



<b>Code and Number</b>	<b>E.1.14</b>
<b>Title of Document</b>	<b>Course Withdrawal and Refunds</b>

### POLICY

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) will consider student requests for refunds from a course or unit of study in line with this policy and procedure.

This policy identifies the refund procedures for local students withdrawing from the following courses:

- All graduate certificate qualifications and units of study; and
- Immunisation and Principles of Emergency Care (PEC) non-award courses.

### DEFINITIONS

**Award course:** provides graduates with a qualification that is recognised by the Australian Qualifications Framework

**Eligible student:** refers to students, who are, or would be entitled to a refund.

**Extenuating circumstances:** also known as ‘special circumstances’ or ‘compassionate and compelling circumstances’, are circumstances beyond the student’s control which affect the student’s ability to meet course requirements. For further details see: [E.1.3 Student Management](#).

**FEE-HELP:** is a Commonwealth government loan scheme for eligible domestic fee-paying students.

**HE course of study:** a graduate certificate course.

**International student:** refers to students with an overseas student visa. See E1.14a International Student Withdrawal and Refunds.

**Local student:** You are a local student if you are a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, or an Australian permanent resident, or a holder of a visa (other than a student visa).

**Non-award course:** refers to a course or single unit/s of study that does not lead to a qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework.

**Unit of study:** a published unit of study that a student may undertake to complete a HE Course of Study.

**Tuition fees:** fees paid for a course or unit.

**Census date:** a published date no earlier than 20% of the way through each unit of study relevant to graduate certificate courses only.

### POLICY

#### 1. Graduate certificate course of study / unit of study

##### 1.1. Withdrawal from a course or unit of study

Students at the Australian College of Nursing Ltd (“ACN”) who wish to withdraw from a unit of study, or a course of study must do so in writing via email to [customerservices@acn.edu.au](mailto:customerservices@acn.edu.au).

Where a student gives notice that they wish to withdraw from a unit of study, cancel their enrolment in a course of study or cancel their request for Commonwealth FEE-HELP assistance, ACN will ensure that the withdrawal or cancellation is effective from the time of notification.

##### 1.2. Refunds – students who are eligible for FEE-HELP assistance

This section is applicable to students who have applied for FEE-HELP assistance.

In the event of a student withdrawing from a unit of study on or before the published census date, the following will apply:

- 100% of tuition fees paid for that unit of study will be refunded to the student; and

- the student will not incur a FEE-HELP debt.

In the event of a student withdrawing from a unit of study after the census date, the following will apply:

- no refund is applicable; and/or
- the student will incur a FEE-HELP debt.

1.2.1. Review of a refund decision:

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of a refund request, has a right to a review of the decision in special circumstances. Please refer to ACN's policy E.1.15 Re-crediting a Student FEE-HELP Balance available on ACN's website.

1.2.2. Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances may apply where:

- circumstances were beyond the student's control; and
- circumstances did not make their full impact on the student until after commencement of the course.

An example of extenuating circumstances may include:

- Medical circumstances; or
- Family circumstances; or
- Personal circumstances; or
- Employment related circumstances

For circumstances to be beyond a student's control, the situation should be that which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the student is not responsible. The situation must be unusual, uncommon, or abnormal to be considered extenuating circumstances.

Extenuating circumstances do not include:

- Students change of mind to complete the course or unit of competency
- Pre-existing condition

Supporting documentation must be provided to demonstrate extenuating circumstances. Examples of supporting documentation may include:

- a medical certificate or specialist report
- a statutory declaration or personal statement
- an official letter from relevant source/authority.

**1.3. Refunds – students who are not eligible for FEE-HELP assistance**

This section is applicable to all students except students that applied for FEE-HELP assistance.

In the event of a student withdrawing from a unit of study on or before the census date, 100% of tuition fees paid for that unit will be refunded to the student.

In the event of a student withdrawing from a unit of study after the census date, no refund is applicable.

1.3.1. Review of a refund decision

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of a refund request, has a right to a review of the decision in special circumstances. Please refer to [E.1.13 Student Grievance Handling Policy](#).

1.3.2. Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances may apply where:

- circumstances were beyond the student's control; and

- circumstances did not make their full impact on the student until after commencement of the course

An example of extenuating circumstances may include:

- Medical circumstances; or
- Family circumstances; or
- Personal circumstances; or
- Employment related circumstances

For circumstances to be beyond a student's control, the situation should be that which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the student is not responsible. The situation must be unusual, uncommon, or abnormal to be considered extenuating circumstances.

Extenuating circumstances do not include:

- Students change of mind to complete the course or unit of competency
- Pre-existing condition

Supporting documentation must be provided to demonstrate extenuating circumstances. Examples of supporting documentation may include:

- a medical certificate or specialist report
- a statutory declaration or personal statement
- an official letter from relevant source/authority.

## 2. **Protecting fees paid in advance**

In the event that ACN ceases for any reason to provide an award course in which a student is enrolled, in accordance with our Tuition Assurance Policy, the student will be given the option of either an offer of a place in a similar course of study with an alternative education provider, without any requirement to pay the alternative provider tuition fees for any replacement units; OR a refund of fees already paid to ACN for any unit commenced but not completed because ACN has ceased to provide the course.

