

Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a fair, documented process for requesting, assessing, approving, refusing, initiating, recording and reporting a deferral, suspension or cancellation of enrolment. It protects student welfare and procedural fairness, maintains accurate enrolment records, and ensures additional ESOS and PRISMS obligations are met for overseas students.

2. Scope

This policy applies to domestic and overseas students enrolled with STC. It covers student-requested and STC-initiated changes before and after course commencement. It does not replace the separate processes for course transfer, withdrawal and refunds, course progress or attendance reporting, critical incidents, complaints and appeals, or provider default. Those processes must be applied where relevant.

3. Regulatory framework

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and the 2025 Standards for RTOs, including the Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025.
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act), including enrolment reporting obligations.
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, particularly Standards 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.
- Migration legislation and student visa conditions, as applicable.
- Applicable apprenticeship, traineeship, government funding, consumer, privacy and anti-discrimination requirements.
- STC's written agreement, Student Handbook, refund, support, complaints and appeals, and records policies.

This policy does not provide migration advice. Overseas students are directed to the Department of Home Affairs or a registered migration agent for advice about visa consequences.

4. Principles

- Each decision is made on its merits, using relevant and reasonably available evidence.
- Students receive clear information, a reasonable opportunity to respond and written reasons.
- Student safety and wellbeing are prioritised, including culturally safe, accessible processes and reasonable adjustments.
- A provider-initiated suspension or cancellation is not implemented until the internal appeal process is completed, unless the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk.
- Overseas student enrolment changes are recorded accurately and promptly in PRISMS, and affected students are advised to seek visa advice.
- Decisions, evidence, communications, appeals and system actions are retained in an auditable record.

5. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Cancellation	Permanent cessation of an enrolment from an effective date. Cancellation does not itself determine any refund entitlement or release/transfer decision.
Compassionate or compelling circumstances	Circumstances generally beyond the student's control that have an impact on course progress or wellbeing, assessed on demonstrable evidence. Examples may include serious illness or injury; bereavement; major political upheaval or natural disaster; a traumatic experience; or a visa-processing delay preventing timely commencement.

Term	Meaning
Deferral	Postponement of the commencement of a course before the student has commenced.
Domestic student	A student who is not an overseas student for ESOS purposes.
Misbehaviour	Conduct that breaches the Student Code of Conduct or other lawful STC requirement, including serious or repeated unsafe, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, dishonest or disruptive conduct.
Overseas student	A student studying in Australia on a student visa and enrolled or intending to enrol in a CRICOS-registered course.
Suspension	A temporary pause in an enrolment after study has commenced, with an intended return date. It may be initiated by the student or STC.
Withdrawal	A student's voluntary decision to cease an enrolment. For administrative purposes an approved withdrawal results in cancellation of enrolment.
Working day	A weekday on which STC is open for business, excluding public holidays and published closure periods.

6. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Managing Director / delegate	Approve significant or exceptional decisions and ensure adequate governance and resources.
RTO Manager	Assess or approve decisions; ensure procedural fairness; authorise provider-initiated action and PRISMS reporting; oversee consistency and review.
Compliance Manager / authorised PRISMS officer	Check National Code and reporting requirements; process and verify PRISMS actions; retain reporting evidence.
Student Administration	Receive and register applications; acknowledge requests; gather records; issue correspondence; update the SMS, training plan and relevant registers.
Student Support Officer	Assist students to understand and access the process; identify wellbeing or accessibility needs; coordinate referrals and return-to-study support.
Trainers and assessors	Provide relevant factual information, maintain confidentiality and support an approved return-to-study plan.
Students	Provide complete and accurate information and evidence; keep contact details current; respond to requests; comply with the decision and any return-to-study conditions.

7. Grounds and evidence

Student-requested deferral or suspension

An overseas student's deferral or suspension may be approved where STC is satisfied that compassionate or compelling circumstances apply. A domestic student's request may also be approved for other reasonable grounds permitted by the enrolment agreement, funding arrangements and course requirements. The student must explain the requested dates, impact and proposed return, and provide evidence reasonably available to them.

