

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the ICAN Learn Policy for the management of requests for Deferment and Leave of Absence applications from students.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Defer** means to formally delay commencement of the course or a unit of study with a relevant fee period, with intent to recommence study to complete content at an agreed future date, should a date be available for the same content.
- 2.2 **Enrolment** is an agreement to engage, commit to attending and completing a course and pay for the service (if applicable).
- 2.3 **Census** refers to the cut-off date for withdrawal from a course without financial penalty. Following the census date, a student is liable for the cost incurred through enrolment. Census dates are applicable to registered training organisations that are approved to offer Vocational Education Training student loans.
- 2.4 **Compassionate circumstances** are circumstances beyond the student's control that have caused a change in the student's situation and /or capacity to complete or pay for the course fee. Compassionate circumstances must be demonstrated to be:
 - 2.4.1 outside of the student's control; and
 - 2.4.2 impact on ability to study; and
 - 2.4.3 are documented by authentic evidence.
- 2.5 **Offer** is an offer made by ICAN Learn to enter an enrolment contract.
- 2.6 **Leave of Absence** refers to a period of time during which the student does not engage in study or course participation but remains enrolled.

3. Application

This Policy applies to:

- 3.1 ICAN Learn students undertaking accredited courses.
- 3.2 ICAN Learn staff who provide information to students about deferment and leave of absence.

4. Review

This policy is reviewed annually with notation of review outlined in policy review schedule and continuous improvement register.

5. Policy

- 5.1 This Policy describes a fair and equitable approach to student application for deferment and leave of absence from ICAN Learn accredited courses.
- 5.2 This policy sets out:
 - 5.2.1 definitions of leave;
 - 5.2.2 frequency;
 - 5.2.3 period of absence; and
 - 5.2.4 allowable circumstances/compassionate grounds.

- 5.3 Any agreements made in relation to deferment or leave of absence will be communicated to the student in writing.

6. Approval

- 6.1 Approval is not guaranteed. Reasons for leave of absence / reduced study load may not be approved.
- 6.2 Reasons to apply for Leave of Absence may include but are not limited to:
- 6.1.2 financial hardship;
 - 6.1.3 program is not what expected;
 - 6.1.4 work commitments;
 - 6.1.5 travelling overseas;
 - 6.1.6 minor medical illness or condition; or
 - 6.1.7 previous undisclosed medical and psychological conditions.
- 6.2 The student is informed in writing of the outcomes of their application and reasons for non-approval should that occur.

7. Deferment

- 7.1 ICAN Learn assists students to defer course commencement, should circumstances change for the student which restricts their ability to commence or complete a course in which the student is enrolled.
- 7.2 Where a student is commencing a course as a new enrollee, the student is able to withdraw without being charged tuition fees provided the student withdraws prior to the census date for a unit of study in the relevant fee period.
- 7.3 The deferment period for the full course will be no more than 12 months, and the student needs to request deferment in writing to enrolment@icanlearn.edu.au.

8 Leave of Absence or relief from study requirements on compassionate grounds

The student may request and arrange a leave of absence and engage in a plan for return.

- 8.1 In the case where a student requests Leave of Absence during the course as a result of extenuating circumstance [outlined in Section 6 of this policy], should that deferment occur prior to a census date, the student will not be charged tuition fees for that fee period. The Leave of Absence on compassionate grounds has specific conditions as described in section 8 of this policy.
- 8.2 In the case of Leave of Absence, it is preferable that the Leave of Absence aligns with a relevant census date in a unit of study related to the fee period that applies to the Leave of Absence Period so that the student is not disadvantaged financially and can take leave without the requirement to pay tuition fees for the relevant fee period¹.
- 8.3 ICAN Learn works with the student to determine the most appropriate time for leave of absence where possible to minimise any financial risk to the student.

¹ Fees and charges policy

- 8.4 Leave of Absence is usually approved for no more than 3 months unless there are extenuating circumstances. If further leave of absence is required, the student may apply for another leave of absence period with additional up-to-date evidence.
- 8.5 ICAN Learn must consider the course offerings that may be available to the student on return from leave of absence and whether in fact, the organisation can reasonably meet the needs of the student in the circumstances.
- 8.6 Leave of Absence applications must include a personal statement detailing the reasons for the application.
- 8.7 Should a Leave of Absence be granted, the student must agree to an action plan prior to the leave of absence period.
- 8.8 All evidence relating to applications for leave of absence must be originals or certified copies and be in English or have a certified English translation.
- 8.9 Compassionate grounds that may require you to take a leave of absence include, but are not limited to:
- 8.9.1 Illness or injury
- (a) Personal illness
- If you are ill, a medical certificate must be presented which meets the following criteria.
- Medical certificate from a registered health practitioner who is treating your condition and includes the dates of consultation; the medical condition; impact of the condition on your ability to study; recommendation for a return to study.
- (b) Illness of close family members
- If you have a close family member who is ill, you must supply evidence of your relationship to them (e.g. birth or marriage certificate(s) etc.) as well as an authentic signed letter from the treating Doctor or hospital of the family member.
- 8.9.2 Bereavement of close family members
- Evidence required: e.g. a funeral notice or authentic letter from a funeral home.
- 8.9.3 Permanent or temporary disability
- Evidence required: an authentic letter from General Practitioner demonstrating the student is unable to study or undertake work experience for a specified period of time.
- 8.9.4 Incident or issue causing distress to student
- Incident or issue causing distress to student impacting on their capacity for study (e.g. political upheaval in home country; natural disaster in home country involving close family; involvement in a serious accident; witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime or critical incident).

9. Other circumstances

- 9.1 From time to time there may be other circumstances that lead to a request for a Deferment or Leave of Absence.
- 9.2 In this situation, the student must provide any relevant certified documentation attesting that the situation is outside the student's control and affects their ability to study.

10. Recommencing study

- 10.1 ICAN Learn and the student will agree on terms of return to study (e.g. timeframes, learner support). It is the student's responsibility to contact ICAN Learn at least 5 working days prior to the end date of their approved leave.
- 10.2 Should the student not meet the terms of 10.1, ICAN Learn will withdraw the student forthwith.
- 10.3 The student will be sent notification in writing of the termination of their enrolment and will be issued a Statement of Attainment (if applicable) according to the Course Withdrawal Policy².
- 10.4 All aspects of the Fees and Charges Policy will apply to the student situation, taking into account VET Loan regulation should this apply.

² Course Withdrawal Policy and Procedure