

## D2 – DEFERRAL AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to take into consideration unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the course of a student's study with *BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI-TAITE)* and the best practice for managing the procedures for deferral and leave of absence.

### 2. BACKGROUND

BBI-TAITE is committed to the provision of high-quality theological education, and to assist students who have had unexpected circumstances arise in the course of their study with the Institute. The *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 Section 7.2.c* states:

2. Information for students is available prior to acceptance of an offer, written in plain English where practicable, accompanied by an explanation of any technical or specialised terms, and includes:
  - c. **information to outline the obligations of students and their liabilities to the** higher education provider including expected standards of behaviour, financial obligations to the higher education provider, critical deadlines, policies for deferral, change of preference/enrolment and leave of absence, particular obligations of international students, disciplinary procedures, misconduct and grounds for suspension or exclusion.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in a course with BBI-TAITE across all modes of study.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Course or Course of Study** applies to all awards and courses delivered by the Institute.

**Deferral** refers to delaying the start of your course of study with the Institute by up to one year from the Trimester of your offer of admission. Please note, a deferral may affect your progression in the course, that is, not all subjects offered in the course are available to study in each Trimester.

**Leave of Absence:** If you choose to take a break from your course of study you may do so by applying for a Leave of Absence (LoA).

**Trimester:** The Institute offers three sessions of study per year termed Trimesters, the third of which (Trimester 3 Summer) is an optional term of study. Trimesters 1 and 2 are compulsory for course progression. Students who are unable to study in Trimesters 1 and 2 must apply in writing for a Leave of Absence (LOA).

## 5. POLICY

### 5.1 Deferral

- 5.1.1 *Deferral*: Applicants may defer the start of their course for up to one year (12 months) from the trimester of the Confirmation of Enrolment to the program.
- 5.1.2 *Lapse of Confirmation of Enrolment*: If the Confirmation of Enrolment is not taken up within one year (12 months) from the Trimester the offer of admission is made, then the *Confirmation of Enrolment* will lapse, and the applicant will be required to reapply for entry into the course.

### 5.2 Leave of Absence

- 5.2.1 *Enrolment*: Students are required to be enrolled for at least two trimesters per calendar year.
- 5.2.2 *Leave of Absence*: If leave is required after the student's first Trimester of study they must apply for a Leave of Absence (LoA) – students must complete at least one unit of study prior to applying for a Leave of Absence.
- 5.2.3 *Summer Trimester*: A Leave of Absence application is not necessary where a student does not wish to enrol for the optional third trimester (Summer).
- 5.2.4 *Maximum leave*: Unless additional leave (see 5.2.5 below) is approved, a student may not take more than three trimesters of leave – the equivalent of 12 months – during their course of study.
- 5.2.5 *Additional leave*: Under exceptional circumstances, and with the provision of supporting documentation, students may apply for up to three additional trimesters of leave – the equivalent of a further twelve-month period.
- 5.2.6 *Course maximum timeframe*: Any time taken as a Leave of Absence will be included within the maximum timeframe specified for each course, and not in addition to it.
- 5.2.7 *Access to the Institute's resources*: During a period of a Leave of Absence students may retain limited access to the Institute's resources.

## 6. PROCEDURE

### 6.1 Deferral

- 6.1.1 *Deferral and Confirmation of Enrolment*: Applicants who have received their *Confirmation of Enrolment* may apply to defer their studies for up to one year. Applicants must indicate their intention to defer when returning the *Student Declaration* section of the *Confirmation of Enrolment*.
- 6.1.2 *Failure to commence studies following a deferral*: If an applicant does not commence their studies at the conclusion of their approved deferral their application will lapse, and they will be required to reapply for admission to the program.
- 6.1.3 *Approval of deferral*: Applicants will be made aware of the outcome of their application for deferral through their personal email account advised to the Institute in their application for admission.

