VE-STP08 COURSE TRANSFER POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
Apex	Apex Australia Vocational Education
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CoE	Confirmation of Enrolment
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
ESOS	Education Services for Overseas Students
LMS	Learning Management System
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Student Management System
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SSO	Student Support Officer

1 Scope

1.1 This policy applies to overseas students seeking to transfer to or from Apex, change an Apex course or change a course package, and to staff and agents involved in those processes. National Code transfer restrictions apply to movement between registered providers, not an internal course change within the same registered provider. VET entry, suitability, support and credit requirements apply to any proposed new VET enrolment.

2 Purpose

2.1 Apex will assess transfer requests fairly and promptly, protect student choice and wellbeing, comply with the transfer restriction in force, and maintain accurate enrolment, agreement and PRISMS records. Provider release, withdrawal, refund, credit transfer and visa permission are distinct matters and must be assessed separately.

2.2 Apply National Code Standard 7 as amended, including the temporary restriction commencing 2 October 2026. The February 2026 review cycle in document control does not backdate this amendment or actual approval. Staff must use the law applicable when accepting a transferring student for enrolment.

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Apex must not knowingly enrol an overseas student transferring from another registered provider during the applicable restriction period unless a Standard 7.1A exception is established and documented. Staff must not rely solely on an agent's statement, an old six-month rule or an offer letter as evidence that a student is eligible to transfer.

3.2 Applicable restriction periods

Enrolment timing or circumstance	Rule to apply
Non-school transfers accepted before 2 October 2026	Apply the six-month principal-course rule then in force. A student already accepted for enrolment before the amendment is not retrospectively in breach of the new twelve-month rule; retain evidence of when acceptance occurred.
Non-school transfers from 2 October 2026 to 30 June 2027 inclusive	The student must have completed at least twelve months of the principal course with the releasing provider, unless Standard 7.1A applies. Students with between six and twelve months may be restricted again. Recruitment enquiries or a pending application alone do not establish prior acceptance.
Non-school transfers on or after 1 July 2027	The restriction is scheduled to return to completion of at least six months of the principal course with the releasing provider, unless an exception applies. Check for further amendments and applicable visa settings before acceptance.
Releasing provider is an approved school provider	Apply Standard 7.1.1: the first six months of the student's first registered school-sector course with that provider must have passed, unless a Standard 7.1A exception applies. Escalate school-sector cases for compliance verification.

3.3 The principal course is normally the final course in a visa-linked package. The restriction applies during preceding courses and before commencement of the principal course. Calculate the relevant calendar-month anniversary from actual principal-course commencement; do not count time in an earlier ELICOS or other prerequisite course as time completed in the principal course. Verify study history, approved breaks, current CoEs and PRISMS status and escalate uncertainty before acceptance.

3.4 Completion of a principal course followed by further study is different from transfer out of an unfinished principal course. Check actual completion evidence rather than assuming that a course with a short duration requires a release after successful completion. Do not restart the statutory period arbitrarily for an internal course change; verify any changed principal-course position against current Department guidance and PRISMS records.

3.5 After the applicable restriction has ended, Apex will not require a Standard 7 release as a condition of transferring. Staff will still process withdrawal, fees, refunds and accurate reporting under the relevant procedures. A financial dispute or outstanding fees must not be used to withhold a required release or impose a release charge.

4 Procedures and Service Timeframes

4.1 Students may obtain guidance from the SSO, Admissions or the Academic Manager. Provide the policy and forms through the website, Student Handbook and reception. Explain requirements in an accessible format and assist students who require language or disability support. A written transfer request is required for a restricted provider release; an email containing the necessary information is acceptable and staff may assist the student to prepare it.

4.2 Acknowledge requests within three working days. Assess incoming transfer applications within five working days where the evidence is sufficient; decide outgoing release and internal course-change requests within ten working days of receipt. These are Apex service commitments. Allocate urgent safety, intake and restriction-period cases promptly; provide an earlier response where needed to make the timeframe reasonable.

