



CHRISTIAN HERITAGE COLLEGE

POLICY: Deferral for Overseas Students

Policy Group(s):	Group C: Administration – 3: Students (Ref: C3/0106.1-0718)
Related Policy:	Cancellation of Enrolment for Overseas Students Enrolment Grievance Policy for Overseas Students Leave of Absence for Overseas Students Refunds for Overseas Students Time Limits for Course Completion
Commencement Date:	January 2005
Review Date:	July 2018
Scheduled Review Date:	July 2023

POLICY STATEMENT

Intent:

Christian Heritage College (CHC) recognises that the needs and circumstances of overseas students might alter and there may be instances that require students to postpone the commencement of their studies. The requirement to make formal application to defer the commencement of a course is one way to assist students when making decisions about the best pathway to achieve their academic goals and expected outcomes.

Formal application for deferral assists staff in tracking students' movement and can assist students to maintain successful progression through a course of study.

Scope:

Restricted to: Overseas students who are undertaking a course of study at CHC.

Excludes: Overseas students who have not completed six months of successful study; Domestic students

Objectives:

1. To provide clear guidelines for staff and overseas student concerning the deferring of course commencement.
2. To facilitate a transparent process for eligible overseas students to defer the commencement of their course of study.
3. To provide clear guidelines for processing applications to defer.
4. To ensure compliance with the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (the National Code), specifically Standard 9.

Policy Provisions:

1. General

- 1.1 At CHC, to 'defer' an overseas student's enrolment means to postpone the student's commencement of a course of study, prior either to the agreed starting date as indicated on the student's Written Agreement, or the census date of the agreed semester of commencement. Requests for an overseas student's enrolment to be suspended after a student has successfully engaged in more than six months of study within their chosen course are referred to as 'leave of absence' and are covered by CHC Policy: *Leave of Absence for Overseas Students*.
- 1.2 Under the *ESOS Act* CHC can defer an overseas student's commencement of a course of study, where initiated by the overseas student, if there are compassionate or compelling circumstances (see the *Supporting Guidelines and Procedures* for examples). Instances in which an overseas student's enrolment can be deferred, suspended or cancelled, where initiated by CHC, are covered by CHC Policy: *Cancellation of Enrolment for Overseas Students*.
- 1.3 Overseas students cannot defer the commencement of their course once the census date of the semester of commencement has passed, unless special circumstances are demonstrated to apply.
- 1.4 Overseas students who wish to defer the commencement of their course should be aware that there may be consequences for their course planning due to the sequencing and availability of units.
- 1.5 Overseas students may apply to defer the commencement of their course for an initial period of six months. At the completion of this period, overseas students may apply for a further period of six months, which will be granted only where the overseas student can demonstrate that a further period of deferral is in their best interest and will be of academic benefit.
- 1.6 Approved periods of deferral do not contribute to time limits for course completion; however, they do have implications for the expected course completion date and, therefore, for students' CoE and student visa arrangements. Students who are granted a deferral to their course commencement date are advised to contact the Department of Home Affairs to determine the implications of the deferral for their student visa.
- 1.7 Applications to defer do not attract a fee.
- 1.8 Where an application to defer is approved, the course money paid by an overseas student towards the tuition fees for their first semester of enrolment will be held by CHC in the appropriate account and applied to the student's revised semester of commencement. Should such a student withdraw from the course prior to the revised agreed starting date and apply for a refund of tuition fees, an [Application for Refund – Overseas Students](#) form is to be submitted.
- 1.9 All Library borrowing rights and access to CHC services are suspended for the period of the deferral.

2. Formal Approval

- 2.1 Formal approval to discontinue enrolment is required for overseas students to preserve their enrolment in their course.
- 2.2 Overseas students who wish to defer their commencement of a course of study are to submit an application in writing to the CHC Admissions Officer, with relevant documentation attached (as applicable). The application is to explain the reasons for which deferral is sought and to demonstrate how these meet the requirement of 'compelling or compassionate circumstances'.
- 2.3 Applications to defer are assessed by the Admissions Officer in consultation with the Academic Registrar as required. This assessment will consider any previous periods of deferral that may have been approved, any specific issues that may impinge on time limits for course completion such as significant transfer of credit granted, and any other relevant factors.

