

Defer, Pause and Withdrawal Procedure

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Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that student enrolment withdrawals and deferrals are initiated and processed in an accurate, consistent and timely manner, in line with Department of Jobs Skills Industry and Regions (DJSIR) guidelines, VET Funding Contracts, and Institute policies. Every effort to maximise student retention should be made through early intervention by trainers and support services to support students at risk of withdrawal.

Relevant Policy/Policies

- Fees and Charges Policy (POSA-03)
- Fees, Charges and Refunds Procedure (PRSA-158)

Roles and Responsibilities

This procedure applies to the withdrawal or deferral and the provision of refunds of course fees for domestic students in any Institute course or unit(s). This includes:

- Government-subsidised enrolments, including *Skills First* funded and Free TAFE for Priority Courses;
- VET Student Loan (Diploma and Advanced Diploma) students;
- Fee-for-service (full fee paying) students;
- Students applying for Advanced Standing – Recognition of Prior Learning; and/or Credit Transfer;
- Students participating in short courses and/or non-accredited training.

Trainers are responsible for monitoring student progression, identifying students at risk of withdrawal, and making all efforts to support their continued studies. Trainers must ensure withdrawals are finalized within 2 months of non-engagement.

The Student Administration officers will process Deferral or Course Pause requests and the Future Students team will ensure the students are included into a future intake list.

Administration officers will process withdrawals and ensure any fee reversals or refunds are applied for. The Finance team will process refunds.

Definitions

1. Withdrawal from a Course Enrolment:

- Formal withdrawal:** Student initiated withdrawal. The student has notified the training provider (verbally or in writing) they wish to withdraw from the course before finalisation of the requirements for successful completion of the Program Enrolment;
- Apparent withdrawal:** Training Provider initiated withdrawal.

- The student has stopped attending or submitting assessments (i.e. discontinued) without notifying the training provider; or
- The student is in arrears and the training provider cannot come to an acceptable financial arrangement for the student (per the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* – 3.3).

2. Withdrawal from a Unit Enrolment:

- a. **Formal withdrawal:** the student has notified the training provider of their withdrawal from a Unit or Units before engaging in all of the assessment criteria, and still intends to complete the Course;
- b. **Apparent withdrawal:** The student has stopped participating in training and learning activities for a Unit or Unit/s or has stopped submitting assessments, for two months, without notifying the training provider.

3. Deferral from a Course Enrolment

The student has negotiated a deferral of studies (with an intent to resume in the following year in the same Course) with the Training Provider before or within 28 days of Course Commencement.

4. Pause from studies

The student is part way through their course and has negotiated a pause in their studies (with an intent to resume in the following year in the same Course) with the Training Provider after 28 days of Course Commencement.

Procedure

1. **Formal Course Withdrawal**

- Formal Course Withdrawal is where a student has requested they withdraw from their course and does not intend to continue with their course.
- If a student applies to withdraw within 28 days of Course Commencement Date, all tuition and consumable material fees for all Units will be refunded.
- If a student applies to withdraw after 28 days of Course Commencement Date, tuition and consumable material fees for Units not yet commenced will be refunded, however tuition and consumable material fees associated with Units that have commenced remain payable.
- Students who have taken up a VET Student Loan must apply to withdraw prior to the VET Student Loan Census Date for the Loan to be cancelled; Loans will remain in place if withdrawal occurs after Census Date, except in special circumstances. See Section 4 of this Procedure.
- The Student Services Fee is non-refundable.
- Students may re-apply for place in the Course at a later date if they choose and will go through the standard course application process as a new applicant.
- Approvals for Withdrawals are granted by the Education Coordinator.

Process

1. Student requests withdrawal

- Where a student requests a withdrawal (from a course or a unit/s, verbally or in writing using the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application form FSA-80, or it is revealed that a student intends to cease participation, staff must address

this promptly (i.e. not endanger the student of being deemed ineligible for a refund, or delay the student from being able to withdraw prior to a census date).