4.3 If evidence is missing, tell the student promptly what is needed, why it is relevant and when to provide it. Do not restart the receipt date or pause the process indefinitely. If a decision cannot reasonably be made within the stated period, the Academic Manager must explain the specific reason, interim arrangements, revised date and right to complain about delay. Keep the student informed and decide as soon as practicable.

4.4 Assess each request on its merits. Offer support without making acceptance of support or a fixed waiting period a prerequisite for release. The Academic Manager must declare conflicts; the CEO appoints an unconflicted delegate where necessary. Student preference, safety, genuine course suitability, the written agreement and all relevant evidence must inform the decision.

5 Transferring from Another Registered Provider

5.1 Admissions must obtain the student's identity, visa and CoE information, current and previous study history, principal-course commencement and completion information, and relevant transfer evidence. Check CRICOS, registration conditions and PRISMS using authorised access. A cancelled CoE, withdrawal, non-payment or study gap does not by itself remove transfer restrictions.

5.2 Where restriction applies, the Academic Manager must verify at least one of the following Standard 7.1A exceptions: the releasing provider or enrolled course has ceased to be registered; an ESOS-agency sanction prevents continuation of the course at that provider; the releasing provider has granted release, recorded the effective date and reason in PRISMS and complied with its Standard 7.2 policy and process; or a government sponsor has provided written support for the change as being in the student's best interests.

5.3 Do not accept the student for enrolment, issue an operative CoE or allow commencement in breach of Standard 7. A clearly conditional offer may support a release application but does not establish final acceptance. If PRISMS blocks a CoE or evidence conflicts, stop finalisation, escalate to the Academic Manager and resolve the issue through the appropriate official channel; never alter identity, dates or history to bypass a restriction.

5.4 Independently check the proposed course and delivery location are available and appropriately registered, including current course cancellation instruments, sanctions and teach-out limitations. For VET, complete the pre-enrolment skills review including LLN and digital literacy and provide suitability advice under VE-STP03. Identify support and reasonable adjustments under VE-STP06 and VE-STP07. For relevant ELICOS admission, apply VEL-STP02 and applicable ELICOS requirements.

5.5 Offer credit transfer and recognition of prior learning under the relevant procedures. Authenticate AQF certification or VET transcript evidence and establish equivalence before credit is granted. Document decisions, accepted credit, any reduced duration and resulting fees or CoE changes. Provider transfer approval does not itself grant academic credit.

5.6 Once eligibility and admission checks are complete, provide accurate course, cost, support, location and refund information, obtain a compliant written agreement in accordance with National Code Standard 3 and complete the enrolment and CoE process. Explain any conditions not yet fulfilled. Retain the checks, decision and communications in the student file.

5.7 Education agent and commission controls

5.7.1 Admissions must identify prior onshore study and agent involvement. Finance must not give an education agent commission for recruitment of a student who has commenced a course with another registered provider unless an exception under National Code 4.8 is verified. Release or expiry of the restriction does not itself authorise a commission.

5.7.2 The statutory exceptions concern students accepted by Apex on or before 31 March 2026, the specified courses at Apex for which the student's visa was granted, or a new course commencing after completion of the principal course with the other provider. Record the actual acceptance date or other exception evidence. Treat monetary and non-monetary benefits, associate payments and other recruitment-related consideration according to the statutory

definition; relabelling a benefit does not avoid the ban. Refer disputed cases to the CEO and compliance manager before any payment.

6 Transferring to Another Registered Provider

6.1 Lodgement and assessment

6.1.1 A restricted student must submit a written request explaining the proposed transfer, a valid enrolment offer from the receiving registered provider and relevant supporting evidence. The Request for Release Form is available but equivalent written information is accepted. Verify the offer, intended course, provider and proposed commencement date, and assist with accessible evidence arrangements where needed.

6.1.2 If a Standard 7.1A exception applies independently of release, verify and record that exception rather than inventing an additional release requirement. If the restriction has expired, process the student's withdrawal and reporting without a discretionary release test. Do not delay either process pending an agent's consent.