Examples of evidence

- a medical certificate or treating practitioner's letter stating the functional impact and relevant period;
- a death certificate, funeral notice or other reasonable evidence of bereavement;
- police, psychologist, counsellor or support-service documentation relating to trauma, crime or family violence;
- official information about a natural disaster, political event, travel disruption or visa-processing delay;
- employer or apprenticeship information where relevant; or
- a statutory declaration or other credible evidence where primary documentation cannot reasonably be obtained.

STC will request only information reasonably necessary to decide the matter, will consider barriers to obtaining evidence, and may verify documents with consent or lawful authority. Fraudulent or misleading evidence may result in refusal and separate disciplinary action.

8. Student-initiated application process

- The student submits the approved Deferral, Suspension or Cancellation (DSC) form, or another clear written request accepted by STC, to Student Administration. A support person or authorised representative may assist.
- A planned deferral must be lodged before commencement. A planned suspension should normally be lodged at least 10 working days before the requested start date. STC accepts and prioritises late applications where an emergency, incapacity or other reasonable circumstance prevented earlier notice.
- Student Administration acknowledges the request, records it in the DSC Register and asks for any reasonably required information. The student is told if an incomplete application may delay a decision.
- The authorised decision-maker considers the evidence, course and assessment schedule, progress, expected completion, safety and welfare, training product and funding requirements, and—where applicable—CoE and visa implications.
- STC gives a written decision as soon as practicable, normally within 10 working days after receiving a complete application. The decision states whether it is approved, the effective dates, reasons, conditions, refund or fee process, return-to-study actions, system/CoE consequences and review rights.
- Administration updates the SMS, training plan, relevant funding or apprenticeship systems and, for an overseas student, PRISMS as required. Where course duration changes, the Completion, Progress and Attendance Policy and National Code Standard 8 are also applied.

A student-requested cancellation is ordinarily processed from the requested or agreed effective date after identity and intent are confirmed. STC may contact the student to clarify consequences and support options but will not unreasonably obstruct withdrawal. Refunds are determined separately under the written agreement and Refund Policy.

9. Assessment and decision criteria

Decision factor	Considerations
Evidence and circumstances	Credibility, relevance, duration and impact; whether the matter is beyond the student's control; barriers to obtaining evidence.
Academic and practical impact	Missed learning, assessments, workplace requirements, sequencing, currency, safety and ability to resume successfully.
Duration and return plan	Proposed dates, course availability, maximum course/CoE duration, re-entry point, support and catch-up arrangements.

Decision factor	Considerations
Student welfare and accessibility	Health, safety, disability, family violence, cultural safety, reasonable adjustment and referral needs.
Regulatory and contractual impact	ESOS/PRISMS, visa advice, apprenticeship or funding rules, written agreement, fees/refunds and third-party obligations.
Alternatives	Whether support, adjusted scheduling, reduced workload where lawful, intervention, leave or transfer is more appropriate.

An approval may include reasonable conditions, such as a return date, revised training plan, re-orientation, practical competency review, payment arrangement or support appointment. Conditions must be relevant, proportionate, documented and not discriminatory.

10. STC-initiated suspension or cancellation

STC may initiate suspension or cancellation on lawful and documented grounds, including:

- serious or repeated misconduct under the Student Code of Conduct;
- conduct creating an unacceptable risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of the student or others;
- non-payment of an amount required under the written agreement, after applicable notices and reasonable opportunity to remedy;
- failure to meet course progress or, where applicable, attendance requirements, only after applying the Completion, Progress and Attendance Policy and National Code Standard 8;
- fraud, forged documents, identity or academic integrity misconduct;
- failure to meet a mandatory prerequisite, licensing, workplace, safety or enrolment condition that cannot reasonably be remedied;
- abandonment or non-engagement after reasonable contact and welfare checks; or
- other grounds expressly stated in the written agreement or required by law.