### 6.2 Applications for Leave of Absence

- 6.2.1 *Applications for leave*: Students must apply for leave by emailing [studentservices@bbi.catholic.edu.au](mailto:studentservices@bbi.catholic.edu.au) giving the reasons why the leave is being requested, stating the length of the leave required, and providing documentation in support of their application.
- 6.2.2 *Census date and lapse of candidature*: Applications for leave are to be submitted by the census date of the first trimester in which the student wishes to take leave. Failure to do so may result in their enrolment lapsing and their candidature may be terminated. They will be required to reapply for admission to the program if they wish to recommence their studies at a later date.

- 6.2.3 *Failure to resume studies following a Leave of Absence:* If a student does not resume studies at the conclusion of their approved Leave of Absence their candidature will lapse, if they wish to recommence their studies at a later date.
- 6.2.4 *Exception:* Failure to resume studies (6.2.3 above) does not apply to the optional Summer Trimester (T3). For example, if a period of leave is taken for Trimester 2, a student would not be required to re-enrol until Trimester 1 of the following year.
- 6.2.5 *Unapproved Leave:* Students who fail to enrol into sequential trimesters, that is, Trimesters 1 and 2, while Trimester 3 summer is an optional trimester, and do not have an approved Leave of Absence will be considered to have abandoned their studies and may have their candidature terminated.
- 6.2.6 *Withdrawal from study:* Students who withdraw from all their units in a trimester either before or after the census date and do not apply for a Leave of Absence will be considered to have taken unapproved leave (refer 6.2.5 above).
- 6.2.7 *Notification of outcome of applications:* Students will be made aware of the outcome of their application for leave via their student email account.

### **6.3 Cancellation of a Deferral or a Leave of Absence**

- 6.3.1 *Application for cancellation:* An applicant or student who wishes to apply for cancellation of a Deferral or a Leave of Absence may request to do so by emailing the Institute's Registrar before the commencement of the trimester in which they wish to resume their studies.
- 6.3.2 *Census Date:* Requests for cancellation of a Deferral or a Leave of Absence in a trimester will not be granted if the request is received later than the Census Date of the trimester in which they wish to resume their studies.
- 6.3.3 *Notification of outcome of applications:* Students will be made aware of the outcome of their request for the cancellation of a deferral or a Leave of Absence application via their student email account.

### **6.4 Implications of Leave for students**

- 6.4.1 *Progression:* Candidates who are studying part time and have an approved Leave of Absence application may be required to study more than one unit per trimester in order to ensure completion of their course within the maximum available timeframe (refer 5.2.5 above).
- 6.4.2 *Re-enrolment:* It is the responsibility of each student who takes a Leave of Absence to ensure that they re-enrol into a unit once their leave expires. Failure to do so may result in the student being considered to have abandoned their studies and they may have their candidature terminated.
- 6.4.3 *Notification or enrolment implications:* Students will be made aware of any course or enrolment implications when their leave application is approved.

## **7. RELAXING PROVISION**

To provide for exceptional circumstances arising, the Academic Dean may relax any provision of this policy and report these decisions to Academic Board.

## **8. KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Courses Policy and Procedure

## 9. NOTES

Contact Officer	Director Student Services and Operations
Implementation Officer/s	Academic Dean / Student Registrar
Approval Authority / Authorities	Academic Board
Date Approved	11/11/2016
Date of Commencement	11/11/2016
Date for Review	24 months after commencement
Amendment History	<p>23/11/2016 - Amended to account for maximum time limits and to clarify Trimester 3 as an optional term of study.</p> <p>12/12/2016 – Amended to include Course Completion Policy as a key related document</p> <p>03/12/2018 – removed reference to BBI-TAITE student email account</p> <p>04/08/2020 – complete revision of the policy. Some major items changed include the addition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HESF standard 7.2</li> <li>• Numerous definitions</li> <li>• Sections 5.2, 6.2 and 6.3</li> <li>• Relaxing Provision</li> </ul>
Key Stakeholders	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Academic Board Standing Committee</p> <p>Academic Dean</p> <p>Registrar</p> <p>Academic staff of the Institute</p> <p>Applicants for admission to the Institute's courses</p> <p>All students enrolled in the Institute's courses</p>