6.2 Grounds for granting release

6.2.1 Apex will grant a restricted transfer where it is in the student's best interests, including but not limited to any of the following assessed circumstances:

6.2.1.1 The student will be reported because satisfactory course progress cannot be achieved at the current level even after engaging with Apex's Standard 8 intervention strategy.

6.2.1.2 Compassionate or compelling circumstances materially affect the student's studies or wellbeing. Examples include serious illness or injury, bereavement, significant disruption in the home country, trauma, or a prerequisite or course-availability problem. Consider the individual circumstances and relevant evidence; this list is not exhaustive.

6.2.1.3 Apex does not deliver the course as set out in the written agreement.

6.2.1.4 Evidence shows the student's reasonable expectations about the current course are not being met.

6.2.1.5 Evidence shows misleading information from Apex or an education or migration agent about Apex or its course has made the course unsuitable for the student's needs or study objectives.

6.2.1.6 An internal or external appeal on another matter produces a decision or recommendation to release the student.

6.2.2 Written support from a government sponsor for a change in the student's best interests is a separate Standard 7.1A exception. Other genuine best-interest circumstances may justify release even without compassionate or compelling circumstances. Record the evidence, reasoning and effective transfer date.

6.3 Grounds for proposed refusal

6.3.1 Apex may intend to refuse where, after a fair assessment and reasonable opportunity to supply relevant evidence, no valid receiving-provider offer has been supplied for a restricted release, or the evidence does not establish that transfer is in the student's best interests and no applicable exception exists. Reasons must explain the individual evidence and circumstances and address any asserted grant ground.

6.3.2 Do not apply automatic refusal because the student recently commenced, has not completed four to six weeks of support, has a course package, owes fees, lacks compassionate circumstances alone or has unsatisfactory progress. Consider whether genuine package, suitability or support risks can be resolved, but do not let those risks override a required best-interest release. A request is not proof of an attempt to evade reporting.

6.3.3 A transfer request does not extinguish any independently established reporting obligation. The Academic Manager must manage any course-progress or attendance matter separately under Standard 8 and its appeal safeguards, including ESOS section 19(2A) where applicable. Neither a transfer nor a refusal authorises premature adverse reporting.

6.4 Granting release and subsequent withdrawal

6.4.1 Release is free of charge. On approval, the authorised PRISMS officer will record the release, date of effect and reason in PRISMS promptly and provide written confirmation to the student with visa advice referral and any separate refund information. A confirmation letter is supplementary evidence; it does not replace the PRISMS release record.

6.4.2 Agree and document the last day of study and withdrawal date. Do not cancel the current CoE merely because a student asked for release or an offer was issued. Record an actual termination or course change separately using the correct PRISMS transaction, event date and legal timeframe. Explain that a release does not itself guarantee admission or a visa outcome.

6.4.3 Calculate any refund under the written agreement, Fees and Refunds Policy, ESOS requirements and Australian Consumer Law. Give the student a separate account of amounts, reasons and refund timing. A refund application is not a prerequisite for considering release; a release fee or withholding release to recover debt is prohibited by this policy.

6.5 Younger students

6.5.1 Check the applicable admission age restrictions before accepting a student. If a transfer involves a student under 18, obtain written parent or legal guardian support. Where the student is not cared for by a parent or suitable nominated relative, obtain receiving-provider confirmation that it accepts responsibility for accommodation, support and general welfare under Standard 5. Where welfare responsibility transfers between providers, agree dates without a gap and explain the student's obligation to maintain approved arrangements until the transfer date. Escalate all such cases to the CEO; do not assume this policy authorises an under-18 enrolment.

7 Transferring to Another Course Offered by Apex

7.1 An internal course change is not a provider release under Standard 7. Students may submit a Change of Course Application or equivalent written request explaining their goals and circumstances. Consider capability, course expectations, career goals, wellbeing, package implications and availability individually; do not use the external-transfer restriction or a blanket support waiting period to decide an internal change.

