



# Course Discontinuation Policy and Procedure

## **Purpose**

1. This Policy and Procedure outlines the Australian International Institute of Higher Education's ('the Institute') responsibilities and approach in safeguarding students' interests when a course is discontinued.

## **Scope**

2. This Policy and Procedure applies to:
  - a) all students enrolled at the Institute;
  - b) all staff with responsibilities under this Policy;
  - c) all courses offered or to be offered at the Institute.

## **Definitions**

3. For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure:
  - a) **Course Discontinuation** refers to the circumstances in which it has been formally approved that there will be no new students enrolled in that course after a designated date;
  - b) **Domestic student** is a student who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or who holds an Australian permanent visa;
  - c) **Leave of absence** is a suspension of enrolment initiated by a student;
  - d) **Institute Default** is where the Institute:
    - i. fails to start providing a course to students at the location on the agreed starting day;
    - ii. after the course starts but before it is completed, the course ceases to be provided to the student at the location;and where the student has not withdrawn from the course before the day that the Institute defaults.
  - e) **International student** is any overseas student, including those who have student visas, temporary residency, bridging visas and provisional residency (as applicable under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*);
  - f) **Teach-Out** refers to the special arrangements that apply when a course or subject is discontinued, where no new students are allowed to enrol, and where enrolled students continue to complete the subject, course, or an equivalent;
  - g) **Tuition Protection Service (TPS)** is an initiative of the Australian Government to assist students whose education providers are unable to fully deliver their course of study.



## Policy

4. The Institute will mitigate as far as possible any disadvantage to students due to the discontinuation of a course by providing students with the opportunity to:
  - a) complete the course within a reasonable timeframe;
  - b) transition to another course offered by the Institute or another suitable provider; or
  - c) receive a refund.

## Procedure

### Proposals and approvals for discontinuation

5. Institute-initiated proposals for the discontinuation of a course arise when a course is no longer considered relevant or financially viable.
6. The Academic Dean is responsible for developing and submitting a rationale for the discontinuation of a course to the Academic Board in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The rationale must be accompanied by a description of the measures that will be taken to mitigate disadvantage to students, including a Teach-Out Plan.
7. Teach-Out Plans must outline how the integrity of the course will be maintained during the teach-out period and must include:
  - a) an impact analysis and risk assessment;
  - b) an action plan to address each requirement relevant to the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* and the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code)*;
  - c) a communication plan;
  - d) content of written communication to students (honouring any contractual obligations associated with the course of study, addressing student load issues involved in the teach-out and offering valid transition pathways to other courses of study).
8. Discontinuation of a course may only be approved by the Governing Council on the recommendation of the Academic Board, having due regard to student interests.
9. Where the Governing Council does approve a recommendation to discontinue a course, the CEO must submit a Material Change Notification to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) within 14 days of the approval. Communication about the proposed decision with students and staff will not proceed until confirmation is received from TEQSA.
10. In circumstances where a decision to discontinue a course arises from a regulatory decision, the Institute must comply with all directions from TEQSA.
11. Following confirmation and/or direction from TEQSA:
  - a) the course must be closed to any future enrolments;
  - b) the Marketing and Student Recruitment Officer will be advised to remove the discontinued course from all websites and publications both local and international and to advise any agents;
  - c) all relevant staff and governance bodies are to be advised of the decision and details of the final Teach-Out Plan.



## Implementation of Teach-Out Plans

### *Exceptional circumstances*

12. Where any student does not complete their course by the end of the transition and teach-out period due to exceptional circumstances a contingency for subject options may need to be implemented. This will be determined by the Academic Dean.
13. These arrangements may also need to be applied to any student requesting a Leave of Absence late in the transition and teach-out period, or those seeking an extension to a Leave of Absence. Students should be advised that such requests are unlikely to be approved unless there are exceptional and extenuating circumstances. Students making these requests need to be advised of the consequences for their progression and the limited range of options that may be available. This will be determined by the Academic Dean.
14. Alternative subject options and cross-institutional enrolment may also be determined for students on academic suspension on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Dean.