Proportionate response

Except where immediate protective action is necessary, STC should consider less restrictive measures first, including a warning, behaviour agreement, support, reasonable adjustment, payment plan or intervention. A short precautionary exclusion from premises or activities may be used to manage an immediate safety risk while the matter is assessed; it must be reviewed promptly and is distinct from final enrolment suspension or cancellation.

11. Notice, response and internal appeal

- Before STC imposes a provider-initiated suspension or cancellation, it gives the student written notice of the proposed action, effective date, reasons and material evidence.
- The notice explains how the student may respond and advises of the right to lodge an internal appeal under the Complaints and Appeals Policy within 20 working days. Reasonable access to relevant information is provided, subject to privacy, safety and legal restrictions.
- The student may present their case and be accompanied or assisted by a support person. Any conflict of interest is declared and managed.
- The suspension or cancellation does not take effect until the internal appeal process is completed, unless STC reasonably determines and documents that the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk.
- If immediate action is taken for welfare or safety, STC communicates its scope, reasons and review arrangements, maintains necessary support and proceeds with the appeal as quickly as practicable.
- The student receives the written internal appeal outcome and detailed reasons. If unsuccessful, an overseas student is advised within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the right to access an external appeal at minimal or no cost, in accordance with National Code Standard 10.

National Code Standard 9 requires completion of the internal appeal before a provider-initiated suspension or cancellation takes effect, subject to the welfare-risk exception. Any additional protection under another STC policy, contract or law also applies.

12. Overseas student requirements

PRISMS and visa advice

For every overseas student deferral, suspension or cancellation, STC records the change under section 19 of the ESOS Act through PRISMS using the accurate effective date and reason. STC tells the student in writing to seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs about the potential impact on their student visa. Staff must not promise or predict a visa outcome.

Course duration and CoE

Where an approved deferral or suspension affects the expected completion date, STC reviews the CoE, training plan and course duration under National Code Standard 8. A new or revised CoE is issued only where required and supported by the approved circumstances and registered course duration. The student is advised of any re-enrolment, catch-up, fees or visa implications before accepting the revised arrangement.

Transfer and release

Cancellation or withdrawal does not automatically determine whether an overseas student is entitled to transfer during the restricted period. If the student intends to enrol with another provider before completing six calendar months of their principal course, STC separately applies its Overseas Student Transfer Policy and National Code Standard 7. Any required PRISMS release decision is made and recorded through that process; a “letter of release” is not used as a substitute for the PRISMS process.

Students under 18

Where STC has responsibility for approving an overseas student’s accommodation, support and general welfare, STC continues that responsibility after suspension or cancellation until one of the events permitted by National Code Standard 5 occurs. STC coordinates with the parent or legal guardian and any receiving provider as appropriate, avoids a gap in approved welfare arrangements, and makes required notifications. If STC cannot contact the student and has welfare concerns, it takes reasonable steps to locate the student, including notifying police or relevant agencies where required.

13. Domestic students, apprentices and funded students

For domestic students, STC applies the written agreement and applicable consumer, funding and regulatory requirements. For an apprentice or trainee, an enrolment change does not itself suspend or cancel the training contract. STC consults the student, employer and relevant apprenticeship authority as permitted and required, records changes to the training plan and makes required funding or contract notifications. A student’s rights to a refund, statement of attainment, records and complaint or appeal are preserved.

14. Return from suspension

Before the scheduled return, Student Administration contacts the student to confirm readiness, contact details and any changed circumstances.

The trainer and Student Support Officer review missed content, assessment sequencing, workplace requirements, equipment or safety currency, support needs and reasonable adjustments.

STC issues a revised training plan and timetable and, where applicable, updates the CoE and PRISMS.

Progress is reviewed soon after return, normally within four weeks. If the student cannot return, a further application or another lawful enrolment decision is required; suspension is not allowed to continue indefinitely without review.

15. Fees, refunds and certification

A deferral, suspension, cancellation or withdrawal may affect fees, payment schedules, funding eligibility and refund entitlements. These are determined under the student’s written agreement, STC Refund Policy, ESOS requirements and applicable consumer law. The decision letter identifies the process but does not reduce a statutory right. On cancellation or withdrawal, STC issues any AQF certification documentation to which the student is entitled in accordance with the 2025 Standards, AQF requirements, USI rules and STC certification policy.

