**OVERSEAS STUDENTS:**

**FEE WAIVER GUIDELINES**

**CRICOS REGISTRATION 00643J (00099/1)**

***Background***

* The ACT Education Directorate (Directorate) charges tuition fees to holders of temporary visas on a cost recovery basis calculated on the actual cost of educating a student in an ACT public school for one year in the preschool, primary, high or college sectors. These fees are biennially confirmed by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development (Minister).

***Fee Waiver Context***

* On application and under financial hardship or on humanitarian grounds (including significant adverse change in circumstances after visa grant) the Minister, or delegate, may determine that tuition fees be waived, on a case by case assessment. Scenarios include:
	+ If the payment of tuition fees would restrict the ability of the temporary resident to provide basic necessities (ie food, accommodation, clothing, medical) for self and dependants;
	+ compassionate reasons (eg medical diagnosis requiring surgery and extended recuperation) validated by supporting documentation.
* A waiver is for a nominated period. If an extension is sought, then a new application is necessary and is considered on its merits at the time of submission.
* Fee waivers are not applicable for overseas students holding visa subclass 500 (school sector).

***Application Assessment***

* Fee waiver applications should be lodged in writing to the International Education Unit (IEU), via ieu@act.gov.au, by the individual or their advocate (such as a community support organisation).
* Clarification as to eligibility or process is available by contacting IEU staff on phone 6205 9178.
* Supporting documentation is required to evidence current financial status and/or challenging humanitarian circumstances. As relevant to specific individual contexts, evidence may relate to:
	+ assets such as salary, bank account balances, investments, scholarships;
	+ liabilities such as rent, mortgage, utilities, phone, groceries, health cover, car expenses;
	+ medical certification.
* Submission of false or misleading information may lead to cancelation of enrolment of the dependant of a temporary resident and legal action to recover tuition fees otherwise payable.
* Applications will be resolved within 28 working days of receipt, noting this timeline may be impacted by operational matters and/or delay in the applicant lodging appropriate evidence.

***Application Determination***

* Based on evidence provided by the applicant, the IEU makes a recommendation to the Minister, or delegate, who confirms or rejects a fee waiver.
* The IEU team advises the applicant in writing of the decision, including stating date and duration of any approved fee waiver. If tuition has already been paid, in full or part, for the nominated waiver period then a refund is processed.
* If the applicant is unsuccessful in seeking a waiver, a payment plan is offered to ease financial pressure and may be negotiated on a semester or a term basis.
* The IEU reserves the right to seek economic modelling advice to identify and enact options for greater equity in determining tuition fees liability for dependants of temporary residents.