

704-PP-MEGA Deferment, Suspension, and Cancellation of Enrolment Policy

Relevant Standards SRTOs 2015: 1.7, 5.2 The National Code 2018: Standard 2.1.8, 5, 9 NEAS Quality Assurance Framework Quality Area: 7	Linked Documents Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Form Student Code of Conduct Academic and General Misconduct Policy Students Complaints and Appeals Policy Withdrawal and Course Cancellation Form
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1. Purpose

Standard 9 of The National Code 2018 allows students to defer commencement of studies, take a leave of studies, or temporarily suspend their studies during their program where compassionate or compelling circumstances exist. Standard 9 states that registered providers may only enable students to defer or temporarily suspend their studies, including granting a leave of absence, during the course through formal agreement in certain limited circumstances.

This policy outlines the circumstances for the application, assessment and approval of the deferment, suspension, leave of absence or cancellation of enrolment when instigated by either student or MEGA and subsequent reporting requirements via PRISMS.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all the current international students of MEGA studying on-shore, holding a student visa.

3. Definitions

Deferment: Postponement of the commencement of a course of study prior to start of a new academic term or a study period.

Suspension: Temporary postponement of an undertaken course of study. May occur at any time during an academic term or a study period.

Cancellation: Termination of enrolment.

Compassionate or Compelling circumstances: Are circumstances or events that are beyond the student's control which may include but not limited to – illness or medical or injury to own self or close family members, sudden death of close family members etc that impairs on student's ability to study

Course: means a course of education or training as defined in the ESOS Act 2000.

eCoE: eConfirmation of Enrolment.

PRISMS: The Provider Registration and International Student Management System.

Study Period: A discrete period of study within a course, namely a term, semester, or as otherwise defined by MEGA excluding the holidays as long as that period does not exceed 13 weeks. MEGA uses "Term" to define a study period. The term duration, usually a contact period of ten (10) weeks, is considered a study period.

Guardian: The approved and registered person with MEGA who will be responsible for the welfare and wellbeing of an under 18 years old student.

4. Legislative Context

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth)
- The ESOS Act 2000
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001
- The National Code 2018.

5. Policy

In all the processes listed in this policy, the legal guardian of an under 18 years old student must be informed and be present during all counselling meetings, and where required to sign all appropriate forms or documents related to an under 18 years old student.

5.1 Leave of Absence: Initiated by Student

MEGA may approve a personal leave of absence up to a maximum period of two (2) weeks within a study period. An *Application for a Leave of Absence* must be submitted to the Admissions Manager for approval.

A leave of absence can only be granted on compassionate or compelling circumstances e.g. sudden illness, injury or professional development activity and students must provide a valid reason for the leave. MEGA may ask for documentary or third-party evidence to verify the situation.

Students granted a leave of absence will be allowed to undertake any assessment tasks that they might have missed during their absence without any academic penalty. Students may have to attend extra classes, if available, on their return to make up for the lost time.

Only two leaves of absences can be granted in an academic year and may impact on course completion date. Any changes to student's enrolment will be notified the Secretary of DET via PRISMS within 14 days of the change to the student's enrolment status.

Leave of absence cannot be used for personal travelling, undertaking hobbies, working or taking holidays/breaks, and will not be approved on such grounds.

All leaves of absence are recorded as suspension of studies in PRISMS.

For students who are less than 18 years of age, the legal guardians of the student must sign all documents and be present during counselling meeting where and appeal

5.2 Deferring or Suspending a Course of Study: Initiated by Student

- Students wishing to defer or temporarily suspend their enrolment may only do so when there are compelling or compassionate circumstances. Compelling or compassionate circumstances may include, but are not limited to:
 - Serious illness
 - Serious illness or death of a family member necessitating a return to the student's home country
 - Serious injury
 - Stressful family or personal situation or a traumatic experience
 - Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel.
- Students will need to substantiate their claims with appropriate supporting documentation. Deferment or suspension of studies cannot be used for personal travelling, undertaking hobbies, working or taking holidays/breaks, and will not be approved on such grounds

- Students who would like to defer the commencement of their studies or suspend their current course of study must first speak to the Student Admissions Manager
- Prior to applying to suspend their studies, students must ensure that they have paid any outstanding course and other fees
- After these measures have been taken, and the student still wishes to defer or suspend their studies, a Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Form must be completed and submitted to the Admissions Manager with verifiable supporting documents. The Form can be obtained from MEGA reception or from MEGA website. The form must be submitted at least fourteen (14) working days prior to the requested deferment or suspension date
- In the event that an application for deferment and suspension being approved or denied, the outcome will be notified to the applicant in writing and, if denied, reasons for the refusal will be given. The refusal must be communicated to the student in writing within 14 days from the date of application
- In the event of an application for deferment or suspension of studies being approved, a designated MEGA Admissions Manager will notify the **Secretary of DET via PRISMS within 31 days** (or within 14 days if the student is less than 18 years old) **of the change to the student's enrolment status (Section 19, ESOS Act).**