- Prior to withdrawing, trainers and Student Support staff should discuss with the student any adjustments or options for continued study and make all reasonable attempts to re-engage or improve student participation.
- The date of notification (verbal or written request from a student or their Sponsor (e.g. apprentice's employer or VETDSS student's school) to withdraw or cancel their enrolment) is the date the withdrawal/cancellation is effective.
- Communication to and from the student or Sponsor (e.g., email) to confirm date of withdrawal request must be kept in the student's file.
- Funded students must be counselled that withdrawal from a course that has commenced impacts upon any eligibility criteria for future *Skills First* funded courses and any Free TAFE initiatives may impact any Centrelink benefits.

2. Trainer requests administrative processing of Withdrawal.

- Trainer completes Enrolment Withdrawal Form (FSA-80) plus Enrolment Summary WC/WD report (EN-25W) from SMS and submits to Student Administration Team for processing. This must occur within 8 weeks of the student informing the trainer of their intention to withdraw.
- The Trainer is to submit the evidence of communication from the student/Sponsor showing the date the student communicated their intention to withdraw. This is the formal course withdrawal date. The evidence may be an email evidence of communication from the student.

Any Units that have commenced (with SSP start dates) are to have the claimed nominal hours reduced to the hours of attendance, indicated by a 'WD' result on the EN-25W report) – trainer to use withdrawal calculator to determine hours to claim [Claimable hours formula.xlsx](#)

- Any Units that have not commenced are to have the claimed nominal hours reduced to zero, indicated by a 'WC' result on the EN-25W report
- For each withdrawn unit, the Trainer is to submit valid evidence of participation showing the last date of participation evidence, from an attendance roll, piece of student's work, assessment work or Trainer notes showing the last date the student was engaged in learning. This becomes the unit withdrawal date.

3. Student Administration officer processes withdrawal

- Formal course withdrawal dates and unit last dates of participation evidence is checked. If no evidence is located for units that have SSP start dates within SMS, a request to remove SSP is obtained from the Coordinator Student Administration.
- Units are withdrawn within SMS as per the FLA-80 and EN-25W information
- Any refunds are applied for using the Application for refund request form (FFI-60)
- If Diploma/Advanced Diploma withdrawal, VSL Administrator is notified to ensure reversal of VET Student Loan if within census dates
- If Apprentice or Trainee cancellation, Apprentice Administration is notified and will notify the AASN and VRQA (via Epsilon)
- Any Foundations Course withdrawals must be reported to DET.
- goLearn Administrator is notified to suspend student from goLearn shells
- Course status on SMS is updated to 'Withdrawn'
- Confirmation of withdrawal email is sent to the student

4. Issue Statement of Attainment

- For students who have partially completed a course, a Statement of Attainment is generated by the Student Administration Officer and must be provided to the student within 30 days of the last final outcome (where no debt is outstanding).
- 5. Fee adjustments or Refunds are processed by the Enrolments and Finance teams.

2. Apparent Course Withdrawal

- Apparent Course Withdrawal is where a Trainer initiates withdrawal after a student has disengaged from participating in studies and has not responded to attempts by their Trainer to re-engage
- Where there is concern a student has disengaged from learning for longer than a two week period (has not been contactable, has not participated in training, or has failed to submit assessments), training staff should review the last point of participation and promptly attempt to re-engage the student.
- Training staff should retain evidence of communication showing repeated attempts to contact and re-engage the student in the student file.
- Support for an 'at risk' student can be sought from the Student Success team.
- Where a student does not re-engage (no further evidence of valid participation in learning or assessment is gathered): 6 weeks after the last point of participation by the student, the trainer should email and/or send a letter using the 'Notice of impending withdrawal email/letter template', instructing the student to contact the trainer immediately, or their enrolment will be withdrawn in 2 weeks' time.
- Students may re-apply for place in the Course at a later date if they choose and will go through the standard course application process as a new applicant.
- For VET Student Loan apparent withdrawals, see Section 4 of this Procedure.

