

Academic progress guideline

Authorised by Executive Director Workforce

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Related policies/standards

Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015

- Standard 4 – Accurate and accessible information about an RTO, its services and performance is available to inform prospective and current learners and clients.
- Standard 5 – Each learner is properly informed and protected.

Responsible officer Manager, Learning and Development

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What is the purpose of this guideline?

This guideline outlines the manner in which the Cunningham Centre supports academic progress and manages interruptions to study.

What is our policy?

The Cunningham Centre takes pride in its reputation for providing high quality customer service to its clients.

We expect that clients who enrol in our courses do so after considering all of the information provided prior to enrolment both on our website and in pre-enrolment materials such as application packs, particularly what adjustments they need to make to their busy lifestyles to ensure that they will successfully complete the course they wish to enrol in.

Clients will be provided with a course outline that stipulates key dates for assessment submission along with any other significant dates. Failure to adhere to these dates are likely to result in academic and/or financial consequences.

If an employer pays the fees for a client, the Cunningham Centre will keep them informed of the client's progress, including deferments, extensions or withdrawals from the course. The client will be copied into any correspondence that is sent to the employer. The aim of this is to ensure that the employer is aware of what is happening and can provide support. The Cunningham Centre will not share any personal or sensitive information with the employer without the client's written consent. The Cunningham Centre adopts the definition of 'Personal Information' as defined by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. For more information, please see their website: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/agencies-and-organisations/guides/what-is-personal-information>

If the client has paid the fees, the Cunningham Centre will not share any information with any outside entity, including information about academic progress, without the client's written consent.

Internally, information may be shared between educators, course administration officers, a course review panel and, if pertaining to academic integrity and dishonesty, the Executive Director responsible for the course. The information will generally be shared for moderation and assessment review, panel reviews, evaluation and improvement processes.

Who does it apply to?

Clients who are enrolled in Cunningham Centre courses only.

What do I need to know?

All forms and guidelines referred to below are available on the Cunningham Centre website under **Academic guidelines and forms**. If you are unable to access these documents for any reason, contact your Course Facilitator for assistance.

It is our policy to keep your employer informed about your progress if they have paid the enrolment fees. This interaction will be limited to advice relating to requests for deferment, withdrawal or extensions. We will

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not share any other information, including your assessment results, any commentary or opinion about your performance in the course, or any other personal or sensitive details. If you would like us to share this information with anyone, you can complete an *Authority to release information*.

Our courses are designed for flexible learning. The flexibility relates to when you engage with the learning as you progress towards meeting the milestones laid out in the course outline. These milestones will generally relate to the submission of formative or summative assessment tasks. These dates are fixed and can only be modified through negotiation with your Course Facilitator. Academic and/or financial penalties may apply if you do not adhere to these dates.

You will be provided with a course outline that identifies these key dates. The other key dates on the course outline you need to be aware of are:

- **Start date:** This is the date on which the course is deemed to have started. **In the majority of cases, you will not be eligible for a refund if you withdraw from the course after this date. (See refund guidelines)**
- **End date:** This is the date by which all of your assessment needs to have been finalised and your certification issued. It is not the last date of assessment submission.

With 'reasonable justification', you may be entitled to:

- Transfer to a future cohort within a reasonable timeframe provided you have enrolled (and paid fees) and the course has not yet commenced;
- Reasonable adjustment to assessment submission deadlines and/or extension of end date as negotiated with your Course Facilitator without attracting additional fees, provided you have been engaging in your study and the reason why you require an extension meets the definition of 'reasonable justification' below. Extensions to end date will only be granted for up to 6 months. (see **Major interruption to study**)

'Reasonable justification' includes:

- Passionate or compelling circumstances (e.g. death of a family member, jury duty, unforeseen carer responsibilities);
- Work commitments which were not known at time of enrolment (e.g. secondment to another role/deployment to another country);
Illness supported by medical certificate.

Deferral

Deferral applies where you have fully paid the relevant fees, and the course has started. . In this event, you may request a deferral to a cohort which will be commencing within 6 months from the commencement date for the course you originally enrolled into.

Please contact your course facilitator via email or phone to request a deferral.

