A26.0: Duration of Study Policy (International Students)

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1. Context
Torrens University Australia has an obligation under the ESOS framework to ensure that students are in the position to complete their studies within the prescribed duration of the program and to include only the allowable portion of online or distance learning in their studies. The University informs students about the full-time study load requirements of their student visa and provides comprehensive support services to assist them to complete their degrees on time. The University also monitors the enrolment load of international students to identify and address issues that may impact on timely completion.

2. Definitions

CoE: Confirmation of enrolment in PRISMS.

Compassionate or Compelling circumstances: Circumstances that are generally beyond the control of the student and which affect the student’s wellbeing or progress in their program of study.

Compulsory study period: at Torrens University Australia, all trimesters are compulsory study periods.


Full-time study: a standard full time study load is 16 units per trimester over three trimesters per calendar year (depending on total unit value of the program).

International students: A full fee-paying student studying in Australia on a student visa as defined in the ESOS Regulations 2001.

PRISMS: Provider Registration and International Student Management System
3. **Scope**
This policy applies to all international students as defined in this policy.

4. **Principles**
Torrens University Australia will:

- ensure that students are informed of their obligations to maintain a study load that complies with the conditions of their student visa. Specifically that they must:
  - study full-time in order to complete their program within the program duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE);
  - ensure that no more than 25% of their courses are studied in online mode;
  - not enrol exclusively in online courses in any trimester.
- enable students to extend the expected duration of their CoE in limited circumstances, specifically:
  - if, under the Suspension and Cancellation Policy (International Students) a student has been granted an approved suspension or deferment of studies;
  - if, under the Academic Progress Policy, a student is subject to a University initiated intervention strategy; or
  - when a student can demonstrate compassionate and compelling circumstances for the extension.
- assess applications for an extension of a student’s CoE on the basis of compassionate and compelling circumstances in a fair and equitable manner.

5. **Monitoring enrolment load**
The Duration of Study Procedures (International) describe the process of monitoring the enrolment of international students. In summary, enrolments for international students are reviewed at the beginning of each trimester to ensure that:

- commencing international students are enrolled in a full-time load (16 units) for their first trimester; and
- under-enrolled international students are identified, and if they have not been granted an approved suspension or deferment, are counselled that they are putting their student visa at risk; and
- over-enrolled international students are identified. While taking an overload to catch-up on missed or failed courses is permitted, the University will counsel overloading students about the workload impact of enrolling in more courses than the standard load.

If students are deemed to be deliberately under-enrolling over an academic year without acceptable reason, and contrary to the University’s advice, the University may:

- document the student’s behaviour on the student’s file, and refuse to extend the student’s CoE, or
- cancel the student’s enrolment for refusing to enrol in the required study load.

6. **Monitoring online enrolment load**
The Duration of Study Procedures (International Students) describe the process for monitoring enrolment in online courses. In summary, enrolments of international students are reviewed at the beginning of each trimester to ensure that:

- international students do not enrol in more than 25% of courses that comprise their program that are delivered in online mode, and
- international students enrol in at least one course that is not an online course in each compulsory study period.
7. **Compassionate and compelling circumstances**

Students may apply for an extension of their CoE based on compassionate or compelling circumstances. Examples include but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury;
- bereavement of close family members;
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel;
- a traumatic experience such as involvement in, or witnessing a serious accident, or witnessing or being a victim of a serious crime;
- a student has failed occasional courses throughout the program but have not met the threshold for intervention under the Academic Progress Policy.

Requests must be made using the Amendment of Program Form (International Students) and must be accompanied by supporting documentation (such as medical certificates, police reports, death certificate, psychologist reports, as relevant).

8. **Extension of CoEs**

The University will only extend the duration of a student’s study where it is clear that the student will not complete their program within the expected duration as a result of the circumstances outlined in 4 above, or because the number of courses left to complete a program are less than a full-time load. The variation of the CoE and the reasons for the variation will be recorded via PRISMS. A new CoE will be issued once the length of the extension required can be accurately predicted.

9. **Record keeping**

Relevant documentation will be recorded in a student’s file in all instances where:

- a student requests an extension of CoE and the outcome of the request;
- a student is counselled about under-enrolment and over-enrolment and the actions taken by the University as a result;
- a student has/will enrol in more than 25% of their program in online courses or has not enrolled in at least one face to face course in a compulsory study period, and the actions taken by the University as a result.

10. **Appeals**

Students who are refused an extension of their CoE can appeal the decision by following the procedures of the **Student Grievance Management Policy**.

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*Duration of Study Policy (International Students)*  
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