7.2 Before approval, the Academic Manager must verify entry requirements, pre-enrolment suitability, LLN and digital skills for the new VET product, capacity, required support, course and location registration, licensing conditions and proposed duration. Consider authenticated credit or RPL evidence and advise on fees, credit, remaining training, scheduling, package progression and visa implications. Decline only for explained, evidenced and lawful reasons with review rights.

7.3 Provide revised or new written agreement information and obtain the student's informed acceptance before implementing the new enrolment and taking fees as required by Standard 3. Finance will document fees, transfers of payments and any refunds. Do not guarantee a lower-level course can commence on the existing visa.

7.4 The authorised officer must coordinate the old and new course records and CoEs, accurate end and start dates and the relevant PRISMS variation. An internal change must not be recorded as the student leaving Apex for another provider. A Letter of Release is not required for a successful internal course-change appeal. Preserve valid results and agreed adjustments, and arrange appropriate induction to the new course.

7.5 An internal transfer does not reset an adverse progress record or cancel a lawful reporting obligation. Manage any existing progress, attendance, disciplinary or withdrawal process independently with its own evidence and appeal rights.

8 Visa Information

8.1 Advise every overseas student granted release to contact the Department of Home Affairs to determine whether a new visa is required. Provide the same referral before an internal course change. Direct students to immi.homeaffairs.gov.au and the visa conditions and change-of-study guidance, or an Australian legal practitioner or registered migration agent for individual immigration advice. Staff must not give immigration assistance unless authorised under the Migration Act.

8.2 A provider release or new CoE is not visa approval. Condition 8202 generally requires continued enrolment at the same or a higher AQF level, subject to applicable exceptions. Moving to a lower AQF level or from an AQF course to a non-AQF course may require a new visa to be granted before the change. Verify current DHA guidance and any relevant exception; do not allow commencement contrary to applicable visa conditions.

8.3 Before implementing a transfer, explain the student's obligations to maintain lawful enrolment and comply with study conditions. The Senior Compliance and Risk Manager must review applicable law and guidance before 1 July 2027, including announced visa transfer reforms, and update procedures when operative requirements are confirmed. Announced reforms must not be treated as already commenced law.

9 Complaints and Appeals

9.1 If Apex intends to refuse an external release, notify the student in writing of the reasons and the right to access VE-HRP01 Complaint and Appeal Handling Policy and Procedure within twenty working days of notification. State the appeal deadline, contact route, available assistance and right to a support person. A student may also complain about delay or other handling concerns. Provide equivalent procedural fairness and review rights for an internal transfer decision.

9.2 Commence assessment of a formal complaint or appeal within ten working days and finalise it as soon as practicable. The twenty-working-day period is the opportunity to lodge an appeal, not a mandatory deadline to finish every appeal. Use an impartial reviewer, give the student a fair opportunity to present their case at minimal or no cost, and provide written outcomes and detailed reasons. Keep records and explain delays and expected completion dates.

9.3 Do not finalise a release refusal status in PRISMS until the appeal finds in Apex's favour, the student chooses not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the twenty-working-day period, or the student withdraws from the process. Withdrawal from the course is not the same as withdrawing an appeal. Check and document any active internal or external appeal before finalising refusal; do not assume expiry of twenty days ends an appeal already lodged.

9.4 After an unsuccessful internal review, advise the student within ten working days of the right to external complaints handling and appeals at minimal or no cost and provide the appropriate body's contact details. Overseas VET students at private providers may contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman's overseas student complaints service at ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints, subject to jurisdiction. Provide an appropriate independent review route where Outcome Standard 2.8 applies.

9.5 Immediately implement a favourable internal or external decision or recommendation and advise the student of the action taken. For release this includes the PRISMS release record; for an internal change it includes the correct new-course enrolment process. Maintain appropriate support and protect students against retaliation throughout review. Changes to enrolment or adverse reporting require their separate legal safeguards.

