



## DEFERMENT OR SUSPENSION OF STUDY POLICY

### 1 Special Leave Policy

Study Group Australia Pty Ltd (“the Institution”) designates holiday periods for each year. Students do not need to apply for leave for these periods; your course will be automatically suspended for that time.

These dates are available from Student Services.

Other than these designated holiday periods, the Institution will only approve Special Leave on the grounds of:

- i. compassionate or compelling circumstances (see below for examples); or
- ii. misbehaviour by the student.

This document addresses applications for Special Leave.

Suspension of studies due to misbehaviour of the student is addressed under the *Academic Dishonesty Policy*.

### 2 Applications for Special Leave

Students may apply for Special Leave if they have good reason for doing so (i.e. compassionate or compelling circumstances – see below for examples). To make an application, the student needs to complete an Application for Special Leave Form, which is available from Student Services. The completed form must be submitted to the State Course Coordinator at least 10 working days in advance of the proposed commencement date of the requested leave period.

The Institution may grant or decline any student’s request for Special Leave, based on the potential impact that the temporary suspending of his/her studies may have on the student’s academic progress.

Before making an application for special leave, international students should refer to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) website, or telephone the Helpline 131 881, or visit the local DIBP office for advice on how the potential change to their enrolment status may impact on their visa.

### 3 Compassionate and compelling circumstances

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student’s course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- i. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- ii. bereavement of a close family member such as a parent or grandparent (where possible a death certificate should be provided);
- iii. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student’s studies; or
- iv. a traumatic experience which could include:

- a. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident, or
  - b. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime,
- v. and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports);
- vi. where the Institution was unable to offer a prerequisite unit; or
- vii. inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.

Please note that the above are only some examples of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances. The Campus Director/State Academic Director will use his/her professional judgement to assess each case on its individual merits.

When determining whether compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, the Campus Director/State Academic Director will consider documentary evidence provided to support the claim, and will keep copies of these documents in the student's file.

#### **4 Duration of Leave – International Students**

DIBP's policy is that if a student's enrolment is suspended for a period of 28 days or longer, the student must return home unless special circumstances exist (for example, the student is medically unfit to travel).

Therefore, when the Institution notifies DIBP that an international student's enrolment has been suspended for a significant period, the student must return to his or her home country unless special circumstances exist (for example, the student is medically unfit to travel). While the Institution determines the enrolment status of the student, it is DIBP who decides whether the student may remain in Australia or must return home.

DIBP may cancel a visa where, for example, the student has obtained special leave with the understanding of returning to his/her homeland, and the student then does not leave Australia, or where the student leaves Australia, but does not return to his/her studies by the agreed date.

An extended leave of absence or a deferral of more than 6 months, for any reason, will result in cancellation of the visa.

#### **Version Control**

Document: Deferment or Suspension of Study Policy		
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