

Domestic Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

The Australian Performing Arts Conservatory (APAC) Domestic Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure sets out the purpose, scope, principles, policy statements, procedures and responsibilities relating to managing domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study.

1.1. Purpose

The intent of this document is to set out APAC's framework for effectively managing domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study in a manner compliant with mandated standards, and which supports academic quality and fosters good practice.

1.2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to domestic students, staff and members of decision-making bodies.

1.3. Principles

- The management of domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study is fair, equitable, reasonable, transparent, and consistent;
- Clear, comprehensive, accurate and easily accessible information on domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study is published on the website and in the Student Handbook; and
- APAC takes proactive and pre-emptive action to address systemic issues identified through the review of instances of domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study.

2. Policy Statements

2.1. Fairness, Equity, Reasonableness, Transparency and Consistency

APAC is committed to ensuring its activities are free from bias and unlawful discrimination. APAC's processes and practices relating to its students exemplify fairness and reflect due process. APAC's management of students must be equitable. This takes into account the particular circumstances and characteristics of students. Decision-making must be reasonable. Decisions take appropriate account of all relevant information and circumstances. The deliberations will arrive at conclusions based on sound reasoning: it is prompt, objective, and straightforward. Decision outcomes result from consistently applied criteria, allowing for the fact that a changing regulatory environment may lead different decision outcomes over time.

2.2. Communication

Fairness, equity and transparency underpin the effective communication of information regarding international student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study. APAC ensures that clear, comprehensive, accurate and easily accessible information is available of the website, and in the Student Handbook.

2.3. Review and Improvement

APAC's approach to the management of domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study to is regularly reviewed, utilising feedback from students and staff, advice from external experts, and benchmarking with processes and practices at other institutions. Issues identified in the review process, including issues concerning compliance with mandated standards and the proper application of this Policy and Procedure, are expeditiously addressed. Identified opportunities for improvement are considered and pursued where feasible.

3. Procedure

3.1. Student-Initiated Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study

3.1.1. Overview

Domestic students may apply to defer their study if they are unable, or do not wish, to commence their course on the scheduled course commencement date; may apply for voluntary suspension of their study for a specified period; and may voluntarily withdraw from a course at any time.

The maximum time allowed for a deferment or voluntary suspension of study is one year.

3.1.2. Deferring Commencement

- i. Domestic students wishing to defer the commencement date of their course must apply to the Director of Higher Education (DoHE) in writing using an Application for Deferment for Higher Education Domestic and International Students Form.
- ii. In the event that the request for deferment is approved, the student will be advised in writing of the decision within five (5) working days.
- iii. Administrative staff will enter the information regarding the deferment on the Student Management System.
- iv. The request for deferment of commencement of study, any accompanying documentation, and a copy of the written advice to the student of the decision will be placed on the student's file.

3.1.3. Voluntary Suspension of Study

- i. Voluntary suspension of study is known as Leave of Absence at APAC. Domestic students wishing to take a Leave of Absence from their study must apply to the DoHE in writing using the Application for Leave of Absence for Higher Education Domestic and International Students Form. If the form is submitted after census date, financial and academic penalties may apply.
- ii. The DoHE will make an appointment to meet with the student to discuss their request, advise the student if there are any fees owing to APAC and discuss how payment would be settled or transferred and will also check if there are any library books, learning resources or other items on loan to the student and discuss potential arrangements for their return.
- iii. In the event that the request for Leave of Absence is approved, the DoHE will advise the student in writing of the decision within five (5) working days.
- iv. Administrative staff will enter the information regarding the Leave of Absence on the Student Management System.
- v. The Admissions and Compliance Manager will:
 - ensure that the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the period of suspension of study;
 - email the relevant staff advising them that the student has suspended their study so that records can be updated, and any necessary arrangements made; and
 - make a diary entry to set a reminder for when the student is due back.

3.1.4. Voluntary Withdrawal from a Course

- i. Students wishing to voluntarily withdraw from their course will advise the DoHE in writing using the Application for Withdrawal for Higher Education Domestic and International Students Form of their intention to withdraw. If the form is submitted after census date, financial and academic penalties may apply.
- ii. A copy of the request and any supporting documentation, along with any comments from the DoHE, is placed on the student's file.
- iii. Administrative staff cancel the student's enrolment in the Student Management System.
- iv. The Admissions and Compliance Manager will:
 - ensure that the student's financial records are adjusted to take account of the cancellation of enrolment.
 - email relevant staff advising them that the student's enrolment has been cancelled so that records can be updated, and any necessary arrangements are made.

3.2. APAC-Initiated Suspension and Cancellation of Study

The cancellation of enrolment process refers to the initiation of cancelling a domestic student's enrolment in their course by APAC.

APAC may initiate cancellation of a domestic student's enrolment on the following grounds, but not limited to: misbehaviour by the student; student's failure to pay an amount they are required to pay APAC to undertake or continue the courses stated in their Letter of Offer; or a breach of course progression requirements by the student.

APAC's decision to initiate cancellation of a domestic student's enrolment will be in accordance with and follow the procedures of the Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure; the Domestic Student Refund Policy and Procedure; the Attendance, Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure; and the Student Code of Conduct.

Students are advised in writing of APAC's intention to cancel their enrolment and the detailed reasons for this decision.

Students are advised in writing of their right to appeal this decision through the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. Students have twenty (20) working days from the date their intention to cancel has been received to submit their appeal

4. Responsibilities

4.1. The Board of Directors

- ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements through the oversight of APAC activities and the development, monitoring and review of policies and practices and initiating prompt action where compliance is deemed to have lapsed.
- assuring itself that there is an effective system in place for managing domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study, compliant with mandated standards.

4.2. The Chief Executive Officer

- effectively discharging the decision-maker role assigned to the CEO in this Policy and Procedure and aligned Policies and Procedures;
- ensuring that the system in place for managing domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study complies with mandated standards;
- ensuring that the system in place for managing domestic student deferment, suspension and cancellation of study is regularly reviewed, identified deficiencies expeditiously addressed, and opportunities for improvement pursued where feasible.

4.3. The Director of Higher Education

- effectively discharging the decision-maker role assigned to the DoHE in this Policy and Procedure and aligned policies and procedures.

4.4. Staff

- acting in accordance with this Policy and Procedure; and
- seeking any advice required to properly and effectively meet their responsibilities in relation to this Policy and Procedure.

5. Relevant Documents

- APAC Application for Deferment for Higher Education Domestic and International Students
- APAC Application for Leave of Absence for Higher Education Domestic and International Students
- APAC Application for Withdrawal for Higher Education Domestic and International Students
- APAC Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- APAC Attendance, Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure
- APAC Domestic Student Refund Policy and Procedure
- APAC Student Code of Conduct
- APAC Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

6. Definitions

- **Domestic Student** is a student who is an Australian citizen (including Australian citizens with dual citizenship); a New Zealand citizen; an Australian permanent resident; or holds an Australian permanent humanitarian visa.

Version Control and Document Owner

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