10 Records Management and Reporting

10.1 Retain each release request, evidence, assessment, reasons, correspondence, appeal outcome and PRISMS record for at least two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student. Apply any longer legal, academic-record, financial-record or litigation-hold requirement. Retention is not measured merely from the date the request is decided or the student stops attending.

10.2 Record actual acceptance, principal-course commencement, restriction calculation, exception evidence, decision-maker, dates, last study day, reporting action and any refund or commission checks in the student file and relevant registers. Store sensitive information securely, limit access to authorised roles, use lawful consent or disclosure grounds and provide access and correction rights under VE-HRP06.

10.3 PRISMS release recording and ESOS event reporting are separate tasks. For an actual early termination, apply section 19(1)(d); for a change in course identity or duration, apply section 19(1)(e). Under section 19(1A), the deadline is generally thirty-one calendar days after the event; fourteen calendar days applies to section 19(1)(c) or (d) information for a student under 18. Record changes promptly, with an internal target of five working days after a reportable event and always within the statutory limit. Do not wait for the maximum period routinely.

10.4 Any reportable visa-condition breach under section 19(2) is reported as soon as practicable after applicable National Code safeguards are met; it must not be placed on the routine thirty-one-day timetable. A student ceasing to be accepted does not remove section 19(2A) obligations. Refer uncertainty about an event category, appeal hold or dates to the compliance manager before submission and correct inaccurate entries promptly through authorised processes without concealing the original event.

10.5 Publish this policy before enrolment and maintain current copies for staff and students. The compliance manager will sample transfer decisions and reporting each term, check timeliness and consistent best-interest reasoning, and record corrective actions and effectiveness reviews. Update staff, forms, website and agent instructions when rules change, including the scheduled July 2027 transition.

11 Responsibilities

Role	Required actions
Enrolment Officer and Admissions	Receive and acknowledge requests; assist with forms; verify identity, study history, valid offers, restriction dates, registration and agreement evidence; maintain student records. Do not finalise a restricted enrolment without approval.
Academic Manager	Assess incoming eligibility, outgoing best interests and internal suitability; consider evidence and support; provide reasoned decisions and service updates; coordinate lawful implementation.
Authorised PRISMS officer	Verify approval, effective dates, appeal status and transaction type; record release separately from course variation or termination; retain confirmation and meet reporting deadlines.
SSO and trainers	Provide accessible guidance, support and reasonable adjustments; contribute relevant progress or intervention evidence; maintain student support during applications and review.
Finance	Calculate fees and refunds separately from release decisions; check agent commission restrictions and documented exceptions before benefits are given.
CEO and RTO Manager	Resource and oversee compliance, resolve conflicts and unusual cases, ensure independent review, monitor legal changes and audit records, and control policy approval and release.

12 Definitions

Term	Meaning
Accepted student	A person meeting the ESOS Act definition, including acceptance for enrolment and relevant tuition-fee payment circumstances. Determine the actual legal acceptance date from evidence; an enquiry or unaccepted offer alone is insufficient.
Principal course	The main course for which the visa was granted, usually the final course in a package. Verify against the visa-linked enrolment records.
Restriction period	The applicable Standard 7 period set out in section 3.2. It is not universally six months and is not measured from arrival in Australia.
Provider release	A decision by the releasing provider under Standard 7, recorded with effective date and reason in PRISMS. It is distinct from withdrawal and visa approval.
Internal course transfer	A change between courses offered by the same registered provider, managed through admission, agreements and accurate course variation records.
Credit transfer and RPL	Separate academic recognition processes: credit recognises equivalent prior formal completion; RPL assesses prior skills and knowledge against the training product.
Compassionate or compelling circumstances	Individual circumstances generally beyond the student's control that affect study or wellbeing; assessed using relevant evidence and not limited to the examples in section 6.2.
Working day	A day on which Apex's relevant administrative office operates, excluding weekends and applicable public holidays. Calendar-day reporting deadlines include weekends and public holidays.