Process

1. Trainer notifies student of impending withdrawal
 - After multiple attempts to re-engage the student, at 6 weeks after the last point of participation by the student, the trainer will email and/or send a letter using the 'Notice of impending withdrawal email/letter template', instructing the student to contact the trainer immediately, or their enrolment will be withdrawn in 2 weeks' time.
2. Trainer requests administrative processing of Withdrawal.
 - Trainer completes Enrolment Withdrawal Form (FSA-80) plus Enrolment Summary WC/WD report (EN-25W) from SMS and submits to Student Administration Team for processing. This must occur within 8 weeks of the student's last participation. Any Units that have commenced (with SSP start dates) are to have the claimed nominal hours reduced to the hours of attendance, indicated by a 'WD' result on the EN-25W report) - trainer to use withdrawal calculator to determine hours to claim [Claimable hours formula.xlsx](#)
 - Any Units that have not commenced are to have the claimed nominal hours reduced to zero, indicated by a 'WC' result on the EN-25W report)
 - For each withdrawn unit, the Trainer is to submit valid evidence of participation showing the last date of participation evidence, from an attendance roll, piece of student's work, assessment work or Trainer notes showing the last date the student was engaged in learning. This becomes the unit withdrawal date.
 - The last date of participation for the last unit becomes the course withdrawal date.
3. Student Administration Officer processes withdrawal

- Unit last dates of participation evidence is checked. If no evidence is located for units that have SSP start dates within SMS, a request to remove SSP is obtained from the Coordinator Student Administration.
 - Units are withdrawn within SMS as per the FLA-80 and EN-25W information
 - Any refunds are applied for using the Application for refund request form (FFI-60)
 - If Diploma/Advanced Diploma withdrawal, VSL Administrator is notified to ensure reversal of VET Student Loan if within census dates. See section 4 of this Procedure.
 - If Apprentice or Trainee cancellation, Apprentice Administration is notified and will notify the AASN and VRQA (via Epsilon)
 - goLearn Administrator is notified to suspend student from goLearn shells
 - Course status on SMS is updated to 'Withdrawn'
 - Confirmation of withdrawal email is sent to the student
4. Issue Statement of Attainment
 - For students who have partially completed a course, a Statement of Attainment is generated by the Student Administration Officer, and must be provided to the student within 30 days of the last final outcome (where no debt is outstanding).
 5. Fee adjustments or Refunds are processed by the Enrolments and Finance teams.

3. Unit Withdrawal

Unit withdrawals are where a student's enrolment in a unit needs to be cancelled or withdrawn, but the student still intends to continue with their course. This could be due to a unit enrolment error, or the student may wish to undertake an alternative unit within the course.

Process

1. Trainer requests administrative processing of Withdrawal.
 - Trainer completes Enrolment Withdrawal Form (FSA-80) plus Enrolment Summary WC/WD report (EN-25W) from SMS and submits to Student Administration Team for processing.
Any Units that have commenced (with SSP start dates) are to have the claimed nominal hours reduced to the hours of attendance, indicated by a 'WD' result on the EN-25W report) trainer to use withdrawal calculator to determine hours to claim [Claimable hours formula.xlsx](#)
 - Any Units that have not commenced are to have the claimed nominal hours reduced to zero, indicated by a 'WC' result on the EN-25W report)
 - For each withdrawn unit, the Trainer is to submit valid evidence of participation showing the last date of participation evidence, from an attendance roll, piece of student's work, assessment work or Trainer notes showing the last date the student was engaged in learning. This becomes the unit withdrawal date.
2. Student Administration officer processes withdrawal
 - Unit last dates of participation evidence is checked. If no evidence is located for units that have SSP start dates within SMS, a request to remove SSP is obtained from the Student Administration Coordinator.
 - Units are withdrawn within SMS as per the FLA-80 and EN-25W information

- Any refunds are applied for using the Application for refund request form (FFI-60)
 - If Diploma/Advanced Diploma withdrawal, VSL Administrator is notified to ensure reversal of VET Student Loan if within census dates. See Section 4 of this Procedure.
 - goLearn Administrator is notified to suspend student from goLearn shells
3. Fee adjustments or Refunds are processed by the Enrolments and Finance teams.