16. Records, privacy and communication

STC retains the application or initiating report; evidence; risk and welfare assessments; communications; meeting notes; decision and reasons; conditions; appeal records; revised training plans and CoEs; refund or fee referrals; SMS, register and PRISMS records; and return-to-study actions. Records are made promptly, stored securely, accessible only to authorised persons and retained under applicable law and STC's Records Management Policy. Sensitive health, disability, family violence and welfare information is collected and disclosed only as necessary and lawful. Key information is provided in accessible form, with interpreter or other reasonable assistance where required.

17. Quality assurance

The RTO Manager reviews the DSC Register and a sample of decisions at least annually and after any substantiated complaint, appeal, reporting error or material regulatory change. Review considers consistency, timeliness, evidence quality, student outcomes, welfare safeguards, appeal compliance, PRISMS accuracy, refunds and any disproportionate impact on a cohort. Findings are recorded in the continuous improvement register and used to update forms, staff training, student information and systems.

18. Related STC documents

- Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation (DSC) Form and Register
- Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct
- Completion, Progress and Attendance Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Overseas Student Transfer Policy
- Refund Policy and written agreement
- Student Support and Wellbeing Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Privacy and Records Management Policy
- Issuance of AQF Certification Documentation Policy

Appendix A – Process and control points

Stage	Required action	Control / timeframe	Owner
Request or proposal	Receive written request, or document STC's proposed grounds and evidence.	Register promptly; assess urgent welfare or safety issues immediately.	Administration / RTO Manager
Acknowledgement	Confirm receipt, process, missing evidence, support and likely timing.	Promptly; do not reject solely because an emergency prevented advance notice.	Administration
Assessment	Apply section 9 criteria; consult relevant staff; manage conflicts.	Normally decide complete student requests within 10 working days.	Authorised decision-maker
Provider notice	Give proposed action, reasons, evidence and 20-working-day internal appeal right.	Before implementation, except documented welfare-risk action.	RTO Manager
Decision	Issue written reasons, dates, conditions, consequences and review rights.	As soon as practicable.	RTO Manager / Administration

Stage	Required action	Control / timeframe	Owner
Systems	Update SMS, plan, registers, funding/apprenticeship systems and PRISMS.	Accurate effective date and reason; verify completion.	Administration / PRISMS officer
Return or closure	Implement return plan, certification/refund referrals, welfare and record actions.	Follow up at agreed date; review return within 4 weeks.	Trainer / Support / Administration

Appendix B – Compliance alignment

Requirement	Policy response
2025 Standards for RTOs – information and transparency	Sections 4, 8, 11 and 15 require clear process information, written reasons, consequences and rights.
2025 Standards – student support, wellbeing and accessibility	Sections 4, 6–9, 11–14 provide support, welfare escalation and reasonable assistance throughout the process.
2025 Standards – integrity, records and continuous improvement	Sections 6, 16–17 assign accountability, retain auditable evidence and review outcomes.
National Code 2018, Standard 9.1	Sections 7–9 document assessment, approval and recording of student-requested deferral and suspension.
National Code 2018, Standards 9.2–9.3	Sections 7 and 10 define compassionate/compelling circumstances and provider grounds.
National Code 2018, Standards 9.4–9.6	Sections 11–12 provide notice, 20-working-day internal appeal, welfare-risk exception, visa advice and PRISMS reporting.
National Code 2018, Standards 5, 7, 8 and 10	Sections 11–14 address younger-student welfare, transfer/release, course duration, complaints and appeals.

Document control	Details
Policy owner	RTO Manager
Approved by	General Manager
Version	3.0
Effective date	12 August 2026
Next review	12 August 2027, or earlier following regulatory or operational change
Applies to	All STC students; additional requirements apply to overseas students on student visas
Supersedes	Version 2.1 dated 16 January 2025

