STUDENT DEFERMENT, SUSPENSION & CANCELLATION OF STUDY POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

This policy and procedure is designed to provide George Brown College (GBC) 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. POLICY

Under the requirements of the ESOS regulatory framework, if an international student has enrolled in a course at GBC 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 or the College initiates a suspension or cancellation due to breaches of visa conditions, non-payment of fees, misconduct, or academic progress concerns.

Definition

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, and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologist's reports);
e) where the College was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit;
f) inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.

If a student defers or suspends their study on any other grounds, the College must report the student via PRISMS, as not complying with their visa conditions. Once the student has commenced the course, the College will only grant a suspension of study for compassionate and compelling circumstances as above.

The College may suspend or cancel the student's enrolment for the following reasons. If a student

- is found to have engaged in academic or non-academic misconduct
- failed to pay required fees to undertake or continue their course

- has breached the visa requirements for course progress or attendance requirements

A student may also withdraw from a course and thereby cancel their study for their own reasons.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

PEO is responsible for approving applications.

Compliance Officer is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and to ensure that staff and students are aware of its application, PRISMS reporting and that staff implement its requirements.

Student Services Officer is the main point of contact with students to implement this policy

All staff who interact with international students must be aware of and implement this policy

4. REQUIREMENTS

This policy aligns with the ESOS Act 2000, ESOS Regulations 2001, and Standard 9 of the National Code 2018. The College must:

- Ensure deferment, suspension, or cancellation is only approved based on valid reasons.
- Notify the Department of Home Affairs via PRISMS when enrolment changes occur.
- Maintain records of all decisions for at least two years after the student ceases to be enrolled.
- Provide students with written notice of decisions and allow access to the appeals process.

This policy and procedure is additionally subject to the Standards for RTOs 2025, the Compliance Requirements, the Credential Policy, and DEWR Policy Guidance**.**

STANDARDS FOR RTOS 2025

Standard 2.3 (1)

The provider supports VET students to manage their enrolment and access support and information in relation to study options, personal circumstances, and other considerations relevant to their progress.

5. SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all international students enrolled in a CRICOS-registered course of study at the College. It governs the processes for:

- **Deferment of commencement** of study prior to or at the start of a student's course,
- **Suspension of enrolment** during an ongoing course due to compassionate and compelling circumstances or as a result of student misbehaviour, and
- **Cancellation of enrolment** initiated either by the student or by the College.

This policy applies to all staff involved in administering student enrolment variations, including academic, student support, and administrative personnel. It ensures that all actions relating to deferment, suspension, or cancellation of study are managed transparently, fairly, and in accordance with requirements.

6. PROCEDURE

6.1 Student-initiated application for deferment or suspension of study

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

International students may also defer or suspend their study with the College 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 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.

Students may be required to apply for a new student visa to continue their course.

Where a student cannot start on the expected commencement date for compassionate or compelling reasons and the College has agreed to the student's request for a later starting day and the end date of the course will not be affected the College will not defer the commencement of enrolment.

The maximum time allowed for a deferment or voluntary suspension of study is 6 months. A deferment does not entitle a student to any refunds of fees and costs already paid.

Deferring or suspending that <u>does</u> affect the end date of the CoE:
GBC notifies Dept of Employment & Workplace Relations/DoHA through PRISMS that it is deferring or suspending a student's enrolment for a period which <u>will</u> affect the end date of the CoE.

In such situations, PRISMS will cancel the original CoE, and immediately offer the opportunity to create a new CoE with a new end date. If it is not known when the student will return, the option to not create a new CoE at that point should be used. Once the student has notified GBC of their intended date of return a new COE can then be created.

Deferring or suspending that <u>does not</u> affect the end date of the CoE:
GBC notifies Dept of Employment & Workplace Relations through PRISMS that it is deferring or suspending a student's enrolment for a period which <u>will not</u> affect the end date of the CoE.

In this case there is no change to the CoE or the student's enrolment status on PRISMS i.e. the student's CoE status will still be 'Studying".

PROCEDURE FOR A DEFERMENT OF COMMENCEMENT OF STUDY

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

a. the student must advise the Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer in writing on the *Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* with documentation clearly demonstrating the compassionate or compelling reasons why the deferment should be granted.
b. In the event that the request demonstrates compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above) the PEO will approve the application and the Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer will advise the student in writing of the decision within 5 working days.
c. The period of the deferment will be entered into PRISMS
d. If the request for deferment of commencement of study does not meet the requirements for compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above) the PEO will not approve the application and Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer will advise the student in writing within 5 working days of the reason for the decision and that the student has 20 working days to appeal the decision through the College's complaints and appeals 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.

