



ACCET Document 31.1.ESOL – Cancellation and Refund Policy Checklist

Institution Name:

City/State:

ACCET ID:

Date of Review:

Name of Team Reviewer:

Cancellation and tuition refund policies comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations and ACCET policies. Written policies covering cancellation and refund policies pertaining to cancellations, withdrawals, and terminations are clearly stated to prospective students before enrollment, consistently followed, and publicly available. For definitions of terms referenced in this policy (e.g., cancellation, withdrawal, and termination) refer to the definitions section at the end of this document.

ACCET-accredited institutions seek to promote goodwill using explicitly stated, fair, and equitable cancellation and refund practices pertaining to cancellations, withdrawals, and terminations that take into consideration:

1. The legitimate reasons why an applicant or student may not be able to either start or complete the training; and
2. The reasonable expenses incurred by the institution.

General Requirements

1. ☐ An institution must have an equitable, clearly defined, and uniformly administered cancellation and refund policy for cancellations, withdrawals, and terminations.
2. ☐ The requirements established in this policy are the minimum acceptable standards for making refunds. Many institutions incorporate more generous policies and procedures, which the Commission encourages.
3. ☐ If the institution is required to be licensed by the state, and the state mandates a cancellation and refund policy, the institution must demonstrate compliance with that policy as well as with any unique requirements of ACCET's policy. The institution must compare the state's policy with ACCET's in each instance of cancellation or withdrawal and follow the policy that is more lenient towards the student. The written refund policies of the state and ACCET must be provided to students in the enrollment agreement, along with notification that a comparison will be made and that the policy most beneficial to the student will be used.¹

¹ If the institution can demonstrate through a systematic written analysis, including side-by-side comparisons, that either the state policy or ACCET's policy is always more lenient towards students, the institution must follow the more lenient policy but is not required to calculate refunds based on both policies for each student who cancels, withdraws, or is terminated. The institution may publish and implement its own policy based on the refund policies of the state and ACCET, if permissible by the state, which always provides the student with at minimum the most beneficial refund under

4. ☐ An institution must provide (in English) a prospective student with enrollment/application documents that include the cancellation and refund policy and all program costs, including tuition, fees, and any other costs. Students must verify and attest that they understand the content. Additionally, the institution's enrollment documents (including enrollment agreements and catalogs, as applicable) are to be provided in a language students understand. If these enrollment documents are not translated into their native language, students must sign an attestation that they were provided the enrollment documents and given ample opportunity to review and understand the terms and conditions of enrollment, including the institution's refund policy, prior to signing the enrollment documents.
5. ☐ An institution may request, but not require, students to submit a written notification of withdrawal for administrative purposes unless written notice is mandated by federal or state law. It is noted that the Student Exchange Visitor's Program (SEVP) does not explicitly require written notification of cancellation or withdrawal.
6. ☐ An institution must not impose barriers to cancellations, withdrawals, or refunds due to or on behalf of students, including requirements for (a) advance notification of cancellation or withdrawal; (b) written notice of cancellation or withdrawal unless required by federal or state law; (c) a written request for a refund; and/or (d) a cancellation or withdrawal fee. Further, an institution may not deny refunds to or on behalf of students who are terminated due to violation of the institution's written disciplinary and/or attendance policies or local, state, or federal law.
7. ☐ If no notice of withdrawal (written or verbal) is provided, an institution must automatically administratively withdraw a student who has been absent for a maximum of 30 consecutive calendar days (excluding any scheduled breaks of the institution) and complete a refund calculation, processing any refunds to or on behalf of the student.
8. ☐ An institution that enrolls students for multiple terms of study that exceed 12 months must not bill for a period in excess of 12-month increments.
9. ☐ An institution must treat students fairly and equitably relative to tuition, other charges, and refunds. Tuition discounts may be offered, on a limited basis, to students, provided that (a) all students meeting the eligibility criteria are given the tuition discount and (b) there is a fair, equitable, and reasonable rationale for the tuition discount. This includes but is not limited to discounts for multiple term/session enrollments, full tuition payment by or on behalf of the student for a period not to exceed 12 months, a specific program offered at a specific time of year, and/or promotions to increase student diversity. An institution may not offer targeted tuition discounts and financial incentives to induce students from specific competing institutions to transfer. Note that refunds made to or on behalf of students with tuition discounts must be based on the discounted tuition charged, except when students with multiple term/session discounts fail to attend multiple terms/sessions.

the two policies. In this situation, the institution must demonstrate through a systematic written analysis, including side-by-side comparisons, that its policy provides students with a refund that is at least as beneficial as the refund provided under both the policy of the state and ACCET. Institutions that wish to do this should contact the ACCET office for guidance regarding this analysis.

10. ☐ An institution must complete and document refund calculations for each student who cancels, withdraws, or is terminated from training. This documentation must be sufficient to demonstrate that refunds are timely and accurate, including but not limited to:
 - a. ☐ Last Date of Attendance (LDA)
 - b. ☐ Date of Determination (DOD)
 - c. ☐ Charges to the student
 - d. ☐ Total amount paid
 - e. ☐ Weeks earned and resulting percentage of program completed
 - f. ☐ Calculation of refund
11. ☐ If the institution utilizes an authorized overseas agent for recruiting students, the institution must inform the student of its relationship with the agent and how that relationship will affect the ability of the student to obtain a refund. In addition, the institution must document that the refund has been made on behalf of the student to the agent.