If your employer has paid your fees, they will be notified that you have requested a deferral.

If you decide not to take up the place in the cohort you have been deferred to, you will need to contact your course facilitator to request to be withdrawn.

Your application will be archived and you will need to reapply to be considered for future cohorts. This application will be considered as a new application and considered on its merits with the other applications. There is no guarantee that you will be given a place in a future cohort.

If you have been accepted into a course, but have not yet paid your enrolment fees, you may be allocated to a future cohort at the discretion of the Course Facilitator. You will be required to pay the enrolment fees applicable to the cohort that you've requested allocation to.

Extension

Extensions apply where you have commenced study, have been engaging in your study and, for reasons which meet the 'reasonable justification' principles outlined above, require an adjustment to assessment submission deadlines or require more time for you to complete the course. Extensions will not be granted if you have not met these criteria.

Managing extension requests for individual assessment items are covered in the *Assessment Guideline*.

Extensions to the end date for the course may be granted for up to six months from the original end date of the course. Extensions beyond six months constitute a major interruption to study (see below).

If your employer has paid your fees, they will be notified of the request for extension.

The Course Facilitator will make a determination as to whether your circumstances meet the requirement of 'reasonable justification'. Where 'reasonable justification' requirements are not met, your request may still be granted, but it could result in further fees being payable in order to progress. Please see your course materials for further information about fees and conditions which may apply.

Advice about any fees or conditions applied to the granting of extensions relating to your course will be included in application packages and course handbook or equivalent.

Please contact your course facilitator by phone/email to request an extension.

Major interruption to study

In some circumstances, the interruption to your study may be more than six months, or unknown (e.g. major illness, deployment for an indefinite period of time). Under these circumstances, we will work with you to finalise whatever we can under your current enrolment and provide a written acknowledgement that we will reassess the situation when you are ready to return to study. This would involve assessing your knowledge at that point, providing whatever credit is possible within the course framework and negotiating a reasonable enrolment fee for you to re-enter the course. Please remember that we are unable to grant a refund once an activity has commenced.

If your employer has paid your fees, they will be notified that this has occurred.

Withdrawal after commencement

If you wish to withdraw from your course after it has commenced, please contact your course facilitator by phone/email. Special consideration may be given on compassionate grounds and/or exceptional circumstances. Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The request must be in writing and supported with a medical certificate or if not health related, a statutory declaration outlining the exceptional circumstance that has impacted the capability to continue with the activity or course. See **Refund Guidelines** for further instructions.

If your employer has paid your fees, they will be advised when your request has been processed.

Failure to engage/progress

The Cunningham Centre staff will make all reasonable attempts to contact you where they are concerned with your progress. 'Reasonable attempts' means that they have tried on three separate occasions, at least one of which is in writing via email. If you do not respond to any of these attempts, you will receive an email requesting that you contact your Course Facilitator within two weeks to discuss your continuation with the course. If the employer has funded your enrolment in the course, the Cunningham Centre will also advise your employer. The intent will be to enlist their support to facilitate the best outcome for you. Information of a personal or sensitive nature will not be disclosed as part of this process. You will be cc'd into the correspondence that is sent to your employer.

If you have paid the course fees, the Cunningham Centre will not disclose any information to your employer, including information regarding progress with completion of your learning program, without your express consent in writing.

If these efforts do not result in a plan to get you back on track with your study, or we do not hear from you within the timeframe, we will progress to withdraw you from the course.

In this event, you will receive advice in writing verifying that you have been withdrawn from the course and any additional documentation (e.g. a record of results) that can be issued based on what had been completed to the point of withdrawal.

Your course may have other specific conditions relating to academic progress based on the learning and assessment activities which need to be undertaken. These will be outlined in the course handbook or equivalent.

If you do not feel that you have been provided with appropriate support, you are entitled to lodge a complaint. (See *Compliments, complaints and appeals guideline*).

If you wish to re-engage with your study, you will need to apply through the normal process for that particular course. Please be aware that enrolment fees will apply.

You are entitled to appeal any decision that is made by the Cunningham Centre if you believe that it is unreasonable (please see *Compliments, complaints and appeals guideline*).