13 Related Policies and Documents

VE-HRP01 Complaint and Appeal Handling; VE-HRP06 Privacy and Personal Information; VE-STP03 Entry Requirements; VE-STP06 Student Support Services; VE-STP07 Access Equity and Anti-Discrimination; VEL-STP02 Admission to Enrolment where applicable; course progress and attendance policies; Fees and Refunds; credit transfer and RPL; education agent policy and agreements; course withdrawal and cancellation procedures; records management and continuous improvement.

Operational records include the Request for Release, Change of Course Application, valid receiving offer, written agreements, PRISMS release and course-variation evidence, decision and appeal notices, support evidence, refund calculation and commission-exception checks. A supplementary release confirmation letter must not substitute for an electronic release.

14 Relevant Legislation and Authoritative Sources

Framework	Relevant application
ESOS Act 2000 and Regulations 2019	Registration and truthful information; sections 19 and 21 reporting and records; education-agent and commission definitions; applicable student and provider default, refund and notification obligations.
National Code 2018 as amended	Standards 2–3 admission and agreements; 4.7–4.8 commission ban and exceptions; 5 and 7.3 younger students; 6 support; 7.1–7.7 transfer restriction, release, appeals and retention; 8–10 progress, enrolment and complaints safeguards. Apply F2026L00033 and F2026L01351 amendments.

Framework	Relevant application
2025 RTO Standards and NVETR Act 2011	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 and National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025. Relevant outcomes include 1.6–1.7 academic recognition, 2.1–2.4 information, suitability and support, 2.7–2.8 complaints and appeals and 4.1–4.4 governance.
Migration Act 1958 and Migration Regulations 1994	Student visa conditions, including condition 8202, and restrictions on unauthorised immigration assistance. Refer individual visa questions to DHA or an authorised adviser.
Privacy and equality	Privacy Act 1988 and APPs; applicable NSW and Victorian health-records laws; Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Disability Standards for Education 2005 and applicable anti-discrimination laws for fair and accessible services.
Australian Consumer Law	Competition and Consumer Act 2010 Schedule 2: accurate representations, consumer guarantees and unfair contract terms. Agreement terms do not displace mandatory ESOS or consumer rights.

Official reference links

Federal Register of Legislation — National Code: legislation.gov.au/F2017L01182/latest/text; transfer amendment: legislation.gov.au/F2026L01351/asmade/text; ESOS Act: legislation.gov.au/C2004A00757/latest/text.

Department of Education — education.gov.au/esos-framework/changes-legislative-framework-overseas-students; provider transfer extension factsheet dated 2 October 2026; onshore transfer commission factsheet updated 26 August 2026.

ASQA — asqa.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news/extension-overseas-student-transfer-restriction-period-12-months; 2025 Standards practice guides on information, recognition of prior learning and credit transfer, support, complaints and appeals.

DHA — immi.homeaffairs.gov.au: current student visa conditions and change-of-study guidance. Use current PRISMS user guidance for the relevant transaction; escalate system issues through official support.

Commonwealth Ombudsman — ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints.

15 Document Control

Control	Details
Document name	Course Transfer Policy and Procedure
Document code	VE-STP08
Version and scheduled cycle	10.1 — February 2026 review cycle, superseding 10.0
Department	Admissions
Approval authority	CEO
Approval and implementation record	Record actual CEO approval and implementation dates in the controlled register before release. The February 2026 cycle is not an assertion of retrospective approval.
Next scheduled review	February 2028, with mandatory earlier legal-change review before 1 July 2027 and whenever relevant requirements change.
Organisation	Apex Australia Vocational Education
Document controller	RTO Manager

Revision History

Version	Date or cycle	Summary	Review due
1.0	August 2020	New document.	August 2022
9.2	August 2022	Information reviewed and updated.	August 2024
10.0	February 2024	Reformatted; legislation links and controls updated.	February 2026
10.1	October 2026	Substantive review including the law commencing 2 October 2026. Actual approval recorded separately.	February 2028