior to the change.

(6) Note that international or foreign students studying in Australia enrolled for less than 6 months are not allowed to cancel their enrolment for the purposes of transferring to another Australian higher education institution. Certain exceptions apply, please consult the *Overseas Student Transfer Policy and Procedure.*

(7) With the exception of compassionate or compelling extenuating circumstances, cancellation of enrolment may not be approved if the student has outstanding or overdue fees.

(8) A cancellation request will be reviewed within 10 working days from the receipt of the application, and the student will be notified of the outcome of the cancellation request by email.

(9) Once the cancellation is granted and processed, SPI will notify DESE via PRISMS.

Notes

Related Legislation:

ESOS Act 2000
ESOS Act 2000 incorporating National Code 2018

Related Documents:

SPI Student Admissions and Enrolment Policy
SPI Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
SPI Student Progression, Exclusion and Graduation Policy
SPI Tuition Fees Payment and Refund Policy

Amendment History:

Version No.	Approved by	Effective date	Amendments
1.0	Academic Board	21/05/2021	New Policy
1.1	Academic Board	23/09/2022	Sub-section 4.4 inserted and amendments made to Section 4
1.2	Academic Board	09/01/2025	Minor amendments made to Sections 4.1, 4.3 and 5.2 for further refinement.
1.3	Academic Board	14/8/2025	Section 4.3 reviewed with the addition of Leave of Absence, and Section 4.2 refined to advise students to seek immigration guidance regarding any potential impact on student visa.