4. VET Student Loan Withdrawals

Specific rules and processes apply for students with VET Student Loans (VSL) who withdraw from their Diploma/Advanced Diploma Courses, Units or Units of Study

1. Students who apply for withdrawal of their course or units **prior to the Census Date** will have their VSL/Fee Help balance reversed (re-credited).
 - The student can apply for withdrawal using the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application form FSA-153
 - The student will incur no financial, administrative or other barriers to withdrawal
2. Students who apply for withdrawal of their course or units **after the Census Date** will not have their VSL/Fee Help balance reversed, except in special circumstances.
 - The student can apply for withdrawal using the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application form FSA-153; or
 - An Apparent Withdrawal can be initiated by the Trainer in circumstances where a student has disengaged from Training. In these circumstances, the Trainer must
 - i. inform the student of the intention to withdraw due to disengagement
 - ii. provide opportunities for the student to re-engage, including offering the provision of student support services
 - iii. allow the student 28 days to initiate any grievance procedures through the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Management Procedure, before finalising the withdrawal.
 - The student can apply in writing to the Institute Registrar for re-crediting of the Fee Help Loan balance if they believe their withdrawal after Census date was due to special circumstances. This process is described in the Fee Help Re-credit and Review Procedure (E-P145).
3. The student may in the future **apply to re-enrol** into the course and will be granted a place in the course provided they continue to meet entry requirements and there is a place available. This recommencement will be considered a new enrolment and the student may elect to take up a VET Student Loan, provided they meet the VSL entry criteria. The student must give written permission to GOTAFE to re-enrol into the course after previous withdrawal, by completing an Enrolment Form.

5. Course Deferral

- Course Deferral is where a student has been accepted into a course and requests deferral until the following year.

- Students may apply for a deferral prior to or within 28 days of the Course Commencement Date.
- Deferrals are only granted for 1 year, after which time a new Deferral Application will need to be lodged for approval or the student will be withdrawn from the course.
- Any units already commenced will be withdrawn for the current enrolment period.
- All tuition and consumable material fees for all Units will be refunded.
- The Student Services Fee is not refunded but will not be recharged upon recommencing the course.
- Deferral will secure the student's place in the next year's course intake on the proviso that:
 - The course is still being offered by GOTAFE.
 - The student still qualifies for a place in the event that the entry requirements for the course have changed.
- Students must be aware re-commencement in the course will generate tuition and material fees at a rate which may have changed from the original enrolment and is subject to the student still meeting funding eligibility criteria and the availability of funding initiatives. The student must sign the Student Acknowledgement section of the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form for Students FSA-153.
- Deferral approvals are granted by the Education Coordinator.

Process

1. Student requests Deferral

- Student completes the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form for Students FSA-153 and signs the student acknowledgement of conditions section, as follows:
 - ☐ I acknowledge and agree I am applying to **Defer** my studies in the course nominated for a period of up to one year in order to secure my place in the course.
 - ☐ I understand my application may not be approved, and a future place in the course is subject to GOTAFE continuing to deliver the course and my continued ability to meet course entry requirements which may be subject to change.
 - ☐ I understand and agree to the Conditions for Course Deferral as described above including the fees and refunds conditions.
 - ☐ I understand that future access to Government funding initiatives is not guaranteed and is subject to availability and government policy (for example 'Free TAFE' initiatives).
- Student emails copies of the form to their Trainer (if known) and Student Administration studentadmin@gotafe.vic.edu.au

2. Process the Request

The Student Administration team will

- Cancel all unit enrolments and process any fee reversals or refunds
- Email the student confirming their Deferral
- If the student had started training,
 - i. Notify the trainer via the Helpdesk confirming the Deferral
 - ii. If Diploma/Advanced Diploma withdrawal, notify VSL Administrator to ensure reversal of VET Student Loan
 - iii. Notify goLearn Administrator to suspend student from goLearn shells
- Amend the Course sanction status in SMS to 'Deferred', and the Course status remains as 'Admitted'.

- Email the Future Student Experience team notifying them of the student deferral in order for the students name to be added to next years Course intake list
 - File the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form for Students FSA-153 into the SMS Student Documents file.
3. Initiate re-enrolment and re-commencement
- The Future Student Experience team will contact the student to determine if they wish to recommence their studies.
 - If yes, the pre-training review record is checked to ensure the student still meets the course entry requirements, and the student completes the current year's Enrolment and Eligibility Forms.
 - If the student does not wish to recommence, the student's course status in SMS is amended to 'Withdrawn-cancelled'.