3. Communication

- 3.1 Overseas students will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application within 20 working days of the application being received by CHC. This communication will include an explanation of the reasons for the decision.
- 3.2 Where the application is successful, CHC will:
 - 3.2.1 inform the overseas student of their revised agreed starting date and course completion date;
 - 3.2.2 advise the overseas student that they should contact the Department of Home Affairs for advice regarding their student visa;
 - 3.3.3 notify the Department of Education and Training via PRISMS of the deferral;
 - 3.3.4 where applicable, provide the overseas student with a revised CoE; and
 - 3.3.5 record the overseas student's deferral in the CHC Student Management System, withdraw the overseas student from any units in which they may have enrolled and suspend the overseas student's access to Moodle™, Library borrowing rights and CHC services for the period of deferral.
- 3.2 Where applications to defer are rejected, overseas students can access CHC Policy: *Grievance Policy for Overseas Students*. If an overseas student accesses this policy, the conditions and timelines stated therein apply to the review process. The overseas student's enrolment status will remain active and, where the agreed starting day has passed, the overseas student is to attend classes until the review process is completed.
- 3.4 While CHC is able to approve applications to defer the commencement of an overseas student's course of study, it is the Department of Home Affairs that determines whether the student is able to remain in Australia or must return home for the period of the deferral.

4. Commencing Studies Following Deferral

- 4.1 Overseas students who have been granted a period of deferral will be contacted by the CHC Admissions Officer towards the end of that period to inform them of the processes and requirements that apply to the commencement of their course, including attendance at the Orientation program and completion of a *Unit Selection* form relevant to the semester of commencement.
- 4.2 Overseas students are advised to contact their Course Coordinator before completing their *Unit Selection* form for advice regarding the schedule of units that applies to the semester of enrolment in their particular course of study.

Supporting Procedures and Guidelines:

1. Examples of Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances

- 1.1 Serious illness or injury where a medical certificate states that the student is unable to attend classes.
- 1.2 Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided).
- 1.3 Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student's home country which requires emergency travel.
- 1.4 A traumatic experience, such as involvement in or witnessing of a serious accident or witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports).
- 1.5 The student is unable to begin studying on the course commencement date, due to a delay in receiving a student visa.

2. Fees

No financial or academic penalties apply as deferral is not available to students after the census date in a semester.

POLICY FURTHER INFORMATION

**Relevant Commonwealth/
State Legislation** ESOS Act 2000 – The Education Services for Students Act 2000
HESA – Fairness Requirements

ACCOUNTABILITIES

Implementation: Admissions Officer
Compliance: Academic Registrar
Monitoring and Evaluation: Academic Registrar
Development and Review: Director of Quality and Standards
Approval Authority: Academic Board
Interpretation and Advice: Academic Registrar

WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY?

Overseas students
Academic Registrar
Admissions Officer
Course Coordinatorsd

EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY

Performance Indicators:

- The ratio of successful: unsuccessful deferrals
- The number of students who return to study after a period of deferral

Other: Nil

Definitions and Acronyms:

CHC
Christian Heritage College

CoE
Confirmation of Enrolment

Deferral
The postponement of a student's commencement of a course of study, initiated by the student, that applies to an entire study period.

HESA (2003)
Higher Education Support Act (2003)

PRISMS
Provider Registration and International Student Management System

APPROVAL – section maintained by the Director of Quality and Standards

Reference No.	Approved	Date	Committee/Board	Resolution No. / Minute Ref.
C3/0106.1	Yes	12 October 2006	Academic Board	4.4

REVISION HISTORY – section maintained by the Director of Quality and Standards

Revision Reference No.	Approved/Rescinded	Date	Committee/Board	Resolution No. / Minute Ref.
0807	Approved	9 August 2007	Academic Board	4.4
0911	Approved	15 September 2011	Academic Board	4.1
0415	Approved	30 April 2015	Academic Board	4.1
0718	Approved	12 July 2018	Academic Board	5.1