

# Higher Education Deferral or Leave from Studies Procedure

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## Purpose

This procedure supports and mandates the implementation of Federation University Australia's Student Access, Progression and Wellbeing Policy. It expands on the principles outlined in the policy and provides guidance on processing and granting of:

- deferment prior to commencement of studies; or
- Leave from studies after commencement.

Students with a pre-existing disability/health condition or prolonged adverse circumstances may be eligible for assistance and support – refer [Disability Learning Access Plan \(LAP\) Procedure](#).

## Scope

This procedure applies to all domestic students of Federation University Australia studying higher education courses, regardless of the training delivery mode (on-campus, off-campus, online, flexible learning), including those offered through partner providers. However it **does not** apply to applications lodged by international students which will be assessed according to the University's Deferment, Suspension or Cancellation of a Student's Enrolment (ESOS Specific) Procedure.

All commencing students who have been given a formal written offer for a higher education award course by the University but have not yet enrolled will have the option to defer this offer for one teaching period (6 months) to a maximum of two teaching periods (12 months) unless approved otherwise by the relevant School/Institute Board. Students who enrol in the University may apply to take leave from studies at any time.

Students intending to transfer into another Federation University Australia course should be directed to complete a direct application (not the Amend Your Course Status Form).

## Legislative Context

- Federation University Australia Act 2010
- Federation University Australia Statute 2021
  - Part 5 - University Bodies
    - Division 1 - Academic Board
  - Part 8 - Awards, Titles and Honorary Degrees
    - Section 41 - Conferring of awards
    - Section 43 - Testamur
    - Section 52 - Withholding of results and exclusion
- Federation University Australia (Students) Regulations 2022
  - Part 2 - Admission to become a Student
    - Division 1 - Selection
    - Division 3 - Enrolment
    - Division 5 - Assessment
  - Part 5 - Student Misconduct
    - Division 2 - Academic and research misconduct by students
    - Division 6 - Summary and emergency sanctions
- Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Disability Standards for Education (2005)
- Privacy Act (1988)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Educational Services to Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (as amended), Educational Services to Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001 and National Code of Practice 2007
- Standard 13 – Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling the Student's Enrolment

## Definitions

A complete list of definitions relevant to this procedure is contained within the Student Access, Progression and Wellbeing Procedure.

A further list of definitions **specifically** relevant to this procedure is included below:

Term	Definition
Deferment	Students who have been offered and accepted a place in a course can defer commencement of their studies for a maximum of 12 months. Deferment occurs before the first census date.

Enrolment	The process by which a person who is in receipt of a written offer of a place, enrolls in their units.
ESOS Act	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, as amended from time to time.
GPS	Global Professional School
Internal transfer	A student enrolled in a Federation University Australia course who wishes to transfer to another course within the University.
Leave of studies	Students who have commenced their course and wish to take one or more teaching periods away from study can apply for Leave of Studies for a maximum of 12 months. Leave of studies occurs after the first census date.
Offer	Notification to a student in writing that they have a place in a course or unit.

## Actions (applicable to Domestic Students only)

### 1. Confidentiality and Privacy

Any Deferral, Leave from Studies or Withdrawal from All Studies Applications received must be treated by all parties as strictly confidential – refer [Information Privacy Procedure](#).

Information forming part of the application shall only be discussed with, or made available to, a person who is:

- A party to the application
- Is or has been legitimately involved in the management of that application; or
- Has a formal management role in following up the consequences or implications of the application

Parties must be aware of the consequences if there is a breach of confidentiality, which may include disciplinary action.

### 2. Applying for and approving Deferment

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Requesting a deferral	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On receipt of a written offer of a place in a higher education course, the student can select the 'defer' option in their My Student Centre (MySC) account.</li> <li>2. The student may discuss their deferral options with Student Administration.</li> </ol>
B.	Reviewing/ approving the Application	Student Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deferral requests are approved for 12 months unless a formal request is</li> </ol>

			<p>received by Student Administration (deferrals in excess of one year require authorisation from the School/Institute Board)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where deferment is not available for a course, students will be notified at the time of offer.</li> <li>Notify student in writing of approval/non-approval</li> </ol>
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## 3. Applying for and Granting Leave from Studies

