



Extension of the overseas student transfer restriction period to 12 months

Factsheet for Providers

There has been a change to Standard 7 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) regarding the transfer restriction period.

This fact sheet is intended as a plain language guide to the change and should not be relied upon as legal advice. Where there is doubt, please refer to the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* ([ESOS Act](#)) and the [National Code](#), or contact your provider.

What is changing?

Registered education providers must not enrol an overseas student (other than a school student) seeking to transfer from a course at another registered provider prior to that student first completing **12 months** of their principal course. This is an extension of the transfer restriction period, which previously lasted until the student completed **6 months** of their principal course.

This change is temporary. From 1 July 2027, the transfer restriction period will revert to 6 months.

The extension of the transfer restriction period impacts all overseas students (except school students) who have not yet completed 12 months of their principal course at the time the change to the restriction period takes effect.

This does **not** mean that these students are transfer restricted for an **additional** 12 months from this date. It may mean that some students who were no longer transfer-restricted under the 6-month rule, are once again transfer-restricted until they have completed 12 months in total of their principal course.

The transfer restriction period for school students is not part of the temporary extension and remains unchanged from current settings. This means a provider must not enrol an overseas school student seeking to transfer from a course at another registered provider prior to the student first completing 6 months of their first registered school sector course.

Why the change?

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening the integrity of Australia's international education sector, including through migration reforms. On 17 September 2026, the Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, including those changes relating to Student visa settings and new transfer requirements.

The extension of the transfer restriction period complements these reforms, and the Government's commitment to the quality and integrity of the international education sector, by temporarily extending the period in which students have to undertake study in their principal course before they are able to transfer to another provider.

Frequently asked questions

What is a transfer?

A transfer is when an overseas student moves from one provider to another provider without first completing their course. For the purposes of the transfer restriction period, a non-school overseas student must complete 12 months of their principal (or main) course of study before they can transfer to another provider.

Can students still transfer between providers if they need to?

Outside of the transfer restriction period, a student is free to transfer to another provider, as long as this is in line with their visa conditions. For example, students must maintain enrolment in a course that is the same Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level or higher for which their student visa was granted (unless they are changing from AQF level 10 to level 9). For more information about visa conditions, please see the Department of Home Affairs [Check visa details and conditions](#) page.

Under Standard 7 of the National Code, there are some cases where an overseas student can still transfer within their transfer restriction period, including where:

- the releasing provider, or the course in which the student is enrolled, has ceased to be registered
- the releasing provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by its ESOS agency that prevents the student from continuing their course at that provider
- any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interests and has provided written support for the change.

Students can also request to be released from their transfer restriction period early. This request must be made to their provider in line with the provider's internal policies and procedures. The provider must assess this request in accordance with their obligations under Standard 7 of the National Code. It may be appropriate for a provider to release a student from their transfer restriction period early where, for example, there is evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances.

What are compassionate or compelling circumstances?

'Compassionate or compelling' circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the overseas student and which have an impact upon the overseas student's course progress or wellbeing.

These circumstances could include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the overseas student was unable to attend classes
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies
- a traumatic experience, which could include:
 - involvement in, or witnessing of, a serious accident
 - witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports), or
- where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit, or the overseas student has failed a prerequisite unit and therefore faces a shortage of relevant units for which they are eligible to enrol.

These are only some examples of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances. Registered providers should outline what is considered compassionate or compelling circumstances in their own policies and use their professional judgement to assess each case on its individual merits.

When determining whether compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, registered providers should consider documentary evidence provided to support the claim and should keep copies of these documents in the overseas student's file.

How should providers determine whether a student is transferring or not?

Providers should take reasonable steps to determine whether a student has already commenced study with another provider. The Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) has been updated to reflect the extension of the transfer restriction period.

This means that providers are prevented from creating a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) for a student that is still under a transfer restriction. Where a provider attempts to do so, a message will appear notifying them that they cannot make the CoE due to the student being restricted from transferring.

Providers must provide accurate student information in PRISMS. Any provider who knowingly enrolls a student in breach of Standard 7 may be subject to appropriate regulatory action or penalties.

Providers are also reminded that they are still prohibited from giving an education agent commission to an education agent for the recruitment of a student who is transferring from another provider, regardless of when this transfer takes place (for example, within the students' transfer restriction period, or outside of it, including where a student has been released). For more information about

the onshore transfer commission ban, please see the [Ban on the payment of agent commissions for onshore transfers factsheet](#).

What happens if a provider has already enrolled a transferring student who had not yet completed 12 months of their principal course?

Where a provider has already accepted a transferring student for enrolment prior to the extension of the transfer restriction period taking effect, this does not constitute a breach of the new Standard 7.1. This includes where the student may have no longer been transfer restricted under the 6-month rule but would have become re-restricted under the 12-month rule had they not already transferred.

Where a provider may have been in the process of recruiting a transferring student but had not yet accepted them for enrolment at the time the extension of the transfer restriction period takes effect, the provider should assess whether the student is transfer restricted under the new 12-month rule prior to accepting them for enrolment. As above, where a student is transfer restricted, providers will be prevented from creating a new CoE for that student.

Examples

The following examples have been included to help students and providers understand how the extension of the transfer restriction period may affect them.

Case study A

A student commenced their principal course 12 months or more before the extension

Student A commenced a two-course package with an ELICOS course and a higher education course on 1 June 2025. Student A commenced the higher education course, their principal course, on 20 July 2025. They are transfer restricted until 20 January 2026, when they have completed 6 months of their principal course.

Student A is not impacted by the new extension of the transfer restriction period, as they have already completed more than 12 months of their principal course by 20 July 2026. Student A remains unrestricted.

Case study B

A student commenced their principal course 6-12 months before the extension

Student B commenced a bachelor's degree on 20 January 2026. They are transfer restricted until 20 July 2026. In August 2026, Student B considers transferring to another provider in the coming months and starts researching new providers.

The transfer restriction period is extended to 12 months. Student B has not yet completed 12 months of their principal course, so they are now transfer restricted until 20 January 2027.

After 20 January 2027, Student B is no longer transfer restricted.

Case study C

A student commenced their principal course less than 6 months before the extension

Student C commenced a package of two consecutive VET courses on 10 June 2026. The second course, Student C's principal course, is set to commence on 10 January 2027. Student C is set to be transfer restricted until 10 July 2027.

The transfer restriction period is extended to 12 months. Student C has not yet commenced their principal course, so remains transfer restricted.

On 1 July 2027, the transfer restriction period reverts to 6 months. On 10 July 2027, Student C is now no longer transfer restricted, as they have completed 6 months of their principal course.

Case study D

A student commenced their principal course after the extension

The transfer restriction period is extended to 12 months.

Student D commences a bachelor's degree on 15 March 2027. Due to the extension of the transfer restriction period, they are set to be transfer restricted until 15 March 2028.

On 1 July 2027, the transfer restriction period reverts to 6 months. On 15 September 2027, Student D is now no longer transfer restricted, as they have completed 6 months of their principal course.