PROCEDURE FOR A VOLUNTARY SUSPENSION OF STUDY

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

a. the student must advise the Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer in writing on the *Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* that they wish to apply for a voluntary suspension of their study. The Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer will make an appointment to meet with the student to discuss their request. The Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer will also advise the student if there are any fees owing and discuss how payment will be settled.
b. In the event that the request for suspension of study demonstrates compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above) the PEO will approve the application and the Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer will advise the student in writing of the decision within 5 working days.
c. The period of suspension will be entered into PRISMS by the Compliance Officer/ Student Services Officer
d. The Compliance Officer will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:
    i. email the accounts to adjust the student's financial records to take account of the period of suspension of study;
    ii. email the relevant personnel advising them that the student has suspended their study 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.

e. If the request for suspension of study does not demonstrate compassionate and compelling circumstances (as outlined above) the Compliance Officer will advise the student in writing within 5 working days of the reason for the decision and that the student has 20 working days to appeal the decision through the College's complaints and appeals handling procedures.
f. If the student chooses to access the College's process, the College will maintain the student's enrolment until the complaints and appeals process is completed and the College 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 by the Student Services Officer.
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.

6.2 Student-initiated cancellation of study

Overview

A 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.

PROCEDURE FOR CANCELLATION OF STUDY

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

a. The student will advise the Compliance Officer in writing on the *Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* of their intention to withdraw from their study.
b. A copy of the request and any supporting documentation along with any comments from the Compliance Officer is placed on the student's file.
c. The cancellation of the student's enrolment will be formally processed and the Compliance Officer will access PRISMS to advise the change in the student's enrolment status.
d. The Compliance Officer will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:
    i. email accounts to adjust the student's financial records 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.

6.3 College-initiated suspension of study or cancellation of enrolment

Overview

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

Suspension

a) failing to meet minimum academic standards; or
b) academic misconduct; or
c) non-academic misconduct; or
d) any combination of the above.

Cancellation

a) misbehaviour, in accordance with the Student Misconduct Policy
b) no longer holding a student visa
c) non-payment of fees
d) failing to attend class and make satisfactory academic progress

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 Academic *Course Progress Policy and Procedure*.

PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT

The following procedure relates to processing a College initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment due to unsatisfactory academic performance (summarising the Academic *Course Progress and Policy and Procedure):*

a) If an international student fails to meet the minimum academic standards in a second consecutive term, the Compliance Officer or their delegate will advise the student in writing of the intention to report the student for not achieving satisfactory academic progress.
b) The student will be advised by the Compliance Officer 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.
c) The student will also be advised by the Compliance Officer that they have 20 working days to access the College's complaints and appeals handling process, 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 complaint or appeal and, if the student lodges a complaint/appeal, during the period the complaint or appeal is being considered.
e) After all complaints and appeals processes are finalised, or if the student has chosen not to access the complaint/appeal handling process within 20 working days, the student's enrolment will be formally cancelled by the Compliance Officer or their delegate, with appropriate documentation along with any comments from the Student Services Team Leader placed on the student's file.
f) The cancellation of the student's enrolment will be formally processed and the PEO or their delegate will access PRISMS to advise the change in the student's enrolment status.
g) The Compliance Officer will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:
    i. email accounts to adjust the student's financial records 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.

The College can suspend or cancel a student's enrolment against the student's wishes, provided that the suspension or cancellation is consistent with the Colleges policies and/or

Australian Law. Before suspending or cancelling a student's enrolment, GBC must notify the student of its intention to take such action and allow the student 20 working days to access the complaints and appeals process. (See: *Complaints and Appeals Policy*).

Procedure Summary Table – Student-Initiated Application for Deferment or Suspension of Study

Step	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	System/ Record
1	Student submits completed Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study, with certified documentation of compassionate or compelling circumstances.	Student	At least 10 working days prior to requested deferment/ suspension	Application form, supporting evidence
2	Compliance Officer reviews the application and arranges meeting (for suspension) to confirm details, discuss financial implications, and assess evidence.	Compliance Officer	Within 5 working days of receipt	Interview notes (suspension only), file annotation
3	Application assessed against policy criteria for compassionate and compelling circumstances.	Compliance Officer	Immediately following review	Decision notes on student file
4A	If approved – written notice of outcome is issued to student, including period of deferment/suspension.	Compliance Officer	Within 5 working days	Outcome letter, saved in student file
4B	If not approved – student notified of reason and right to appeal within 20 working days under the Complaints and Appeals Policy.	Compliance Officer	Within 5 working days	Notification letter, appeal rights
5	Period of deferment or suspension entered in PRISMS by Compliance Officer: If end date of CoE is affected – PRISMS cancels original CoE and	Compliance Officer	Within 5 working days of approval	PRISMS records, CoE register