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Completing the Amend your course status (Request for Leave from Studies) form	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete an Amend your course status Form online via through MySC and fill-in all the editable fields, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The period for which the leave is sought - either 6 or 12 months. Students are eligible for up to 12 months leave from studies during their course. Additional leave may be granted in extenuating circumstances.</li> <li>The reason/s for which the leave is being sought</li> <li>Attach any relevant documentary evidence to support your application</li> </ul> </li> <li>Submit completed form</li> <li>Continue to attend classes while awaiting the decision on the application</li> </ol>
B.	Granting Leave of Absence	Student Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receipt the application in the University's approved student management system</li> <li>Automatically approve leave of studies for up to 12 months.</li> <li>Notify the student of the outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>within 10 University working days from date of decision</li> <li>clearly state the course/unit from which Leave from</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

			<p>studies has been granted; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the period for which it has been awarded</li> </ul> <p>4. Where a student has taken 12 months leave and wishes to apply for additional leave, this will only be approved on compassionate grounds such as health issues, financial hardship.</p> <p>5. Leave of studies applications will not be approved if the leave period results in the student not being able to complete their course within 10 years of commencement.</p> <p>6. Applications for leave from studies from students whose performance warrants appearance before an academic progress committee will only be considered after the decision of the progress committee has been reached.</p> <p>a. Where the student identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. A team member of the Aboriginal Education Centre must be a progress committee member.</p> <p>7. Students whose leave is approved after the census date will remain liable for the debt incurred for their enrolment in that teaching period. Academic penalties may also apply.</p>
C.	Withdrawal	Student	<p>1. The student has the right to withdraw their application up to the point that the decision has been made and will need to make their intent known to Student Administration</p>
D.	Considering retrospective applications	Student Administration	<p>1. Amend your Course Status applications for Leave from studies will not be approved retrospectively other than in</p>

			exceptional circumstances – refer <a href="#">Higher Education Special Consideration Procedure</a>
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## 4. Returning from Deferment/Leave of Studies

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Communicating with returning students	Student Administration Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student Administration will reserve a place in the course for students who are returning from deferment/leave of studies.</li> <li>2. Students returning from deferment/leave of studies will be communicated to regarding re-enrolment dates</li> <li>3. Students who have been on deferment and do not confirm their intention to return by the written deadline will have their offer lapsed.</li> <li>4. Students who have been on leave of studies and fail to re-enrol by the enrolment deadline will be discontinued with a reason of 'failed to re-enrol'</li> </ol>
B.	Applying for additional deferment/leave	Student Student Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If students wish to apply for further deferment/leave they must do so prior to the applicable deadline as per 4.A.3 and 4.A.4</li> <li>2. Students may apply for an extension of their deferment/leave of studies for up to 12 months based on compassionate circumstances. Compassionate circumstances include health issues or financial hardship</li> <li>3. Students who have reached the maximum amount of approved deferment/leave of studies or who have failed to return before the specified deadline will need to reapply for their course as a new applicant</li> </ol>

## Supporting Documents

- [Students and Support for Students Policy](#)
- [Study Adjustment and Course Flexibility Guidelines](#)
- [Higher Education Special Consideration Procedure](#) and associated forms
- [Disability Learning Access Plan \(LAP\) Procedure](#) and associated plan

## Responsibility

- Chief Learner Experience Officer (as the Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- Director, Student Services and Registrar (as the Document Owner) is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by the Approval Authority.

## Promulgation

The [Higher Education Deferral or Leave from Studies Procedure](#) will be communicated throughout the University community in the form of:

- An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page on the 'Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University' website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy.
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- School/Institute meetings
- Academic Induction Program
- Student Health & Wellbeing meetings
- Student Senate meetings

## Implementation

The [Higher Education Deferral or Leave from Studies Procedure](#) will be communicated throughout the University community in the form of:

- An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page on the 'Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University' website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy
- Moodle module

## Records Management

Document Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Application for Deferment Form	The University's approved student management system	Course Coordinator	Destroy 7 years following deferment

Student's documentary evidence	The University's approved student management system	Course Coordinator	Destroy 7 years following deferment
Notification of Deferment approval/non-approval	The University's approved student management system	Course Coordinator	Destroy 7 years following deferment
Amend your Course Status Leave from Studies	The University's approved student management system	Course Coordinator	Destroy 7 years following leave of absence
Notification documentation	The University's approved student management system	Course Coordinator	Destroy 7 years following leave of absence