

Deferral, Withdrawal and Course Variation Policy – Higher Education

Policy Code: STU-006 **Version:** 11.0 **Effective Date:** 9 March 2017

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rules for domestic Higher Education (HE) students who wish to defer or withdraw from a subject or course, including to change (vary) to another course. The policy also outlines Administrative Withdrawal of a domestic student from a course.

Definition of “College” – *In the higher education sector, ACPE Limited trades as The Australian College of Physical Education (ACPE); Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd trades as Endeavour College of Natural Health (Endeavour) and Wellnation; Study Group Australia Pty Limited trades as Martin College and Martin Higher Education (Martin HE). For the purpose of this policy, any reference to ‘College’ or ‘the College’ should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective entities or trading names.*

- Scope:**
- All campuses offering Higher Education courses (including online)
 - All domestic students – Higher Education
 - Student Services team
 - Registrar / Office of Student Records teams
 - All academic staff (including contractors)

Policy Statement:

The College expects students to actively engage in all study activities associated with their enrolled course and its subjects in alignment with the course’s expected progression timeline. The College does however acknowledge that there are times whereby students cannot engage in their studies or do not wish to continue their studies.

Before a student decides to defer or withdraw from their study the College strongly recommends the student talk to a Student Adviser about their situation to ensure they are informed about any alternative options available at the College to vary their enrolment pattern, such as under Special Circumstances. Student Advisers may also be able to recommend external assistance such as counselling or financial advice to the student for which they may be eligible. Student Advisers may also be able to advise on a more suitable course for the student to vary instead of withdrawing entirely. This may enable the student to continue their studies.

For those students however who cannot actively engage in their studies in a particular subject or course, or wish not to continue their studies the College provides the options of **deferrals** and **withdrawals**.

A student who does not actively participate in their studies but has not formally requested deferral or withdrawal may be **administratively withdrawn** by the College.

A student who defers, withdraws, or is administratively withdrawn may incur penalties (academic and/or financial). For further information on possible financial penalties please refer to the [Fees Policy – Higher Education](#).

Note: This policy applies to **domestic** students only, for international students refer to the [Deferring Suspending or Cancelling Enrolment Policy - International](#).

Deferral

Deferral is a formal process whereby a student's studies and their enrolment are halted for up to 12 months (maximum).

A deferral can only be requested by a student and deferral is for the entire course.

If the deferral request is granted by the College it will hold the student's enrolment for the granted period. A notation for deferral will be made in the student's record in the Student Management Systems. The student remains responsible for all debts and other charges related to the course at the time of deferral.

At the end of the deferral time if a student returns, they will re-enter the course at the same point at which they deferred and into the same subject or its equivalent being offered by the College at the returning time. It is important to note that the course entered into following deferral will be the most current course version available (i.e. if course transition occurred while the student was deferred, they may be required to undertake additional study to ensure course progression in the new course structure).

If a student does not return by the end of the granted deferral period or does not return at all, they will be classified by the College as an **inactive** student (marked as such on their record) and will be administratively withdrawn 12 months after being classified as inactive (see Administrative Withdrawal below).

Students who wish to request deferral must:

- Complete a [Variation of Course Form – Higher Education and VET](#).
- Submit the form to Student Services.

Students can request a deferral at any time throughout their studies, although it is highly preferable that students request deferral in the break prior to the first teaching period they wish to defer. Students will not incur additional academic or financial penalties for a deferral but remain responsible for all tuition and/or resources fees and other incidental charges for the full teaching period; see the [Cancellation Fees Policy – Higher Education](#) for further information (e.g. if a student defers after census date they will still be responsible for the full fees related to the enrolled subjects for that teaching period). The student remains responsible for all debts and other charges related with the course and its subjects.

Variation

Variation is a formal process whereby a student will transfer from one course into another at the same College.

A variation can only be requested by a student and variation is for the entire course (if a student wishes to vary from subject to subject, that is considered a subject swap, as outlined in the [Cancellation Fees Policy – Higher Education](#)).

If the variation request is granted by the College, a notation for 'varied' will be made in the student's record in the Student Management Systems. The student remains responsible for all debts and other charges related to the original course at the time of variation.

Students who wish to request course variation must:

- Complete a [Variation of Course Form – Higher Education and VET](#).
- Submit the form to Student Services.