5.3 Deferment, Suspension, or Cancellation: Initiated by MEGA

- Students may also have their enrolment deferred, suspended or cancelled by MEGA in the event of:
 - Misbehaviour as outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*, and *Academic and General Misconduct Policy*
 - Breach of the *Student Agreement* e.g., non-payment of fees
 - Discovery of evidence of fraudulent documentation to gain admission to MEGA
 - If the student behaves in a way which could potentially bring MEGA into disrepute
 - Failure to maintain satisfactory course progress under MEGA's Course Progress Policy including where the student is clearly having difficulty in completing the course within the expected duration, as specified on the student's eCoE.
- Students have the right to appeal a decision by MEGA to defer, suspend or cancel their studies and MEGA will not notify the Secretary of DET via PRISMS of a change to the enrolment status until the internal complaints and appeals process is completed or the student withdraws the appeal
- In cases where deferment, suspension or cancellation of a student's enrolment is initiated by MEGA, the student will be notified in writing and given twenty (20) working days to access MEGA's internal complaints and appeals process
- After all due processes have been completed, and MEGA decides to defer, suspend or cancel a student's enrolment, the Admissions Manager must notify the Secretary of DET via PRISMS within 31 days or within 14 days if the student is less than 18 years old, of the change to the student's enrolment status
- In the event, however, of MEGA cancelling a student's enrolment due to a breach of a condition of a student visa, the Admissions Manager must give the Secretary particulars of this breach via PRISMS as soon as practicable after the breach occurs.

5.4 Withdrawing from a course of study

Students intending to have their enrolment cancelled through course withdrawal must first speak to their Admissions Manager. Reasons given by the student for course withdrawal should be discussed and appropriate advice obtained. After these measures have been taken, and the student still wishes to withdraw from their studies, a *Withdrawal and Course Cancellation Form* must be completed by the student and submitted to the Admissions Manager. Prior to applying to withdraw from their program, students must ensure that they have paid any outstanding course fees and library fines and have returned all library resources to the library. The *Withdrawal and Course Cancellation Form* can be obtained from MEGA reception.

Restricted Period: If a student is intending to withdraw prior to the completion of six months of his/her principal course of study, they should be directed to and given access to MEGA's *Transfer between Providers Policy*. Students should be informed that MEGAs providing courses to international students are restricted from enrolling transferring students from other providers prior to the student completing six months of his or her principal course of study (*National Code, 7.1*).

While MEGA may grant a student a letter of release in this restricted period, it is not required to do so and it may exercise appropriate discretion. Possible reasons that a letter for release may not be given include, but are not restricted to:

- A student requesting a transfer has an inaccurate understanding of what the transfer represents to his/her study options
- The student still owes MEGA course fees
- It is suspected that the student is seeking transfer only to avoid being reported to DET for failure to meet course progress requirements
- MEGA considers this transfer to be detrimental to the student's interests
- The reasons stated for the request to transfer have not been adequate
- The transfer does not appear to be for the purpose of an educational or career-oriented benefit
- The course requested transfer to is the same or similar to the currently enrolled course(s)
- The primary reason for a transfer request is for a different class schedule which is more suited to the student's current or anticipated employment interests, or other non-educational interest.

When a student applies to withdraw from a course during this restricted period, the student must complete and submit a *Withdrawal and Course Cancellation Form* which is accompanied by:

- a valid letter of offer from another provider
- a detailed letter explaining clearly the reasons for seeking withdraw addressed to the Admissions Manager

In the event that a student's application for withdrawal from an enrolled course(s) is approved, MEGA's Admissions Manager must notify **the Secretary of DET via PRISMS within 31 days (or within 14 days if the student is less than 18 years old) of the change to the student's enrolment status (Section 19, ESOS Act).**

6. Important Note - Visa implications

Leave of absence, deferment, suspension or cancellation of enrolment may have implications for a student's visa; especially if the course end date has been changed. MEGA recommends that students seek appropriate advice regarding these implications. MEGA does not provide immigration advice to students.

7. Appeals

Once a decision is made on deferment, suspension, cancellation and/or exclusion for either reasons initiated by the student or MEGA, the student will be notified in writing of the outcome, including reasons for the decision.

Student should also refer to MEGA's "**Student Complaints and Appeals Policy**", available with student services, front desk, and online at – www.mega.edu.au for information on lodging an appeal against a decision.

8. Responsibility

The Admissions Manager has the responsibility to provide the student details and fee status to CFO for effective implementation and maintenance of this procedure.

The Admissions Manager is responsible for effective implementation and management of this policy as well as provision of information on ways to resolve complaints of breaches of this policy.

The Admissions Manager is responsible for updating and effecting the changes in PRISMS within the prescribed 31 days (or within 14 days if the student is less than 18 years old).

Any complaints or breaches in relation to this policy should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer in person or by email to: ceo@mega.edu.au.

Revision History:

Version No:	Date	Description of modifications	Staff responsible
1	Dec 2017	First Review and alignment of PP to new National Code 2018 and SRTOs 2015.	CEO
2	Jan 2018	New PP approved	CEO
3	Oct 2018	Review of Policy and Procedures, change Academic Coordinator to Admissions Manager and update correct name of form	CEO
4	April 2019	Review of PP as per ASQA Audit (19 and 20 February) report	CEO
5	November 2023	Review of PP preparing for internal audit by RTO Advance	CEO
6	March 2024	Update PP on under 18 years old, definition of compassionate or compelling circumstances as per audit feedback Clauses 3 and 5	CEO
7	March 2025	Review of PP and update Admissions Officer to Admissions Manager	CEO