Refund Due Dates

1. ☐ If an applicant never attends class (no-show) or cancels the enrollment prior to the class start date, all refunds due must be made within 45 calendar days of the first scheduled day of class or the date of cancellation, whichever is earlier.
2. ☐ For an enrolled student, the refund due must be calculated using the LDA and be paid within 45 calendar days from the DOD. The DOD is (a) the date the student gives notice of withdrawal to the institution; (b) the date the institution administratively withdraws the student, as identified under #7 above; or (c) the date the institution terminates the student due to the student's failure to adhere to the institution's attendance, conduct, or student progress policy. If a student provides advance notice of withdrawal, such that the 45-day window ends before the LDA, the refund must be paid within 45 calendar days from the LDA.

Charges Other Than Tuition

1. ☐ All extra costs, such as books, supplies, equipment, laboratory fees, rentals, and any similar charges not included in the tuition, must be clearly stated in the enrollment/application documents. Non-refundable charges must be explicitly itemized on the enrollment/application documents. Charges that are non-refundable are limited to those materials that are distributed and attributable to the portion of the program attended by the student and to fees for services used by the student.
2. ☐ If applicable, students are bound by the terms as defined in any student housing agreements.

Cancellations

1. ☐ *Rejection of Applicant:* If an applicant is rejected for enrollment by an institution, or if a prospective student's visa application is rejected, a full refund of all monies paid will be made to the applicant, less a maximum of \$500 non-refundable charges if such charges are clearly itemized in the enrollment agreement as non-refundable.

2. ☐ *Program Cancellation*: If an institution cancels a program subsequent to a student's enrollment, the institution will refund all monies paid by the student.
3. ☐ *Cancellation Prior to the Start of Class or No Show*: Except under the circumstance identified in #4 below, if an applicant accepted by the institution cancels prior to the start of scheduled classes or never attends class (no show), the institution will refund all monies paid, less any actual housing costs incurred by the institution and a maximum total of \$500 identified non-refundable charges including any application/registration fee, courier fees, and travel cancellation insurance if such charges are clearly itemized in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable.
4. ☐ *Cancellation Prior to the Start of Class or No Show (Initial I-20)*: If an applicant accepted by the institution enters the United States on an I-20 obtained through the institution and subsequently cancels prior to the start of scheduled classes or never attends class (no shows), the institution may retain:
 - a. For an enrollment period of fewer than 12 weeks, all the tuition charges for up to four weeks of the first term/session, actual housing costs incurred by the institution, and a maximum total of \$500 for non-refundable charges, including any application/registration fees, courier fees, and travel cancellation insurance, if such charges are clearly itemized in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable.
 - b. For an enrollment period of 12 weeks or more, all the tuition charges for up to six weeks of the first term/session, any actual housing costs incurred by the institution, and a maximum total of \$500 for non-refundable charges, including any application/registration fee, courier fees, and travel cancellation insurance, if such charges are clearly itemized in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable.
5. ☐ *Cancellation Prior to the Start of Class or No Show (Change of Status)*: If an applicant receives approval for a change of visa status with an I-20 issued by the institution and subsequently cancels prior to the start of scheduled classes or never attends class (no shows), the institution may retain:
 - a. For an enrollment period of fewer than 12 weeks, all the tuition charges for up to four weeks of the first term/session, actual housing costs incurred by the institution, and a maximum total of \$500 for non-refundable charges, including any application/registration fees, courier fees, and travel cancellation insurance, if such charges are clearly itemized in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable.
 - b. For an enrollment period of 12 weeks or more, all the tuition charges for up to six weeks of the first term/session, any actual housing costs incurred by the institution, and a maximum total of \$500 for non-refundable charges, including any application/registration fee, courier fees, and travel cancellation insurance, if such charges are clearly itemized in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable.

Withdrawal or Termination after Start of Class

1. ☐ Refund amounts must be based on a student's LDA. When determining the number of weeks completed by the student, the institution may consider a partial week the same as if a whole week were completed, provided the student was present at least one day during the scheduled week.
2. ☐ *First Period of Financial Obligation:* For students whose LDA occurs at any point in the first four weeks of their initial period of financial obligation, the institution may retain the charges applicable to the first four weeks. For students whose LDA occurs after the first four weeks but before or at the mid-point of their period of financial obligation, the institution may retain a prorated amount of tuition. For students whose LDA occurs after the midpoint, the institution may retain all of the charges for that period. Any tuition paid for the balance of the program must be refunded in full.
3. ☐ *Subsequent Periods of Financial Obligation or Enrollment Periods:* For students who have completed the first period of financial obligation or extended their enrollment at the institution but whose LDA occurs before or at the midpoint of any subsequent period of financial obligation, the institution may retain a prorated amount of tuition for that period. For students whose LDA occurs after the midpoint of any subsequent period of financial obligation, the institution may retain all of the tuition for that period. Any tuition paid for the balance of the program must be refunded in full.

Definitions

Cancellation: A student who never attends classes at the institution after enrolling and informs the institution in advance.

No Show: A student who never attends class at the institution after enrolling and does not inform the institution. Note that the ACCET policy treats no-shows the same as cancellations.

Withdrawal: A student who has attended at least one class at the institution but does not complete the program.

Termination: A type of withdrawal initiated by the institution due to failure of the student to meet one or more institutional policy.

Date of Determination: The date (1) the student gives notice of withdrawal to the institution, (2) the institution administratively withdraws the student, as identified under #7 above; or (3) the date the institution terminates the student due to the student's failure to adhere to the institution's attendance, conduct, or student progress policy.

Last Date of Attendance: The final date the student attends class.

Period of Financial Obligation: The training period for which a student is legally obligated to pay (e.g., month, term, or session), which may be less than the total period of enrollment, if tuition is charged in smaller increments, such as by the month, term, and/or session. Under no circumstance may a period of financial obligation exceed a 12-month period.