	prompts issue of new CoE when return date is known. If end date not affected – PRISMS updated with status 'Studying' unchanged			
6	Suspension only – Student Services Team Leader: Advises Accounts to adjust financial records. Notifies key staff to update records and adjust training delivery. Creates diary reminder for student's expected return	Student Services Team Leader	Immediately following approval	Internal emails, diary system
7	If student appeals, enrolment remains active and PRISMS is not updated until outcome of the appeal.	Compliance Officer	Within 20 working days from decision	Complaints and Appeals Register
8	All records, including application, supporting documents, outcome letter, and PRISMS actions, are retained in student file.	Compliance Officer	Upon case closure	Student file, electronic record system
9	Student is advised to retain original documents and only submit certified copies.	Compliance Officer / Student Services Team Leader	At submission and approval stages	Orientation materials, outcome letter

Procedure Summary Table – Student-Initiated Cancellation of Study

Step	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	System/Record
1	Student submits written notification of cancellation using the *Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study* form.	Student	At least 10 working days before intended withdrawal	Application form, supporting evidence (if provided)
2	Compliance Officer reviews the request and notes any relevant comments or context.	Compliance Officer	Within 3 working days of receipt	Notations on application

3	Request and any supporting documentation are filed in the student's record.	Compliance Officer	Immediately following review	Student file
4	Compliance Officer accesses PRISMS and records the cancellation of enrolment.	Compliance Officer	Within 5 working days of confirmation	PRISMS cancellation record
5	Student Services Team Leader ensures the following follow-up actions are completed: Emails Accounts to adjust student financial records (if applicable) Emails relevant staff to update internal systems and student records	Student Services Team Leader	Immediately following PRISMS update	Email records, SMS updates
6	Student file is finalised and closed, with all cancellation documents securely retained.	Student Services Officer	Upon completion of cancellation process	Student file, electronic record system

Procedure Summary Table – College-Initiated Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment

Step	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	System/Record
1	Identify non-compliance with academic standards, visa conditions, behaviour, or financial obligations.	Student Services Team leader / Compliance Officer	Ongoing	Academic reports, misconduct records, attendance data
2	For unsatisfactory academic progress (per Course Progress Policy), send written notification of intent to report for breach of course progress.	Compliance Officer	Within 5 working days of determination	Written notice, student file
3	Notify the student of the intent to suspend or cancel enrolment, including: Reason for action. Advice to contact the Department of Home Affairs. Right to appeal within 20 working days	Compliance Officer	Immediately upon issuing notice	Notification letter, file record

4	Allow the student 20 working days to access the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.	Student	Within 20 working days	Complaints and Appeals Register
5	Maintain enrolment and permit attendance during any appeal period.	Student Services Team Leader	Until appeal outcome is finalised	SMS record, diary entry
6	If the student does not appeal, or after the internal appeal process is concluded and supports cancellation, finalise the decision.	Compliance Officer	Immediately following 20-day period or appeal conclusion	Decision note, file documentation
7	Update PRISMS to reflect change in enrolment status.	Compliance Officer	Within 5 working days of final decision	PRISMS report
8	Email Accounts to adjust student's financial records and notify relevant staff of enrolment cancellation.	Student Services Team Leader	Immediately after PRISMS update	Email records, SMS update
9	File all documentation relating to the decision, notices, appeals, and outcomes.	Student Services Officer	Upon case closure	Student file, electronic storage

7. Policy Implementation

This policy will be actively implemented and promoted across the College through multiple communication channels to ensure awareness and accessibility for all staff, students, and stakeholders. It will be incorporated into the Student Handbook, published on the College's website, and circulated internally via website and staff meetings. Relevant staff will receive briefing or induction on the policy as part of onboarding or compliance training, and updates will be communicated as part of ongoing policy reviews. This ensures consistent application and understanding across all areas of the College.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

This Policy and Procedure will undergo an annual review, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains relevant and effective in guiding the operations and strategies or as needed to reflect any changes in the regulatory environment or operational practices.

Feedback will be collated and analysed and discussed at the monthly management meetings, for noting or action with any necessary changes documented in a Continuous Improvement Form and in the Continuous Improvement Register.

Document Control

Version number:	V1	Approved by:	PEO
Approval date:	13/06/2025	Review date:	14/06/2026
Standards: NC Standard 9			

Version Control

Version #	Changes	Approval By	Approval Date
1.0	Original Version	Preeti Singh	13/06/2025

Associated Documents

Course Progress and Attendance Policy and Procedure

Continuous Improvement Form

Continuous Improvement Register

Letter to Advise Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment

Letter to Refuse Deferment or Suspension of Study

Student Application for Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of Study

Student Complaints and Appeals Handling Policy and Procedure

Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure