

Deferral, Withdrawal and Course Variation Policy – Higher Education

Policy Code: STU-006

Version: 13.0

Effective Date: 27 March 2020

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, the Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd (ACNM) trades as Endeavour College of Natural Health. 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 trading names / entities.*

Scope

- All campuses offering Higher Education courses (including online)
- All domestic students – Higher Education
- Student Services / Re-enrolment / Retention teams
- Office of Student Records Team
- All academic staff (including sessionals)

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, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinator 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, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinators 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, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinators may also be able to give advice 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 will be classified as **inactive** and will be **administratively withdrawn** by the College (see [Administrative Withdrawal](#) section).

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 - HE](#).

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). The College will review and approve all deferral applications and 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;

- the College will hold a place for commencing students to defer their start date in the course for a maximum of 12 months.
- commencing students must apply for deferral prior to the Census date of the first teaching period they are enrolled into. An application for deferral after census date may result in penalties (academic and / or financial).
- for current students the College will hold the student's enrolment for the granted period and for a maximum period of 12 months.
- a notation for deferral will be made in the student's record in the Student Management System.
- all forward enrolled subjects at the time of the deferral will be removed by a Student Adviser, Retention Co-ordinator or the Office of Student Records.
- the student remains responsible for all debts and other charges related to the course at the time of deferral.
- a deferral request may be shortened by contacting a Student Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinator to support re-enrolment with studies.
- a deferral request may be extended (maximum of 12 months) by contacting a Student Adviser or Retention Co-ordinator and completing a special consideration application form via the Student Portal.

Deferral extensions

The College recognises that there will be times where due to personal circumstances an extension of a deferral period or a second period of deferral may be requested (i.e. pregnancy). For a deferral extension request a student must complete the special consideration application from via the Student Portal with the accompanying certified supporting documentation for consideration and approval.

Deferral extension applications may not be approved for many reasons, however it is important to note that deferral extension applications for special circumstances may not be approved in circumstances where the student is not able to complete within the maximum period for completing the course. Refer to [Academic Progression Policy – HE](#).

Prior to a deferral extension being granted the application will be assessed by the relevant course Head of Department (HOD), Associate HOD (A-HOD) or equivalent and the student will be required to meet with a Retention Co-ordinator and complete a course progression plan to align with the course's expected progression timeline for return to study. Refer to [Academic Progression Policy – HE](#)

At the end of any deferral period:

- a Student Services Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinator will contact the student to re-enrol into subjects aligned with course progression and course completion timeframes.
- a student is expected to re-enrol with study in the next available teaching period.
- a student 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.
- a student will re-enter the course on the same Academic standing.
- 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).

- a student is required to keep their email and contact details that are on file up to date so a Student Services Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinator can contact you before the expiry of your deferment period.

When considering re-enrolment, it may be useful to discuss subjects and course progression with a Student Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Coordinator or Academic. A meeting can be booked via the LMS/Learning Resources Consultation – Academic or Consultation - Student Services or Course Progression.

If a student does not return by the end of the granted deferral period:

- a commencing student's place and letter of offer will be revoked and they will be Administratively Withdrawn from the College
- a deferred student that does not engage in the next teaching period or does not return at all,
 - Step 1: will be classified by the College as an **inactive** student (marked as such on their record)
 - Step 2: a student will be informed of the change to inactive status by the Office of Student Records
 - Step 3: a student's enrolment status will be changed to inactive in the Student Management System
 - Step 4: a student will be administratively withdrawn 12 months after being classified as inactive (see [Administrative Withdrawal](#) section).

Students who are administratively withdrawn for academic reasons can re-apply for admission into the course (see [Administrative Withdrawal](#) section).

Students who wish to defer may consider the following:

- the academic and financial implications of their decision
- the maximum deferral period of 12 months
- the maximum duration during which they are able to complete their studies. Refer to the [Academic Progression Policy – HE](#).

When considering deferral, it may be useful to discuss the deferral and course progression implications with a Student Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Coordinator or Academic staff member. A meeting can be booked via the LMS/Learning Resources Consultation – Academic or Consultation - Student Services or Course Progression.

Students who wish to request deferral must:

- complete a [Deferral or Variation of Course Form – Domestic](#)
- complete and submit the form via the Student Portal
- submit an end date of the deferral

Once the form has been submitted the student will be contacted by a Student Adviser, Retention Coordinator or the Office of Student Records to confirm the deferral has been processed. The deferral request will require an end date of the deferral and this will be recorded in the Student Management System. A Student Adviser or Retention Coordinator will be in contact at the end of the deferral period to support course progression planning into the next teaching period after the deferral period is completed.

Students can request a deferral at any time throughout their studies, although it is recommended 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. (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).

Before applying for a Variation of Course, students must consider:

- eligibility to meet the Inherent Course Requirements of the new course
- deadlines for applying for a variance of course, a student is not able to vary a course in the middle of a teaching period
- the academic and financial implications of the decision, such as tuition fees and duration of study.

Students who apply for a Variation of Course must:

- hold a GPA of 4.0 or higher
- be in good academic standing, not classified as a Student at Risk or on Probationary Enrolment
- have read, acknowledged and understood a copy of the Inherent Course Requirements for the new course of study and be able to complete the clinical practice requirements of the course
- have received approval from the Head of the Department.

Course variation will NOT be considered under the following circumstances:

- a request to vary a course to resolve a change in course requirements that the College has implemented
- a student has not maintained good academic standing, course progression or a GPA of 4.0 or higher.

Where a student has a GPA below 4.0 or has a Probationary Enrolment status, requests to vary between courses will be assessed by the relevant course Head of Department (HOD), Associate HOD (A-HOD) or Course Coordinator (CC). The student may be required to attend a meeting with the Head of the Department (HOD), Associate HOD (A-HOD) or equivalent to confirm eligibility to meet the Inherent Course Requirements of the course and current academic standing. This assessment is to determine if the student is likely to academically succeed in the new course. Where a student is considered unlikely to academically succeed, a conditional variation may be offered or the application to vary could be denied by the HOD, A-HOD or CC.

Students can request a course variation twenty eight (28) days 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 [Fees Policy - HE](#) 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.

A student that varies a course will enter into the most current course version available.

Transitions

- if a course transition has occurred before the student varied, the course transition credits will not be applied to the academic record
- any prior transition credits will be removed when a student varies from one course to another course
- a student is only eligible for transition credits if they are currently enrolled in that course at the time of course transition

- at each new variation all transition credits not based on learning outcomes will no longer apply to the student's academic record
- transition credits will not apply for exemptions granted based on study not completed with the College. (i.e. RPL, advance standing, credit transfer)
- only studies completed at the College are eligible for transition credits.

Refer to the *Educational Pathways Policy - Higher Education* for further information.

A student must successfully complete their course in the maximum number of calendar years, refer to the *Academic Progression Policy – HE*. If a student varies into a new course the student will have the maximum number of calendar years to complete the course. If a student varies back to an original enrolment and course discipline the time does not reset, the student is required to complete the course in the maximum number of calendar years, based on the original commencement date of that course.

Students who want to request course variation must:

- complete a *Variation of Course Form – Higher Education*
- complete and submit the form via the Student Portal.

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.

Course Variation FEE-HELP Eligibility

Students accessing the Government Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) to assist with the cost of their fees, may be eligible to apply for FEE-HELP for the new course of study.

A student that varies a course will be classified as a new enrolment in that course and if accessing the Government FEE-HELP loan, will be required to complete a new electronic Application for Commonwealth Assistance form (eCAF) before the first census date. The current legislated FEE-HELP eligibility criteria will apply. The student is required to check that they meet the eligibility criteria to continue using the FEE-HELP loan scheme at <https://www.studyassist.gov.au> and by logging onto the Student Portal and checking results.

If a student commenced enrolment in a current course of study on or after 1 January 2018, then the student needs to maintain a minimum unit pass rate of 50% to remain eligible to receive FEE-HELP. If the unit pass rate falls below 50% (not academic pass rate), the student will lose access to FEE-HELP. The student will need to pay for all units of study. Once a student's pass rate reaches 50% again, a student will then be able to regain access to FEE-HELP. This includes previous students of the College that have changed their course of study (Variation of Enrolment) since 1 January 2018 or deferred their enrolment commencement from 2017 until after 1 January 2018.

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:

- manage enrolments through the Student Portal

- complete and submit an *Add or Drop Subject Form* via the Student Portal prior to census date. (If you withdraw after census date, you will have to pay fees, or if you have a FEE-HELP loan you will incur a debt).

If the withdrawal request is granted by the College, Student Services, Re-enrolment or Retention Coordinator may:

- initiate investigations as to why the student withdrew e.g. possible 'Student at Risk' process to be initiated
- contact the student to offer course progression advice
- contact the student to book a consultation with a Student Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Coordinator or Academic about course progression.

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 and submit a *Withdrawal from Course Form – Higher Education*
- request for relevant certification documentation as appropriate e.g. Academic Transcript
- submit the form via the Student Portal.

Once the form has been submitted the student will be asked to complete an exit interview and will be contacted by a Retention Coordinator to follow up on the request for course withdrawal.

If the withdrawal request is granted by the College a Student Adviser will:

- conclude 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:

- withdraw the student from any forward enrolled subjects
- 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).

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 W will be applied to their certification documents for the relevant subjects.

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) which will be applied to the student's certification documents. The subject fees and charges will still apply and remain the responsibility of the student.

Students who do not formally withdraw will incur both academic and financial penalties. The academic penalty will be a grade of F (Fail) which will be applied to the student's certification documents. The subject fees and charges will still apply and remain the responsibility of the student.

A student that withdraws from a course completely will be recorded as a 'withdrawn' status of the student on the student's record (the Student Management Systems).

Administrative Withdrawal

Administrative withdrawal (AW) 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.

All determinations made on a student classification of inactive are made with due consideration on all presenting special considerations by the Director, Student Services & Retention and the Director of Education.

A student who has not continued to enrol in their course and has not engaged with their studies and who is not on deferral will be classified as inactive:

- an inactive student is one who has not enrolled in any subject of their course
- an inactive student is one whose deferral has ended and they have not re-enrolled in the next teaching period
- an inactive student is a student that has not engaged with their studies and has had no contact with Student Services, Retention Co-ordinators or Academics
- a student that is not enrolled will be classified as inactive until such time as they re-enrol and return to their study
- a student that has not engaged with their studies will be classified as inactive until they contact a Student Services Adviser, Retention Co-ordinator or Academic
- a classification of 'inactive' will be recorded on their student record.
- a student that is classified as inactive will be removed from being able to access course materials and College auxiliary services, such as the Library

Students nominated as inactive by the College will be:

- contacted by a Student Services Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinator via email and telephone to support re-enrolment with their course of study
- warned and given due notice of an inactive classification and the opportunity to re-enrol or respond to the proposed administrative withdrawal actions
- warned and given a second notice at 6 months of an inactive status and the opportunity to re-enrol or respond to the proposed administrative withdrawal actions
- a student is required to keep their email and contact details that are on file up to date so a Student Services Adviser, Re-enrolment or Retention Co-ordinator can contact you about your intentions to study.

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

- administratively withdrawn from their entire course after a 12 month period of being classified as 'inactive'.
- notified in writing that they have been administratively withdrawn
- given an 'AW' notation 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 with proof of successful completion of recent study through the admission's department

- a student applying for readmission may be asked to provide extra supporting documentation to be considered by the Director, Student Services and Retention and the Director of Education to assess suitability for readmittance
- readmittance 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 *Grievance Policy - Domestic Students - Higher Education*.

Re-entry FEE-HELP eligibility

Students accessing the Government Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) to assist with the cost of their fees, may be eligible to apply for FEE-HELP for the new course of study.

A student that re-enters a course will be classified as a new enrolment in that course and if accessing the Government FEE-HELP loan, will be required to complete a new electronic Application for Commonwealth Assistance form (eCAF) before the first census date. The current legislated FEE-HELP eligibility criteria will apply. The student is required to check that they meet the eligibility criteria to continue using the FEE-HELP loan scheme at <https://www.studyassist.gov.au> and by logging onto the Student Portal and checking results.