6. Pausing Studies

- Pausing studies occurs when a student is part way through their course (more than 28 days after Course Commencement Date) and due to personal circumstances requests to put their studies on hold for a period of up to 1 year before recommencing their studies.
- Any Units not completed will be withdrawn for the current enrolment period.
- Tuition and consumable material fees associated with Units that have commenced remain payable.
- Tuition and consumable material fees for Units that have not commenced will be fully refunded.
- The Student Services Fee is not refunded and will be payable again upon recommencement of studies.
- Formal Pausing of the course will secure the student's place in the next year's course intake on the proviso that:
 - a) The course is still being offered by GOTAFE.
 - b) The student still qualifies for a place in the event that the entry requirements for the course have changed.
- The student will be required to re-enrol and recommence in uncompleted Units.
- Students must be aware re-commencement in the course will generate tuition and material fees at a rate which may have changed from the original enrolment and is subject to the student still meeting funding eligibility criteria and the availability of funding initiatives.
- Approvals to Pause studies are granted by the Education Coordinator.

Process

1. Student requests Deferral
 - Student completes the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form for Students FSA-153 and signs the student acknowledgement of conditions section, as follows:
 - ☐ I acknowledge and agree I am applying to **Pause** my studies in the course nominated for a period of up to one year in order to secure my place in the course.
 - ☐ I understand my application may not be approved, and a future place in the course is subject to GOTAFE continuing to deliver the course and my continued ability to meet course entry requirements which may be subject to change.
 - ☐ I understand and agree to the Conditions for Pausing Studies as described above including the fees and refunds conditions.

☐ I understand that future access to Government funding initiatives is not guaranteed and is subject to availability and government policy (for example 'Free TAFE' and 'Job Trainer' initiatives).

- Student emails copies of the form to their Trainer (if known) and Student Administration studentadmin@gotafe.vic.edu.au

2. Finalise or withdraw units

The Trainer will

- Finalise any submitted assessments and unit results for any units the student has completed.
- Complete the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form for remaining units
 - indicating this is a Pause of Studies,
 - for any units commenced, request WD with claimed hours on the Enrolment Summary WC/WD Report (EN-25W) from SMS
 - attach evidence of participation for any started units, and
 - attach the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form for Students FSA-153

3. Process unit withdrawals

The Student Administration Officer will

- Process unit withdrawals using the FSA-153 form
- Initiate fee reversals and refunds for any units not commenced, and send to Enrolments team for processing
- Amend the Course sanction status in SMS to 'Paused', and the Course status remains as 'Admitted'.
- Email the Student and CC the Trainer, confirming approval of Paused studies
- Email the Student Attraction and Engagement team notifying them of the student deferral in order for the students name to be added to next years Course intake list
- If Diploma/Advanced Diploma withdrawal, notify VSL Administrator to ensure reversal of VET Student Loan
- Notify goLearn Administrator to suspend student from goLearn shells
- File the Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form for Students FSA-153 into the SMS Student Documents file.

4. Process fee reversals/refunds

The Enrolments Team will

- Process any fee reversals or refunds

5. Initiate re-enrolment and re-commencement

- The Future Students team will contact the student to determine if they wish to recommence their studies.
- If yes, the pre-training review record is checked to ensure the student still meets the course entry requirements, and the student completes the current year's Enrolment and Eligibility Forms.

- The Trainer will supply an individual study plan and timetable aligned to the student recommencing their studies in any units not completed in previous year.
- If the student does not wish to recommence, the student's course status in SMS is amended to 'Withdrawn', and a Statement of Attainment is issued.

Documentation and regulation

1. Fees and Charges Policy (POSA-03)
2. Fees, Charges and Refunds Procedure (PRSA-158)
3. Enrolment Withdrawal Form (FSA-80)
4. Course Deferral, Pause or Withdrawal Application Form [FSA-153]
5. Enrolment Summary WC/WD report (EN-25W) from SMS
6. Application for refund request form (FFI-60)
7. Fee Help Re-credit and Review Procedure (E-P145)