



# Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships

## Exemption Policy

### 1. Purpose

The Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships (CTS) Program Exemption Policy articulates the policy defining the exemption from obligations in the Scholarship Agreement which *may* be granted by the Department of Education (the Department) to individuals in receipt of a Commonwealth Teaching Scholarship. Requests will be considered for exemptions during both stages of the CTS Program:

- during the period of undertaking an accredited initial teacher education (ITE) program
- during the 10-year period in which a CTS recipient is required to complete the commitment to teach obligation (CTT).

Exemption requests submitted outside of the ITE or CTT timeframes will not be considered.

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the CTS Grant Opportunity Guidelines (Scholarship Guidelines) and the terms of the Scholarship Agreement, available on the [Scholarships website](#).

An approved exemption will remove the recipient from the CTS Program with no obligation to repay any amount of the scholarship payments received. Exemptions **may** be granted where there are proven extenuating circumstances which cause a CTS recipient to:

- withdraw from an ITE program
- significantly delay their ITE course completion (e.g. reduce study load, deferral of more than 12 months)
- fail to meet the requirements of a teacher (e.g. registration)
- withdraw from teaching employment
- fail to complete the CTT in full
- anticipate failure to complete CTT within the required timeframe.

The Department will not grant an exemption where the withdrawal, delay or failure arises due to criminal activity/conviction.

## 2. Background

Sections 3 and 5 of the Scholarship Guidelines outline withdrawal from the program during ITE and the CTT.

## 3. Exemption Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for an exemption, individuals must be a CTS recipient either in the scholarship funding period or within the 10-year period to complete the CTT, as set out in the individual's Scholarship Agreement.

The Department may grant an exemption where the request is based on the following extenuating circumstances if they significantly impact a CTS recipient's ability to fulfill their obligations under the Scholarship Agreement (noting this list is not exhaustive):

- Medical: e.g. significant physical or mental illness/injury; significant exacerbation of existing condition
- Hardship: e.g. victim of significant crime including family and domestic violence; financial hardship; sudden, unavoidable primary caring responsibilities
- Compassionate: e.g. death/sudden serious illness of immediate family member
- Demonstrated inability to obtain eligible employment
- Death of the CTS recipient (evidence to be provided by next of kin).

The Department will not grant an exemption where the request is based on the following circumstances (noting this list is not exhaustive):

- Criminal conviction which prevents a CTS recipient from completing their ITE program, meeting registration requirements or gaining employment
- Withdrawal due to change of mind
- Inadequate time management
- Personal travel plans unrelated to an extenuating circumstance.

## 4. Seeking an Exemption

If a CTS recipient considers they may be eligible for an exemption they must request the Exemption Request Form in writing by emailing the CTS recipient email address. The CTS recipient must complete the online form and include all required supporting evidence.

Submitting an exemption request **does not guarantee an exemption** will be granted. **All requests for consideration of an exemption** must include:

- Full name of recipient
- CTS ID
- Email address
- Reason for request

- Relevant evidence to fully support and prove the extenuating circumstances for the exemption request
- Evidence specified for the relevant request type (see below).

**Exemption (ITE withdrawal) requests** must also include evidence of an approved withdrawal (or significant deferral) notice or enrolment advice indicating reduced study load from the higher education provider.

**Exemption (during CTT period) requests** must also include, where required:

- adequate evidence to demonstrate inability to gain relevant Teacher Registration or;
- adequate evidence of attempts to complete the CTT in the provided time and/or;
- adequate evidence to indicate official withdrawal from teaching employment.

## 5. Consideration of Exemption and Decision

The Department will consider the request for an exemption, as submitted in the Exemption form, to determine if the exemption can be granted. If additional evidence is requested, the CTS recipient will have 14 days to respond with supplementary evidence. Should additional time be required to obtain evidence, the CTS recipient must request additional time in writing before the 14 days has been reached.

CTS recipients will generally be advised of the decision outcome in writing within 30 days of the initial request or where additional evidence is required, within 30 days of the receipt of supplementary evidence.

## 6. Outcome of Exemption Decision

If an exemption is approved and applied, the CTS recipient will be advised of the withdrawal from the CTS Program and the Scholarship Agreement between the Department and the CTS recipient will be terminated.

If an exemption is rejected, the recipient will be advised of the outcome in writing. An invoice will be issued for the scholarship funding owed and the recipient will be withdrawn from the CTS Program.

There is no appeal mechanism in relation to any exemption decision.

## 7. Complaints

Any complaint about a decision made by the Department will be handled in accordance with the Department's Complaints Procedures outlined in the Complaints Handling Policy available on the [Scholarships website](#).