If a student commenced enrolment in a current course of study on or after 1 January 2018, then the student needs to maintain a minimum unit pass rate of 50% to remain eligible to receive FEE-HELP. If the unit pass rate falls below 50% (not academic pass rate), the student will lose access to FEE-HELP. The student will need to pay for all units of study. Once a student's pass rate reaches 50% again, a student will then be able to regain access to FEE-HELP.

This includes previous students of the College that have changed their course of study (Variation of Enrolment) since 1 January 2018 or deferred their enrolment commencement from 2017 until 1 January 2018.

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.

Support

The College is committed to providing accessible support for students who may be affected by circumstances. At all times the College respects an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality when providing support services.

The College provides a Student Assistance program that offers confidential counselling for study related or personal problems this service can be accessed by calling 1800 336 207 (24/7) or via www.acesseap.com.au

Responsibilities

The Director, Student Services & Retention and the Director of Education will hold 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 / Associate Heads of Department or other academic staff have reason to inquire about specific cases of administrative withdrawal, they may inquire to the Director, Student Services & Retention in non-

academic withdrawal cases and the Director of Education in academic and re-entry cases. 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
- the appropriate forms are completed and submitted within timelines as required.

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.

Academic Standing - In order to be deemed in good academic standing, a student must complete successfully 50% or more of the subjects in which they are enrolled within one academic year. In addition, a student must maintain a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 3.5. This comes into effect once a student has been enrolled in credit points to at least the equivalent of one full-time teaching period or the equivalent of 16 credit points.

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

Course Commencement – Course commencement date is calculated by using the census date of the first unit of study undertaken in a course of study and is not the date your enrolment was confirmed or your offer letter signed.

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, Student Services, Re-enrolment or Retention Coordinators 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 At Risk (SaR) - a student is deemed to be 'At Risk' if they are not performing adequately in, or progressing through, their course as per the *Academic Progression Policy – Higher Education*

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.

Related Procedures

Administrative Withdrawal - Non Academic Procedure

Further Information

Related Policies

Academic Progression Policy – Higher Education

Complaints and Appeals Policy - International

Deferring Suspending or Cancelling Enrolment Policy - International

Educational Pathways Policy – Higher Education

Fees Policy - HE

Grievance Policy - Domestic Students - HE

Inherent Course Requirements

Student Misconduct Policy - Higher Education

Related Documents

Add or Drop Subject Form

Deferral of Course Form – Higher Education (Student Portal online form)

Variation of Course Form – Higher Education (Student Portal online form)

Withdrawal from Course Form – Higher Education (Student Portal online form)

Guidelines

Not Applicable

Benchmarking

Australian Catholic University
Australasian College of Natural Therapies (ACNT)
Griffith University
Monash University
University of Wollongong

Supporting Research and Analysis

Australian Government. Study Assist. Deadlines and withdrawals

<https://www.studyassist.gov.au>

Australian Government. Study FEE_HELP Eligibility students – Study Assist

<https://www.studyassist.gov.au>

Australian Government. Study Assist. FAQs for current students – Study Assist

<https://www.studyassist.gov.au/help-loans/fee-help>

Related Legislation

Higher Education Support Act 2003
2018 Student Loan Sustainability Bill

Review and Approval

Policy Author

Director, Student Services & Retention

Policy Owner

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Contact

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Recommending Body

Academic Board
Meeting date: 3 October 2019

Approval Body

College Council
Meeting date: 18 October 2019

Policy Status

Revised

Responsibilities for Implementation

- Director, Student Services & Retention
- Director of Education
- Heads of Department / Associate Heads of Department
- Office of Student Records
- Re-enrolment Co-ordinators
- Retention Coordinators
- Student Services teams

Key Stakeholders

- Managing Director
- Director, Student Services & Retention
- Director of Education
- Academic staff (including sessionals)
- Retention Coordinators
- Student Services teams
- Students