### *Student communications*

15. All students impacted by the decision to discontinue a course must be advised. The correspondence should include the reasons for the decision and details concerning the various options that are available.
16. The relevant Course Coordinator will normally act as the nominated contact person to conduct information sessions and assist students with their individual enquiries.
17. A communication plan also needs to be developed for any current applicants for the course advising of alternative course options.
18. In circumstances where there is to be one last intake for the course, students need to be advised that no deferral of commencement is possible. Marketing material for the final intake must clearly state that deferral cannot be approved.

## Where a course can no longer be offered

19. In the unlikely event that the Institute cannot offer a course the Institute is considered to have ‘defaulted’. The Institute may fail to deliver the course:
  - a) before students commence a course;
  - b) after students commence the course but before they are able to complete.
20. In these circumstances the Institute has legislated obligations to all students, as set out below:

For domestic students:	For international students:
Within <b>24 hours</b> , the Institute will notify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the Tuition Protection Service (TPS) Director;</li> <li>– affected students.</li> </ul>	Within <b>3 days</b> , the Institute will notify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the TPS Director;</li> <li>– the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA),<sup>1</sup> and</li> <li>– affected students.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> TEQSA is the ESOS Agency as defined under Section 6C(1) of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*



21. The Institute will offer the following options to students, as appropriate:
  - a) enrolment in an appropriate, alternative course offered at the Institute at no further charge to the student;
  - b) enrolment in a similar course provided by another registered higher education provider at no further charge to the student;
  - c) a refund of tuition fees under the provisions of the Institute's *Refund Policy and Procedure*;
  - d) in the case of domestic FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP students a loan re-credit for the subjects for which a HELP loan had been received and were being undertaken when the Institute defaulted.
22. For international students, the Institute will discharge its obligations under the Tuition Protection Service within 14 days of the default and notify the TPS Director and TEQSA of the provision of a refund or alternative course as applicable within 21 days of the default.

### **Alternative providers**

23. The Academic Dean is responsible for maintaining a list of, and engaging with, suitable providers for alternative course options.

### **Appeals**

24. A student may appeal against a decision made under this Policy under the provisions of the *Student Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

### **Responsibilities**

25. The CEO is responsible for:
  - a) consulting with the Academic Dean concerning any proposals to discontinue courses;
  - b) liaising with TEQSA concerning any provider-initiated or other directions to discontinue courses.
26. The Academic Dean is responsible for:
  - a) completion of proposals for discontinuation and teach-out plans in consultation with the CEO and submission of proposals to Academic Board;
  - b) identification of providers of alternative courses and formalisation of reciprocal arrangements;
  - c) overseeing student communication and support
  - d) implementing Teach-Out Plans, in consultation with the Course Coordinator and the Student Services Manager.
27. The Course Coordinator is responsible for implementation of the Teach-Out Plan and for providing assurance to the Academic Dean that the Plan is being implemented effectively and that student outcomes are not at risk over the teach-out period.
28. The Student Services Manager is responsible for:
  - a) identification of completion dates, management of load and enrolment issues and any refunds or tuition protection arrangements associated with the discontinuation of courses.
29. The Marketing and Student Recruitment Officer is responsible for:
  - a) ensuring that all course information and marketing materials for the discontinued course are withdrawn and agents are notified when a decision to discontinue a course has been made.



### Associated information

<b>Approving body</b>	Academic Board
<b>Date approved</b>	28 September 2020
<b>Date of effect</b>	Commencement of operation
<b>Next scheduled review</b>	Two years from when policy commence
<b>Policy owner</b>	Academic Dean
<b>Policy contact</b>	Academic Dean
<b>Related AIIHE Documents</b>	<i>Course Development and Amendment Policy and Procedure</i> <i>Course Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure</i> <i>Refund Policy and Procedure</i>
<b>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth)</b>	Standard 6.2.1i
<b>Other related external instruments/documents</b>	<b>Related Legislation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)</i></li><li>• <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i></li></ul> <b>Good Practice Documents</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Tuition Protection Service</a></li></ul>

### Document history

Version	Author	Changes	Approval Date
1.0	Not applicable	Original version	28 September 2020

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