Students can request a course variation at any time throughout their studies, although it is highly preferable that students request variation in the break prior to the first teaching period in which they wish to enrol in the new course. Students will not incur additional academic or financial penalties for a variation but remain responsible for all tuition and/or resources fees and other incidental charges for the full teaching period in both courses;

see the relevant Fees Policy for further information (e.g. if a student varies after census date they will still be responsible for the full fees related to the enrolled subjects for that teaching period). The student remains responsible for all debts and other charges related with both courses and their subjects.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal is the formal process whereby a student's studies are halted, and their enrolment is removed from one or all subjects (and in that case their course). A withdrawal can only be requested by a student and can be for withdrawal from a subject or from the entire course.

Withdrawal at subject level

Students who wish to request withdrawal from one or more subjects (but not the entire course), either to change to a different subject/s or not must:

- Complete an [Add, Drop or Swap Form – Higher Education and VET](#).
- Submit the form to Student Services.

If the withdrawal request is granted by the College Student Services will:

- Initiate investigations as to why the student withdrew e.g. possible 'student at risk' process to be initiated.
- Inform the Registrar / Office of Student Records.

The Registrar / Office of Student Records will:

- Record the relevant 'withdrawn' status for the subjects on the student's record (the Student Management Systems).

Withdrawal at course level

Students who wish to request withdrawal from the entire course must:

- Complete a [Withdrawal from Course Form – Higher Education and VET](#).
- Submit the form to Student Services.

If the withdrawal request is granted by the College Student Services will:

- Initiate investigations as to why the student withdrew e.g. exit interview.
- Inform the Registrar / Office of Student Records.

The Registrar / Office of Student Records will:

- Record the relevant 'withdrawn' status for any incomplete subjects on the student's record (the Student Management Systems).

- Record a 'withdrawn' status of the student on the student's record (the Student Management Systems).
- Issue relevant certification documentation as appropriate e.g. Academic Transcript.

Students can request to withdraw from a subject or course at any time throughout their studies. Students who submit and are granted withdrawal (at any level) by the College **before** the published census date for enrolled subjects will not incur academic penalties. Academically a grade of WR (Withdrawal Recorded) or similar will be applied to their certification documents for the relevant subjects. Financial penalties may apply if the withdrawal was requested less than one month prior to the commencement date of the teaching period (refer to the [Cancellation Fees Policy – Higher Education](#)).

Students who submit and are granted a withdrawal (at any level) by the College **after** the published census date for the subjects **will** incur both academic and financial penalties. The academic penalty will be a grade of WF (Withdrawal with Failure) or similar which will be applied to the student's certification documents. Financial penalties will also apply (refer to the [Cancellation Fees Policy – Higher Education](#)).

Students who do not formally withdraw will incur both an academic and financial penalty. The academic penalty will be a grade of F (Fail) which will be applied to the student's certification documents. Financial penalties will also apply (refer to the [Cancellation Fees Policy – Higher Education](#)).

Administrative Withdrawal

Administrative withdrawal is the College's formal process by which a student is removed from their current enrolment for academic or non-academic reasons.

Academic

Administrative withdrawal for academic reasons is when a student is removed from their current enrolment in a course as the student has lapsed in their subject enrolments and/or lapsed in their study requirements. A student who is administratively withdrawn for academic reasons is to be made inactive until such time such time as they return to their study. These students will be classified as 'inactive' on their student record. An inactive student is one who has not enrolled in any subject of their course, or have not complied with the study/training requirements over a 12 month period. Students will be administratively withdrawn from their entire course including any applicable subjects.

Students nominated as inactive by the College for academic reasons will be:

- Warned and given due notice and the opportunity to respond to the proposed administrative withdrawal actions.

If there is no subsequent response from the student they will be:

- Notified in writing that they have been administratively withdrawn for academic reasons.
- Removed from being able to access course materials.
- Removed from being able to access College auxiliary services, such as the Library.
- Given an 'AW' notation or similar in the Student Management Systems.

Administrative withdrawal does not relieve the student of the responsibility for all tuition and/or resources fees and other incidental charges for the full teaching period. The student remains responsible for all debts and other charges related with the course and its subjects.

Students who are administratively withdrawn for academic reasons can:

- Re-apply for admission into the course and will be classified as 're-entry'. As a re-entry student the course entered into will be the most current course version available. All fees and charges associated with the re-entered course will be charged. If applicable, previous grades awarded may be reviewed by the Educational Pathways department to determine any relevant advanced standing to the re-entered course (on application).
- Receive the appropriate certificate documentation such as an Academic Transcript.
- Appeal the administrative withdrawal decision made by the College as per the relevant Grievance Policy.