## 3. **Principles of Emergency Care (PEC)**

In the event that a student withdraws from a PEC non-award course, the following will apply:

- Students who withdraw from a PEC non-award course prior to course commencement will be refunded the non-award course fee less a 10% administration fee.
- Students who withdraw from a PEC non-award course on or after course commencement will not be provided a refund of fees paid.
- A refund may be awarded in other circumstances at the discretion of the Director of Professional Development (DPD).

## 4. **Immunisation**

In the event that a student withdraws from an Immunisation non-award course, the following will apply:

- Students who are self-funded, who have not logged in or commenced an immunisation course and who withdraw within the first two (2) months of the purchase of the course may be provided with a refund voucher, if extenuating circumstances are presented, to complete the course at a later date. The voucher is valid for a maximum of 12 months from the date of issue and can only be used to enrol into the immunisation course. Vouchers are not valid as credit and are not transferrable.
- No vouchers will be provided to government, employer, or other third-party funded students.
- Self-funded students who have not logged in or commenced an immunisation course and who withdraw within the first two (2) weeks of the purchase of the course may be eligible to receive a refund of the course fees less a 10% administration fee, if

extenuating circumstances which were not known at enrolment are present. Refunds are not available for change of mind.

- Students who withdraw from an Immunisation non-award course after commencing the course content, or without meeting the requirements, or outside of the time frames in the points above, will not be provided with a refund or refund voucher.
- A refund or refund voucher may be awarded in other circumstances at the discretion of the Director of Professional Development (DPD).

#### 5. Review of a refund decision

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of a refund request, has a right to a review of the decision. The [Non-academic grievance policy](#) outlines grievance procedures designed to ensure that ACN responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the Director Education Operations and sent to: [studentcomplaints@acn.edu.au](mailto:studentcomplaints@acn.edu.au).

#### 6. Payment of refunds

Refunds will be paid within 30 days of approval.

#### 7. Publication

This Course *Withdrawal and Refund Policy* is made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with ACN by publication on the website: <https://www.acn.edu.au/about-us/student-policies>

This refund policy will also form part of enrolment information.

### RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

[E.1.15 Re-crediting a Student Fee-Help balance](#)

[E.1.13 Student Grievance Handling Policy](#)

### APPENDICES

[Appendix One](#) - Refund Approval Process due to Special or Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances

**Ratified by Board:** 19 February 2016

<b>Responsibility for Review</b>	Director Education Operations
<b>Ratification</b>	Education Management Committee
<b>Date of Issue</b>	February 2016
<b>Date Last Reviewed</b>	March 2024

### APPENDIX ONE

## Refund Approval Process Due to Special or Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances

A determination of special circumstances will be made in accordance with ACN's withdrawal and refund policies and in adherence to the requirements of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, the *Higher Education Support (Administration) Guidelines 2022*, and the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*.

### Approval process for refund requests after census date – Graduate Certificates

- Customer Service escalates a request for a refund due to special or compassionate and compelling circumstances and supporting documentation to the Director of Education Operations (DEO).
- The DEO assesses the reasons for the request and supporting documentation and carries out an assessment:
  1. identifies the relevant circumstance based on the information and evidence the student has provided in their application and any further information available from the student's records,
  2. determines whether the circumstances identified were beyond the student's control,
  3. determines when the circumstances occurred and/or if they made their full impact on the student on or after the census date for the unit in question,
  4. determines if the circumstances made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements of the unit.
- Upon completion of an assessment of special circumstances, the DEO makes a determination and provides written notice to the student of the decision, setting out the reasons for the decision and informs the student of their right to a review of a decision / appeal (if applicable).

### Review of a decision to refuse a refund request after census date

- Customer Service escalates an appeal / request for a review of a decision to refuse a refund due to special or compassionate and compelling circumstances to the review officer, the National Director of Education (NDE).
- The NDE reviews the information from the original decision and then assesses any new evidence provided by the student.
- The NDE (or delegate) provides written notice to the student of the decision, setting out the reasons for the decision; and informs the student of their right to apply to an external qualified dispute resolver, if they disagree with the review of the decision and / or timelines involved:
  - Administrative Appeals Tribunal (FEE-HELP Students)
  - Overseas Student Ombudsman (International Students)
  - Resolution Institute (domestic fee-paying students and international students)

### Approval process for refund requests – PEC and Immunisation

- Customer Service escalates a request for a refund to the Director of Professional Development (DPD) for approval.
- The DPD (or delegate) reviews the request in accordance with [E.1.14 Course Withdrawals and Refunds](#) and provides written notice to the student of the decision, setting out the reasons for the decision and informs the student of their right to an appeal (if applicable).

### Appeal process for refund requests – PEC and Immunisation

- The student sends a formal grievance / appeal of a decision to not grant a refund to: [studentcomplaints@acn.edu.au](mailto:studentcomplaints@acn.edu.au). For further details see: [E.1.13 Non-academic Grievance Policy](#).

## REFERENCES

Australian Government, *Higher Education Support (Administration) Guidelines*. 2022. [Higher Education Support \(Administration\) Guidelines 2022 \(legislation.gov.au\)](#)

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018. 2018. [Standard 9: Deferring, suspending or cancelling the overseas student's enrolment](#)

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018. 2018.  
[Standard 10: Complaints and appeals](#)  
Australian Government, Department of Education. 2022. [J. Guide to special circumstances decision-making - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)