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Leave Policy and Procedure

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Table of Contents

1. SCOPE	3
2. DEFINITIONS	3
3. POLICY	3
4. LEAVES, LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND SUPENSIONS	3
5. PROCEDURES	5
6. APPEALS PROCESS	6

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all overseas students enrolled with Queensford College's courses of study and outlines the process for assessing, documenting and managing requests for absence of leave requests, in line with obligations under Standard 9 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

2. Definitions

Study period: is a discrete period of study within a course. Queensford College defines each study period as 18 contact weeks. Where the remaining duration of the course is less than 18 weeks, the study period will be equal to the remaining duration of the course.

3. Policy

All overseas students will be informed and provided access to a copy of this policy on Queensford College's website, www.queensford.edu.au, to inform of the basis on which applications for absence of leave will be assessed.

This policy needs to be understood in coherence with Queensford College's Attendance Policy, Course Progression Monitoring Policy, Deferring, Suspending, Cancelling Policy, Student Academic and General Code of Conduct Policy.

4. Leave of Absence and Suspensions

International Students have scheduled breaks during their study at Queensford College. Queensford College encourages students to utilise these breaks to address any commitments other than study. If the students wish to travel overseas to meet their family, they are encouraged to do so during the break allocated. Students are advised about the breaks during their orientation and can also refer to Queensford College Academic Calendar available on Queensford College website.

Queensford College will not approve any leave/s for students unless and until the reason is of compelling or compassionate in nature. In all other circumstances, since Queensford College has an attendance policy that students are required to adhere to. Queensford College won't be able to approve any leave requests from students. Please refer to Queensford College Attendance Policy and Procedure for further information.

Students having compassionate or compelling circumstances, must support their claim by providing documentation as listed below (other documentation may not be accepted).

4.1 Documentation Required for Exceptional Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances

Documentation must provide details of the medical grounds or exceptional compassionate or compelling circumstances. All documents must be provided in English. These may include (but may not be limited to):

- medical certificate or supporting documentation from a registered psychologist / medical practitioner (including their provider number) where it indicates the student is suffering

from a serious illness or injury and is unable to attend class including the period of non-attendance

- death certificate of close family members such as parents or grandparents
- police or psychologist's report
- other documentation supporting compassionate or compelling circumstances (Medical Certificates and Reports from overseas about an immediate family member being sick)

Compassionate and compelling circumstances may include (but are not limited to):

- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies; or
- a traumatic experience, which could include:
 - involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
 - witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports)
- inability to commence course due to non-issue of visa
- where the College was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit

Queensford College reserves the right to check the authenticity of documents submitted by the student in support of their claim, before assessing the request.

1. If Queensford College deems that the student genuinely has compassionate or compelling circumstances, the leave of absence shall be approved provided student is not applying for more than 1 week (7 calendar days) of leave and meet the following requirements:
 - The student has more than 90% attendance in the current study period, and
 - The student has satisfactory course progress in the current study period, and
 - The student does not have any outstanding tuition fee to Queensford College.
 - In this case, the student will be marked absent for any classes he/she misses during the leave of absence.
2. If Queensford College deems that the student genuinely has Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances and student is applying for a leave of more than 1 week (7 calendar days) in that study period, the student's enrolment will be suspended for the period, the student is requesting for leave. In this case, the student's COE (Confirmation Enrolment) will be suspended for that period, under compelling and compassionate grounds and a new COE will be issued for the student.

Student will be taken off the roll for that period of suspension.

3. If Queensford College deems that the student does not have Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances to support the leave request, then the leave request will be declined. Hence, to avoid inconvenience or breach of policy, students are advised to not purchase travel tickets without prior approval from Queensford College.

If the student is absent without approved leave, the Queensford Attendance Policy and Procedure will be applied.

Please also refer to other relevant policies of Queensford College such as Deferring, Suspending, Cancelling Policy, which can be found on Queensford College website, www.queensford.edu.au

5. Procedure

Absence of Leave/Suspension Under Emergency Circumstances (including sick leave, and exceptional compassionate and compelling circumstances).

1. International students requesting leave of absence must make the request by initiating a discussion with a Student Support Officer.

International students must complete the Leave of Absence Request Form and gather sufficient evidence of the requested leave to be submitted to the Student Support Officer at the student's campus. Where it is not possible for the form to be submitted in person, international students should email the form to international@queensford.edu.au

4. The Student Support Officer will assess and verify submitted request by matching the request type against the documentation given.
5. If the documentation provided by the student is assessed as not substantiating the leave request, then the student will be notified in writing (through email) that their leave of absence or suspension has been denied and their student file updated.
6. The student may initiate an appeal against the College's decision in accordance with the College's Complaints and Appeals policy/ procedure.
7. If the documentation provided by the student is assessed as not supporting the leave request, then the student will be notified in writing that their leave of absence or suspension has been approved and their student file updated.

Where suspension is required, students COE (Confirmation of Enrolment) will be suspended for that period, under compelling and compassionate grounds and a new Confirmation of Enrolment will be issued for the student. The student will be taken off the roll for that period of suspension.

In case of Leave of Absence, students will be marked absent.

7. Upon approval and prior to leaving, students are to send a copy of purchased travel tickets/itinerary and overseas contact details to the Student Support Officer in order for them to update their student record.

6. Appeals Process

If Queensford College decision is to deny leave, the student may appeal through the College's complaints and appeals process and complete the Complaints and Appeals Form. The Complaints Policy and Procedure is available on Queensford College's website: www.queensford.edu.au