Non-Academic Withdrawal

Administrative withdrawal for non-academic reasons may be applied when a student engages in behaviour that creates a dangerous or disruptive situation causing harm to self or others, or that disrupts the learning environment or community. Such situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis under the guidance of the [Student Misconduct Policy – Higher Education](#), which clearly outlines the circumstances, responsibilities, processes and outcomes relevant to these situations.

Responsibilities

The Director, Student Services & Retention will be the person with the responsibility to ensure this policy is implemented and adhered to by all staff and students of the College, and to ensure this policy is maintained and updated as related policies and procedures change.

If Heads of Department / Program Leaders or other academic staff have reason to inquire about specific cases of administrative withdrawal, they may inquire to the Director, Student Services & Retention. In certain cases, the student's right to confidentiality may not permit full disclosure of the circumstances.

The student in relation to deferrals and withdrawals is responsible for ensuring:

- They are aware of any financial and academic penalties they may incur.
- They are aware of published teaching commencement and census dates.
- Appropriate forms are completed and submitted as required.

Related Procedures:

[Administrative Withdrawal \(Non Academic\) Procedure – Higher Education](#)

Definitions: **Academic Penalty** – An academic grade applied to a student record who withdraws from a subject after a defined date and before completion of all assessments for the subject.

Census Date - A date set by the Federal Department of Education and Training (DET) as last date of possible withdrawal or course change without penalty under the FEE-HELP loan scheme. This date is published on the College student calendar and DET publications. For courses not covered under the FEE-HELP loan scheme, 'census date' should be considered Friday of week 4 of the teaching period for the subject

Course – can also be referred to as a qualification or program

Defer/Deferral – is a formal process whereby enrolment is held for a period of up to 12 months.

Domestic – students are Australian citizens or permanent residents or a New Zealand citizens or a non-citizen, permanent visa holder.

Financial Penalty – A cancellation fee or enrolment fee incurred following the deferral or withdrawal from a subject or course.

Inactive – an inactive student is an individual who has failed to comply with one or more of the following:

- Enrolment into at least one subject over a 12 month period
- Submit learning and assessment activities as required
- Attend required classes or online forums (unless prior written approval to miss required classes e.g. special circumstances application approved)
- Demonstrate satisfactory academic and course engagements in the preceding 12 months
- Complete sufficient learning opportunities such as examinations, assessments, clinic sessions etc.
- No contact with Academics or Student Services over a 12 month period.

Re-entry – A student who has studied with the College previously and is considered to be an inactive student but wishes to re-enrol before administrative withdrawal is processed.

Student/Learner - is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

Student Management Systems – Customer relationship management databases including Filemaker and Amino.

Withdraw/Withdrawal – the formal process whereby a student is removed from their current study of a subject or course.

Further Information:

Related	Cancellation Fees Policy – Higher Education
Policies:	Complaints and Appeals Policy - International
	Deferring Suspending or Cancelling Enrolment Policy – International
	Fees Policy – Higher Education

[Grievance Policy – Domestic Students - Higher Education](#)

[Student Misconduct Policy – Higher Education](#)

Benchmarking: Deakin University Australia, Macquarie University Australia, TAFE Queensland, TAFE NSW

Supporting Research and Analysis: Australian Government. Study Assist. FAQs for current students – Study Assist

Australian Government. Study Assist. Deadlines and withdrawals.

Related Documents: [Add, Drop or Swap Form – Higher Education and VET](#)

[Variation of Course Form – Higher Education and VET](#)

[Withdrawal from Course Form – Higher Education and VET](#)

Related Legislation: Higher Education Support Act 2003

Guidelines: Not applicable

Policy Author:	Director, Student Services & Retention
Policy Owner:	Director, Student Services & Retention
Contact:	Director, Student Services & Retention
Approval Body:	<p>ACPE – Academic Board Meeting date: 02-Mar-17</p> <p>Endeavour - College Council Meeting date: 17-Feb-17</p> <p>Martin HE – Academic Board (East) Meeting date: 14-Feb-17</p>
Policy Status:	Harmonised
Responsibilities for Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Student Services & Retention • Directors of Education • Student Services teams
Key Stakeholders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Student Services & Retention • Directors of Education • Academic staff (including contractors) • Student Services teams • Students
Date for next review:	February 2019