

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRANSFER BETWEEN REGISTERED PROVIDERS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The ESOS regulatory framework¹ restricts approved providers of courses to international students (“registered providers”) from enrolling transferring students prior to the student completing six months of their principal course².

This policy is designed to ensure that Astra Institute of Higher Education (“ASTRA” or “the Institute”) does not enrol any transferring international student prior to six months of their principal course being completed, unless that student has valid evidence, such as a letter or an email from another registered provider agreeing to such a transfer, and which is recorded in PRISMS, or if other specific conditions are met.

This policy also details the procedures for assessing applications to transfer from the Institute to another registered provider within the initial six months of a student’s principal course.

2. Students seeking to transfer to the Institute from another registered provider

The Institute will not recruit or knowingly enrol an international student wishing to transfer from another registered provider prior to the student completing six months of their principal course except in the following circumstances:

- i. the student has been released from another registered provider and the release has been recorded with the date of effect and reason for release in PRISMS;
- ii. the original registered provider has ceased to be registered or the course in which the student is enrolled has ceased to be registered;
- iii. the original registered provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the government that prevents the student from continuing their principal course;
- iv. a government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student’s best interest and has provided written support for that change.

¹ Refer to *ESOS Compliance Framework*

² A principal course of study is usually the final course of study undertaken by the student. For example, if an international student is studying an English language program followed by a Bachelor program, the Bachelor degree is considered the principal course

International students seeking to transfer to the Institute must comply with the Institute's admissions procedures and meet the course entry requirements.

Where an international student seeks to transfer from another registered provider before they have completed six months of their principal course the following procedure will apply:

- 2.1 The Institute receives an application from a student who is on-shore and is currently undertaking study at another registered provider.
- 2.2 Utilising information from the student's passport, including their study visa and the date the student arrived in Australia, the Registrar will determine if the student has completed six months of their principal course with the other registered provider.
- 2.3 If the student has completed six months study in their principal course, the application process proceeds as for all other on-shore international student applications.
- 2.4 If the student has not completed six months study in their principal course they are required to provide evidence of their release from the registered provider they are currently studying with and the release has been recorded with the date of effect and reason for release in PRISMS.
- 2.5 Where the student states that their current registered provider has entered their release into PRISMS without providing the student any written notification, the Institute will seek to create a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) in PRISMS. Where PRISMS notifies that the student is still currently enrolled with another registered provider the transfer application cannot proceed.
- 2.6 If the student is a government sponsored student, they are required to provide written support from their sponsor agreeing to the change.
- 2.7 Once evidence of release is provided the application proceeds as for all other on-shore international student applications (refer *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure*).
- 2.8 In the circumstances where the original registered provider or course has ceased to be registered, or sanctions have been placed on the original institution by the Australian government which do not allow the student to continue with the course, no formal release is required.

3. Students seeking to transfer from the Institute to another registered provider

The Institute will generally agree to a request from an international student to transfer to another registered provider prior to completing six months of their principal course with the Institute where it can be demonstrated that such a transfer is in the best interests of the student. In assessing such a request, the following factors will be taken into account to determine if granting the request is in the best interests of the student:

- i. the student will be reported because they are unable to achieve satisfactory course progress at the level they are studying, even after engaging with the Institute's intervention strategy to assist the student;
- ii. there is evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances;
- iii. the Institute fails to deliver the course as outlined in the written agreement with the student;
- iv. there is evidence that the student's reasonable expectations about their current course are not being met;
- v. there is evidence that the student was misled by the Institute or an education or migration agent regarding the Institute or its course and the course is therefore unsuitable to their needs and/or study objectives;
- vi. an appeal (internal or external) on another matter results in a decision or recommendation to release the overseas student.

Where a release is granted it will be issued to the student at no cost and will advise the student of the need to contact the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs to seek advice on any implications to their student visa.

The circumstances which the Institute considers as reasonable grounds to refuse a transfer are as follows:

- the student requesting a transfer does not have a clear understanding of what the transfer represents to their study options;
- the student has not made an attempt to discuss the reasons for seeking a transfer with either the Course Coordinator or Student Support Officer;
- the student has outstanding course fees owing to the Institute;
- it is suspected that the student is seeking to transfer to another registered provider only to avoid being reported to the relevant government department for failure to meet academic progress requirements.

