

Deferral Policy and Procedure

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for all students to defer from a Think: Colleges course or unit of study.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to FEE-HELP and non FEE-HELP students enrolled in ELICOS, Vocational Training and Higher Education courses at any of the Think: Colleges ("the College"). The policy also provides for the administration of applications for deferral and includes applications for overseas students seeking to defer the commencement of their studies based on an inability to begin due to a delay in receiving a student visa.

Definitions

Refer to *Glossary of Terms*.

Policy Content

Domestic Students enrolled in a higher education course or a VET FEE-HELP enabled course

A student seeking to defer from a course/unit of study before the course census date must complete the *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* available from Think: Student Services and return the completed form to Think: Student Services. The student must also meet with the relevant Head of College (or delegated nominee). The permission to defer a course or unit of study cannot be granted for more than 12 months and is granted at the discretion of the Head of College (or delegated nominee).

Overseas students enrolled in all courses and domestic students enrolled in a vocational course which is not VET FEE-HELP enabled

A student seeking to defer from a course/unit of study before the course commencement date must complete the *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* available from Think: Student Services and return the completed form to Think: Student Services. The student must also meet with the relevant Head of College (or delegated nominee). The permission to defer a course or unit of study cannot be granted for more than 12 months and is granted at the discretion of the Head of College (or delegated nominee).

Additional information for Overseas students deferral process from a Course or Unit of Study

Think: Student Services will process any deferral in accordance with the provisions of the ESOS Act and the National Code 2007.

Under the National Code 2007, deferral or temporary suspension of studies, including granting a leave of absence, during a course may only be done through a formal agreement in certain limited circumstances including consideration under compassionate or compelling circumstances such as:

- Serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- Where the College is unable to offer a pre-requisite unit of study (National Code 2007, Standard 13.2); or
- The College implementing its intervention strategy for students who were at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress, or

- Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (Where possible a death certificate should be provided);
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies; or
- A traumatic experience which could include:
 - Involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
 - Witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports)
- Inability to begin due to a delay in receiving a student visa.

As per the *Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure*, Late Admissions may only be allowed up to two weeks into the initial study period after the student submits a *Visa Delay form* and only with the approval of the Head of College (or delegated nominee). The Head of College for Billy Blue College of English requires all students to start on a Monday.

Refer to the *Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedure* for details on suspension and expulsion.

Procedure for implementation

Overseas students enrolled in all courses and domestic students enrolled in a vocational course which is not VET FEE-HELP enabled

1. Students seeking a deferral from a course or unit of study must submit either:
 - a. A completed *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* to Think: Student Services; or
 - b. Overseas students seeking to defer the commencement of their studies based on an inability to begin within the first 5 days due to a delay in receiving a student visa must submit a completed *Visa Delay form* to Think: Student Services.

Forms are available from Think: Student Services, and online. All applications must include any relevant written or supporting documents. Applications will be entered into The Student Records Management System upon receipt and a copy kept in the student's file. All applications must have relevant written or supporting documents. Applications will be entered into The Student Records Management System upon receipt and a copy kept in the student's file.

2. The Head of College (or delegated nominee) will review and approve or reject the student's application based on the criteria listed above. After a decision has been made, the outcome is processed by Think: Student Services.
 - Students who lodge their *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* more than 28 days before the course commencement date for a unit of study will be granted a deferral without penalty from any unit of study in which they were enrolled.
 - Students who lodge their *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* 0-28 days before the course commencement date or after the course commencement date for a unit of study or course may be granted a deferral without penalty from any unit of study in which they were enrolled at the discretion of the Head of College (or delegated nominee). Any fees paid or due for the course/unit of study may be carried forward until the student's return to study, be refunded, or students may remain liable for fees according to the *Refund Policy and Procedure*.
 - Students who lodge their *Visa Delay form* before the course commencement date will be granted a deferral without penalty from any unit of study in which they were enrolled.

- Students who lodge their *Visa Delay form* after the course commencement date for a unit of study or course may be granted a deferral without penalty from any unit of study in which they were enrolled at the discretion of the Head of College (or delegated nominee). Any fees paid or due for the course/unit of study may be carried forward until the student's return to study, be refunded, or students may remain liable for fees according to the *Refund Policy and Procedure*.
 - Deferral may be granted for a maximum of 12 months regardless of whether the student has been accepted on a full-time or part-time basis. A deferral of more than 12 months is not permitted, students would need to re-apply to the College.
 - Students wishing to extend an initial deferral period of six months to the maximum deferral period of twelve months must submit a new *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* to Think: Student Services more than 28 days prior to the commencement of the deferral period.
 - Deferral beyond the maximum period of one academic year will not be approved. Offers to students who do not take up a place after a deferral of one academic year will lapse. Students must re-apply for a later intake if/when they are ready to commence study and normal course fees will apply.
 - Each application will be treated on its merits, as deferral is not automatic.
 - Unless there are exceptional circumstances (as determined by the Head of College or delegated nominee), an offer lapses after the scheduled day of enrolment. Students still wishing to defer must reapply for the next intake. In this case, there is no refund of fees paid, see the *Refund Policy and Procedure* for details.
3. Students who apply for a deferral will be advised in writing of the outcome by Think: Student Services within 15 working days.
- If a student's deferral application is approved then all tuition fees will be transferred to the next semester.
 - If the student deferral application is rejected then the student will have an option to appeal the decision within 20 working days after receiving the notification. (Refer to the appeal section under the *Non Academic Grievance Policy and Procedure*)
4. Student deferrals are documented in The Student Records Management System and on the student's file. This must be included where there is a variation in the student's enrolment load which may affect the student's expected duration of study. The variation and reasons for it must be included on the student's file.

Additional Procedure for Overseas Students

Deferral Before the Course Commencement Date

Where an overseas student's arrival is delayed, Think: Student Services will update PRISMS by either:

(1) Notifying the Secretary of DEEWR through PRISMS of the student's delayed arrival where the student's course end date remains the same or

(2) Notify the Secretary of DEEWR through PRISMS of the student's course deferral, issue a new *CoE* with the revised end date and inform the student to contact DIAC.

Deferral After Course Commencement Date

1. Think: Student Services will issue a letter to the student to inform them that any application to seek a deferral of his/her enrolment will be treated as a *suspension of studies* and may affect his/her student visa.

2. Think: Student Services will notify the Secretary of DEEWR via PRISMS of the suspension and/or issue a new *CoE* when the student can only account for the variation/s by extending his or her expected duration of study.

Domestic Students enrolled in a higher education course or a VET FEE-HELP enabled course

- Students seeking a deferral from a course or unit of study must apply to Think: Student Services using the *Change/Defer/Withdraw form*. All applications must have relevant written or supporting documents.
- Students who lodge their *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* on or before the census date for a unit of study will be granted a deferral without penalty from any unit of study in which they were enrolled. They will not incur a FEE-HELP debt for the unit of study and any fees paid for the unit of study will be refunded.
- Students who submit their *Change/Defer/Withdraw form* after the census date will incur a FEE-HELP debt for those units of study and/or remain liable for tuition fees.
- If the student wishes to be considered for re-credit of his/her FEE-HELP balance and/or exemption from liability for tuition fees the student must fill in a *Special Circumstances Form* and submit it within 12 months of the date of his/her deferral from those units of study.
- Student's deferral is documented in The Student Records Management System on the student's file

Publication

These procedures are to be published for students on the Think: Colleges website and in the Student Handbook to ensure current and prospective students have up to date and accurate information publicly available to them.

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Policy Approved By	CEO
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