International Student Release Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy describes how Australian Catholic University (ACU) assesses applications from international students on a student visa, seeking release to transfer to another education provider prior to completing the relevant transfer restriction period for their principal course enrolment at ACU in accordance with Standard 7 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

Section 2 - Definitions

(2) Terms used in this policy are consistent with the Glossary of Student and Course Terms. The following specific definitions also apply:

Term	Definition
Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)	is a document issued by the University to confirm a student's enrolment in the specified course and required when applying for a student visa.
Packaged offer	means two or more offers of enrolment for study with the University. It usually requires students to complete the first course before enrolling in their second course.
Pathway course(s)	a preliminary course of study undertaken before the principal course and is usually a pre-requisite to the principal course. Pathway courses include ELICOS, diplomas, Foundation Studies and Tertiary Preparation Program (Health Sciences).
Principal course	the final (or highest level) course of study that students will undertake. For example, if students are studying a pathway course followed by a Bachelor degree, the Bachelor degree is the principal course.
Release	is where the University grants permission for students to transfer to another education provider prior to completing the relevant transfer restriction period for their principal course enrolment at ACU.
Transfer restriction period	the period during which an overseas student is restricted from transferring to another education provider before completing the required amount of time in their principal course, unless an exception applies. From 2 October 2026 to 30 June 2027, the transfer restriction period is twelve months. From 1 July 2027, the transfer restriction period will return to six months.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to international students studying on a student visa who have not completed the relevant transfer restriction period for their principal course at the University and wish to transfer to another education provider.

Section 4 - Eligibility for Release

(4) International students studying on a student visa who have not completed the the relevant transfer restriction period for their principal course at ACU must seek approval from the University if they wish to transfer to another education provider.

(5) The request will be formally assessed as per this policy and in accordance with Standard 7 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018

(6) Students do not require a release under the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 once they have completed the relevant transfer restriction period for their principal course. The transfer restriction period is calculated from the first day of the principal course.

(7) Students enrolled in pathway courses are not permitted to transfer to an alternative education provider without formal release from the University.

(8) The Department of Home Affairs requires that students who are granted a student visa must comply with student visa conditions. Students considering moving to a lower Australian Qualifications Framework level course are urged to seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs prior to finalising their decision.

Section 5 - Circumstances for which Applications for Release will be Refused

(9) The University will not grant release in the following circumstances:

a. Change of mind: students may apply for a transfer to other campuses and/or courses offered by the University;
b. If the student seeks to transfer from a course/package to a lower AQF level course at an alternative education provider;
c. If the student has not exhausted access to the University's support services for assistance with study or personal issues;
d. Claims of financial hardship or seeks to transfer to another provider with lower tuition fees;
e. Requests to change study location due to accommodation difficulties, distance, transport and/or living arrangements;
f. If the request is considered detrimental to the student's well-being;
g. If an Unconditional Letter of Offer from another education provider has not been provided.

> Note: conditional offers will be accepted where the only condition is provision of a release from the University.

Section 6 - Circumstances for which Applications for Release will be Approved

(10) The University will grant release in the following circumstances:

a. if an offer of a place is withdrawn by the University;
b. the University was unable to provide, or ceased to provide, the course the student applied to and accepted the

offer of enrolment or was enrolled in;

c. the student not being permitted to enrol in their course due to not meeting the pre-requisite(s);
d. an ACU pathway student not being able to proceed to their subsequent course in their packaged offer due to not meeting the admission requirements or prerequisite(s) and the student can demonstrate that they have exhausted the University's support services to address these issues;
e. the student's enrolment is terminated due to unsatisfactory course progress as governed by the Academic Regulations and will be reported to the Department of Education;
f. the University believes the student has compassionate or compelling circumstances and there is evidence to support the claim;
g. there is evidence that the student's reasonable expectations about their current course are not being met;
h. there is evidence that the student was misled by the University or an ACU authorised education agent regarding the University or its course and the program of study is therefore unsuitable to their needs and/or study objectives;
i. an appeal (internal or external) on any matter that results in a decision or recommendation to release the student; or
j. written advice supporting a change from a government sponsor (sponsored students only).

Section 7 - Release Application Process

(11) Students should remain enrolled in their current course of study until such time they receive an outcome of their application.

(12) Students wishing to apply for release must:

a. complete the Request for Release form;
b. provide a copy of the new provider's valid Unconditional Letter of Offer; and
c. submit any relevant supporting documentation.

(13) Students who are under 18 of age and wishing to apply for release must provide the following:

a. written confirmation that the student's parent or legal guardian supports the transfer; and
b. where the student is not being cared for in Australia by a parent or suitable nominated (blood) relative, the valid enrolment offer also confirms that the receiving provider will accept that responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements, and to ensure that there is no gap in the welfare arrangements as per Standard 5 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

(14) Sponsored students wishing to apply for release must provide written approval from their sponsor.

(15) Students will be advised of an outcome within 14 days of the formal request for release.

Section 8 - Appeal of Release Outcome

(16) Students who are refused a release have the right to appeal in accordance with the Student Appeals Policy.

Section 9 - Revisions Made to this Policy

(17) The revision table includes revisions up until this document was migrated into the current policy platform. Any later changes will show in the Status and Details tab.

Section 10 - Associated Information

(18) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	4th November 2026
Review Date	4th November 2031
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	4th November 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Julie Cogin Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Manager	Ben Griffin Associate Director, International Admissions and Compliance
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