Where it is assessed that one of the above factors applies, the student's request for a release may be refused.

In the circumstance that the Institute does not grant a release, the student will be provided with written notification outlining the reasons for the refusal and informing the student of their right to appeal the decision through the Institute's grievance procedures within 20 working days (refer *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure*).

The Institute will not finalise the student's refusal status in PRISMS until the appeal finds in favour of the Institute, or the student has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20 working day period, or the student withdraws from the process.

Students will be notified of the outcome of the assessment of their request for release within five working days of the request being submitted.

All requests for release and the decision made will be recorded in PRISMS.

The Institute will maintain records of all requests from students for a release and the assessment of and decision regarding the request on the student's file for a period of no less than two years from the date the student's enrolment with the Institute is terminated.

The following procedure applies to international students wishing to transfer from the Institute to another registered provider within six months of commencement of their principal course:

- 3.1 The international student will present, in person, to the Registrar and provide a written request that they wish to transfer from the Institute to another registered provider. The Registrar will arrange an exit interview where the student will provide an original copy of a valid enrolment offer from the registered provider to which the student wishes to transfer.
- 3.2 The Registrar will check the financial status of the student to determine if there are fees owing or if the student is entitled to a refund under the Institute's *Student Withdrawal and Refund Policy*. The Registrar will advise the student if there are any fees owing and discuss how payment will be settled or, if a refund is due, how much will be refunded and when. The Registrar will also check to see if there are any library books or other items on loan to the student and make arrangements for their return.
- 3.3 During the exit interview the Registrar will:
 - i. discuss the reasons for the student wishing to transfer to another registered provider;
 - ii. sight the original valid enrolment offer from the registered provider that the student wishes to transfer to; and
 - iii. make a copy of the enrolment offer.

- 3.4 Following the exit interview the Registrar will make an assessment of whether or not the student's request for a transfer to another registered provider is in the best interests of the student by taking into account the factors mentioned above and come to a decision on whether to provide the student with a release.
- 3.5 If the Registrar agrees to the student's request for a transfer to another registered provider they will provide the student with written notification within five working days and update PRISMS. The release will be provided to the student at no charge and will advise the student of the need to contact Department of Home Affairs to seek advice on whether a new student visa is required.
- 3.6 The student must, if applicable, pay any outstanding fees or return any library books or equipment before receiving the release.
- 3.7 If the Registrar denies the student's request for a transfer to another registered provider, the student will be provided with a letter detailing the reasons to refuse the request within five working days and will be informed of their right to appeal the decision within 20 working days through the Institute's grievance handling procedures.
- 3.8 The request for transfer to another registered provider, a copy of the valid enrolment offer from the other registered provider and a copy of the written advice to the student of the decision will be placed on the student's file.
- 3.9 The Registrar will ensure that the following tasks are undertaken:
- i. a Record of Results is prepared for the transferring student, if applicable;
 - ii. email the relevant personnel advising them that the student has withdrawn from the course so that records can be updated, and any necessary arrangements are made for the student's release.
- 3.10 A notification of release will always be provided when, or if:
- i. the Institute's registration or accreditation has been revoked;
 - ii. sanctions imposed on the Institute by the government prevent the student from continuing in the course;
 - iii. a government sponsor deems that the transfer is in the best interest of the student.

4. Publication

International students and staff have access to this policy through publication on the Institute’s website (www.astra.edu.au).

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)</i>	A document issued by the Institute to intending international students that confirms the student’s eligibility to enrol in a course at the Institute.
<i>Course</i>	A structured sequence of study leading to the award of a degree, or other recognised qualification, which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the Board of Directors of Astra Institute of Higher Education.
<i>(the) Institute</i>	Astra Institute of Higher Education.
<i>International student</i>	A holder of a student visa, who is not a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, or who is not an Australian permanent resident, or who is a temporary resident of Australia.

6. Related documents

- International Student Notification of Release
- International Student Notification of Refusal to Release
- Student Withdrawal and Refund Policy
- Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure
- Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure

7. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Executive Management Committee	29 August 2022	Document creation

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Appendix 1: Student transfer request assessment flowchart

