International Student Extension of Study (CoE) Policy and Procedure

1. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) Part 3 Division 1 Section 19, requires State approved international education providers to supply the Department of Education and Training (DET) with details of all international students accepted by the provider.

This legislative obligation is met by the University issuing a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) through the DET PRISMS database to all accepted international students. This CoE is used for students to apply for an Australian student visa. The University is obliged to inform DET, via the PRISMS database, of any of the following changes to reported student information within 14 days of the occurrence of such change:

- the identity or duration of an accepted student's program;
- any student who does not begin the program;
- any student who terminates his or her study (whether student or University initiated) prior to the student's program being completed;
- any other prescribed matter relating to accepted students, for example, students taking approved leave of absence.

If international student visa holders do not complete within the expected CoE duration, the University may extend the length of a student's study and CoE only in the following limited circumstances:
International students are advised of the legislative requirements and conditions of program extension in publications provided at the stage of offer, orientation, and during their enrolment in a program.

2. **MONITORING**

The National Code of Practice 2007 Standard 9.1 requires international education providers to monitor the progress of international student visa holders, to ensure at all times they are in a position to complete their program within the duration of the CoE issued for that program.

Each compulsory trimester, the Griffith International Compliance Office will notify all enrolled international students, via their student email account, of their ESOS obligations to complete their program by the end date of their CoE.

Students are identified as at risk of not meeting progress requirements through:

- The Academic Progress Report run by the Griffith International Compliance Office;
- The *Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy*;
- Progress reports for higher degree research students;
- Other risk factors identified by the University;
- Student self-identification.

Intervention strategies to support academic progress implemented and recorded by the University include:

- Notifications and support mechanisms to students identified at risk with an amber status under the *Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy*;
- Staff advice and assistance for students facing difficulties affecting academic performance, including, but not limited to, referral to support services, increased monitoring, changed program structures, and reduced study loads.

3. **GROUNDS FOR PROVISION OF EXTENSION OF OR NEW CoE**

International students who meet the following provisions will be provided with a CoE to submit to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) for their student visa extension application. The decision to approve a student visa application is the sole decision of DIBP.

DIBP’s Simplified Student Visa Framework (SSVF) arrangements require Universities to assess applicants for admission to be genuine students (GS), to meet Genuine Temporary Entrant (GTE) criteria and to have the financial capacity to fund their studies and stay in Australia. The Griffith International Compliance Office will assess a student’s application for a new CoE against DIBP’s GTE requirement in addition to the following provisions.

3.1 **Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances**

Compassionate and compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's wellbeing or academic progress in a program. These could include but are not limited to:

a) “compassionate or compelling circumstances (for example illness where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes or where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit);

b) the registered provider implementing its intervention strategy for students who were at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress; or

c) an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted under Standard 13”.

(National Code of Practice 2007 Standard 9.2)
• Serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
• Bereavement of close family members such as parents, grandparents and siblings;
• Pregnancy, as evidenced by a medical certificate;
• Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country which may require emergency travel or reduction in enrolment load impacting on the student's studies;
• A traumatic experience which could include involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident, or witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime (supported by police or psychologist's reports);
• Where the University is unable to offer a pre-requisite course(s) needed to meet award requirements within a suitable timeframe;
• Inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa which was beyond the student's control(supported by relevant, dated visa documentation);
• Where a Dean/Deputy Dean (Research) approves an extension to the maximum submission date for higher degree by research students based on exceptional circumstances, where the progress has been delayed by factors beyond the control of the student.

3.2 Academic Progression

• Where the student has engaged in a formal intervention strategy due to being identified as at risk of not meeting satisfactory academic progress.
• A student has not achieved grades enabling progression at the standard rate but has not done so poorly as to be identified by the University as a student at risk of losing their good academic standing.

3.3 Additional Courses

• A student who has enrolled incorrectly and is required to complete further core and/or elective courses in order to successfully complete their degree program.
• A student who requests to add a major that results in further core and/or elective courses being required to be completed.
• International student visa holders who have completed degree requirements and prior to graduation successfully apply to the University to complete additional courses for genuine reasons i.e. to raise their GPA for entry into an Honours program, will be issued with a new CoE.

3.4 Leave of Absence

International student visa holders who take approved leave of absence, as prescribed in Section 9.0 of the University's Student Administration Policy, are able to extend their studies for the period leave of absence was taken, or for the duration required for the current program structure to be completed in a standard full-time delivery.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Application for extension or new CoE

International student visa holders must submit a completed Confirmation of Enrolment Request Form and attach supporting documentation:

a) three months of student visa expiry date, if applying for a student visa offshore;
b) one month of student visa expiry date, if applying for a student visa onshore (Australia).

Supporting documentation must be included with the Confirmation of Enrolment Request Form. Supporting documentation must include but is not limited to:

a) Reason/s why the student was not able to complete their program within the duration of their CoE;
b) Documents such as medical certificates where applicable;

c) Enrolment plan for completion of program including the new anticipated date of completion to allow the University to determine the new CoE duration.

The enrolment plan will be forwarded to Student Administration for confirmation that the student’s program can be completed within the proposed new CoE duration in standard full-time delivery mode.

A student, who submits an enrolment plan that places them at risk of not meeting satisfactory academic progress based on their previous academic performance, will be required to meet with an International Student Advisor (ISA) prior to the assessment of their CoE extension request. The assessment by the ISA of the student’s ability to successfully complete their program both academically and within the proposed new CoE duration will be taken into account when finalising the student’s request for a CoE extension.

4.2 Notification of Outcome

A CoE extension will only be issued once all academic results for completed trimesters have been published.

- The International Compliance Office will communicate the outcome of the application to the student via their student email account.
- Successful applicants will be issued a CoE for the extension/new program duration.
- The student must provide this CoE to DIBP with their student visa application before the expiry date of her or his student visa.

5. REVIEW OF DECISION

International student visa holders have a right to apply for a review of a decision when they are not granted an extension or new CoE.

The application for review of an unsuccessful CoE extension request must be forwarded to the Associate Director, International Administration, Griffith International, using the Review of a Decision form in accordance with the University’s Student Review and Appeals Policy and Student Review and Appeals Procedures. The decision of the Associate Director, International Administration is final.

A written outcome of the review will be forwarded to the student. If the review outcome is successful, a CoE will be provided to the student to apply for a student visa and enable continued study. If the review is unsuccessful, and the student seeks to remain enrolled beyond the end date of the applicable CoE, the student must provide to the University, certified documentary evidence of an appropriately dated Australian visa which allows continued study.