Australian Government

Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships

# Withdrawal Policy

## 1. Purpose

The Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships (CTS) Program Withdrawal Policy (the policy) sets out the processes that apply to CTS recipients who are withdrawing, or are considering withdrawing from, the CTS Program.

It also sets out the processes for a Department-initiated Withdrawal if a recipient does not comply with an obligation in the Scholarship Agreement.

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the CTS Grant Opportunity Guidelines (Scholarship Guidelines) for the relevant round, the terms of the Scholarship Agreement, and the CTS Exemption Policy in place at the relevant time, available on the Scholarships website.

## 2. Background

The Scholarship Guidelines relevant to each scholarship round and the Scholarship Agreement contain provisions relevant to withdrawal from the CTS Program during the initial teacher education (ITE) program and the Commitment to Teach obligation (CTT).

## 3. Withdrawal from the CTS Program

CTS recipients may consider withdrawing from the CTS Program if they are unable to meet the obligations set out in the Scholarship Agreement, such as:

- unable to continue studying an accredited ITE program on a full-time basis
- unable to meet the CTT obligation.

If a CTS recipient can no longer meet the obligations set out in the Scholarship Agreement and is considering withdrawing from the scholarship, they must email the Department of Education (the Department) to explain their circumstances.

If a recipient advises the Department of their intention to withdraw from the CTS Program, the Department will direct them to review their Scholarship Agreement obligations, including their repayment obligations. Following this, the recipient must acknowledge they understand the consequences of withdrawal and confirm if they wish to withdraw from the CTS Program.

## 4. Withdrawal and seeking exemption

A CTS recipient indicating that they wish to seek an exemption from completing their obligations under the Scholarship Agreement will be managed in accordance with the CTS Exemption Policy in place at the relevant time, available on the Scholarships website.

If an exemption is granted, the CTS recipient's Scholarship Agreement will be terminated. The recipient will no longer be required to meet any of the CTS obligations set out in the Scholarship Agreement and will not be required to pay back any of the Scholarship Funding received to date.

If an exemption is not granted, the processes outlined below will apply.

## 5. Withdrawal without an exemption

If a CTS recipient withdraws from the scholarship without an approved exemption (in accordance with the CTS Exemption Policy in place at the relevant time), the clauses of the Scholarship Agreement relating to repayment obligations apply.

A CTS recipient withdrawing from the scholarship without an exemption approved by the Department will receive an email from the Department confirming the decision to withdraw.

The recipient will be advised of the amount of the Scholarship Funding which must be repaid and will be sent an invoice containing details on how to repay.

The terms of the invoice require payment within 30 days unless an instalment plan is established (see CTS Payments Policy for information on how to seek an instalment plan).

Once the scholarship funding has been repaid, or an approved instalment plan has been established, the recipient's Scholarship Agreement will be terminated by the Department.

## 6. Withdrawal – Department-initiated

The Scholarship Agreement sets out obligations of CTS recipients to report and advise of a range of circumstances including:

- reporting annually to provide evidence of continued full-time enrolment in an accredited ITE program before receiving the next scholarship instalment
- reporting on eligible work that contributes to meeting CTT obligations
- reporting Notifiable Events, to advise the Department of changes including, but not limited to, contact details, ITE program duration and higher education providers.

If a CTS recipient fails to submit the information required or submits information in one of the processes listed above that indicates they are no longer meeting the scholarship obligations, the Department will follow-up with the recipient to seek the required information or additional information and evidence about their circumstances.

If the Department determines that a CTS recipient is no longer meeting the Scholarship Agreement obligations, and the recipient does not have an approved exemption, the Department may formally withdraw the recipient from the CTS Program and terminate their Scholarship Agreement. If the Department withdraws the recipient from the CTS Program, the clauses of the Scholarship Agreement relating to repayment obligations apply.

## 6.1 Non-responders

A recipient may be deemed a 'Non-responder' if they fail to respond to six or more contact attempts made by the Department (either via email or SMS).

### Non-responder process

- If a recipient is classed as a 'Non-responder', they may be issued with a formal breach notice requiring them to rectify any breach of their Scholarship Agreement obligations within 30 calendar days.
- If the recipient fails to address the issue(s) outlined in the breach notice within the specified timeframe, the Department may terminate the recipient's Scholarship Agreement and the recipient may be required to repay any scholarship funding received.

A recipient whose scholarship is terminated under the non-responder process is not eligible to request or receive an exemption from their repayment obligation (see CTS Exemption Policy).

## 6.2 Provision of false or misleading information

If a recipient provides false or misleading information to the Department regarding their scholarship (e.g. in their application, the acceptance of their Conditional Offer or in complying with their Scholarship Agreement reporting obligations), then the Department may terminate the recipient's Scholarship Agreement.

If the Department terminates a recipient's Scholarship Agreement for these reasons, the recipient will not be eligible to request an exemption and will be required to repay any scholarship funding they have received.

The Department's decisions on withdrawals are final and there is no mechanism to appeal these decisions.

# 7. Complaints

Any complaint about a decision made by the Department will be handled in accordance with the CTS Complaints Handling Policy.