

How to Request a Release Letter – Information Sheet

General

This Information Sheet has been developed to comply with Standard 7 of the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007.

International students on student visas must normally remain with their original education provider for the first six months of their principle course unless they obtain a release letter. Where a student has been made a packaged offer of more than one course, the principle course is the final course in the packaged offer.

The start date for the calculation of the six month period is when the student starts, or was scheduled to start their principle course. Breaks for the purposes of deferment or suspension are not counted for the purposes of determining whether the student has completed six months of the principle course.

NOTE: A student must maintain their enrolment at Chambers Institute and maintain any conditions of that enrolment including participating in classes whilst the Release Letter is being considered.

NOTE: A Release Letter does not automatically withdraw a student from their course. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from their current course where necessary. Students must seek advice from DIBP regarding any implications for their student visa.

Application for a Release Letter

All applications for release letters must be made in writing, on the Request for Release Letter form, with the required documentation attached.

Required Documentation

In order for a request for a release letter to be considered, the student must provide the following documentation.

- A copy of the Letter of Offer from another provider
- Application for Withdrawal Form (if applicable)
- Application for Refund Request form (if applicable)
- A written statement detailing the reasons for your application to transfer stating that the transfer will in your best interest
- Evidence of personal circumstances (if applicable)

- Evidence that there are no outstanding debts owing to Chambers Institute
- Written support from parent/guardian (for students under 18 years of age)
- Evidence of an interview with a Chambers Institute staff member to assist with determination of the student circumstances given as a reason for requesting the Release Letter prior to granting or not granting a Release.

Circumstances in which a Release Letter will be granted:

- Where it is considered that the course that the student wishes to transfer to:
 - Better meets the study capabilities of the student; and/or
 - Represents a clear education progression; and /or
 - Better meets the long term goals of the student, whether these relate to future work, education or personal aspirations; and/or
 - Offers the student access to greater support either through services offered by another registered provider, commercial or non-profit services or through access to family, friends or a cultural support network.
- The student claims or can provide evidence that he or she is experiencing demonstrable academic difficulties in their current course.
- A student's personal circumstances indicate a change to an alternative course at another institution is in their best interest.
- The student claims or can provide evidence that his or her reasonable expectations of the current course are not being met.

Circumstances in which a Release Letter will be not be granted:

- the transfer may jeopardise the student's progression through a package of courses
- the transfer is considered detrimental to the student in other ways, including where the transfer does not represent a clear education progression to a higher level course in the student's academic discipline.
- the student has recently started studying the course and the full range of support services are yet to be provided or offered to the student. In this case, the student will be requested to wait a further 6 weeks before applying for a transfer to another provider during which time the full range of support services will be provided to the student.
- the student is deliberately trying to manipulate the Australian student visa system.
- the student is trying to avoid being reported to DIBP for failure to meet the provider's attendance or academic progress requirements.
- The student wishes to change to a similar program with lower fees.

- an application for a release letter will not be considered if a student has tuition fee or other outstanding debts owing to Chambers Institute.
- a letter of release will be granted where a student has provided evidence that he or she was misled by Chambers Institute or migration agent regarding the provider or its course which is in breach of the ESOS Act.

Counselling

Where appropriate students seeking a release letter will be counselled by a staff member:

- to explore their reasons for wishing to transfer and/or
- to discuss any compassionate or compelling personal circumstances and/or
- to find out if there are any academic reasons to transfer and/or
- to identify any alternative academic options within Chambers Institute which may be relevant to their academic interests.

Outcome of Application

Students will be given a written statement of the outcome of their request, including reasons for the outcome, at no cost.

The written outcome will normally be provided within 10 working days of the date the student submits their written request. Requests that do not contain all the required information may take longer to process.

Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Release Letter have the right to appeal the decision accessing Chambers Institute Complaints and Appeals process. All appeals must be in writing and be accompanied by relevant supporting evidence. The student has 20 days in which to do this.

This does not remove the right of students to appeal through external avenues as set out in Chambers Institute Complaints and Appeals Policy. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may lodge an external appeal to the Overseas Students Ombudsman who offer a free and independent service to overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by Chambers Institute. Students are able to view the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au or call on 1300 363 072 for further information.

Refunds

Students must apply in writing for refunds. Students must withdraw by specified dates in order to obtain refunds.