



CLOSURE OF SPARK ACADEMY

Information for current or intending international students

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has been informed that Spark Academy ceased to teach students on January 11, 2010.

DEEWR has arranged a meeting for international students affected by this closure to advise you of what steps are being taken to help you continue your studies as quickly as possible. Please pass on the details of this meeting to all your classmates to ensure everyone gets the message.

When: Thursday 14 January 2010

Time: 10 AM

**Place: Albert Room, The Chifley at Lennox
66 Queen Street Mall
Brisbane QLD 4000**

The Australian Government has in place comprehensive arrangements to ensure that your interests are safeguarded. Key elements include the tuition assurance scheme and the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Assurance Fund.

- Spark Academy is a member of the tuition assurance scheme managed by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). ACPET is now required to offer you a suitable alternative course. Under this arrangement you will not be required to pay extra money if you have already paid money in advance to Spark Academy.
- The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is overseeing this process.
- If ACPET is unable to place you in a suitable alternative course then the ESOS Assurance Fund may offer you a place in a suitable alternative course. If the Assurance Fund is unable to place you in a suitable alternative course you may be eligible for a refund.

You do not need to enrol yourself in another course at this time. Arrangements are being made to ensure you can continue your studies with minimal disruption.

You should keep all records concerning your enrolment at Spark Academy including receipts and academic records.

For further assistance please contact ACPET on spark@acpet.edu.au

For further information please check the website www.aei.gov.au/ESOS for updates or call the ESOS Helpline on 1300 363 079.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

International Students enrolled at Spark Academy

Q. What happens next?

- A.** The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has activated the ACPET tuition assurance scheme to arrange a placement for you in a suitable alternative course. Please attend the meeting organised by DEEWR for Spark Academy's international students on Thursday 14 January 2010. At the meeting we will be advising you of all the steps that are being taken to help you continue your studies as quickly as possible and you will also be requested to complete a relocation form for ACPET.

Q. I am not able to go to the student meeting. What should I do?

- A.** Keep all records regarding your enrolment at the Academy. Check the website for information updates www.aei.gov.au/ESOS or call the ESOS Helpline on 1300 363 079. Contact ACPET at spark@acpet.edu.au

Q. Will I be enrolled with another education provider?

- A.** DEEWR has asked the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) to offer each student a place in a suitable alternative course with another provider. You should not have to pay any extra money to this provider if you paid money in advance to your school.

You must keep all official records of your academic progress and official receipts for all fees you have paid to your school. These might be useful later to establish your entitlements.

Q. What will happen with my visa?

- A.** The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) appreciates that students are not responsible for the college closing and further visa information for students is available on the DIAC website at: www.immi.gov.au/students/education-providers-approval.htm

If you have questions about your visa, please contact DIAC as soon as possible. If students are in Australia they can contact DIAC on 131 881. If students are outside Australia, a list of immigration offices is available at: www.immi.gov.au/contacts/overseas/index.htm

Q. What if I have to stay longer in Australia to complete my qualification – will my student visa be extended?

- A.** Please check your student visa's expiry date. If you require further time to finish your new course in Australia you must apply for a further student visa before your visa expires.

You can either check your visa label for your visa expiry date or use the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) service at www.immi.gov.au/e visa/vevo.htm

Q. Can I enrol in a new college?

A. It is very important that you give your tuition assurance scheme the opportunity to find you a placement in a suitable alternative course. Under the TAS placement arrangements you should not be required to pay any additional amount to undertake a portion of the new provider's course for which you have already paid money in advance to your institution.

Q. I cancelled my course before 11 January 2010. Am I entitled to a refund of my course fee?

A. Students who withdrew from their course while the course was being provided are cases of "student default". This means you are only entitled to the amount of refund stated in the written agreement you signed with the college. You will need to check the provisions of your written agreement. If you are entitled to a refund under the written agreement which the Academy has not paid to you, you may be referred to the ESOS Assurance Fund for assessment of your claim.

If you cancelled your course before 11 January 2010, you may have rights under Australian consumer protection law to a refund or compensation from Spark Academy. The Department cannot advise you on these rights. To obtain further information see details under Important Contacts.

Q. I enrolled myself in another course with another school or college before the ACPET TAS offered me another course. Do I have to accept the offer made by the TAS?

A. No. If you have a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) with another school or college you do not have to accept the ACPET offer. However, it is important that you keep your official records of your academic progress and official receipts for all fees you have paid to the college. These might be useful later on in establishing your refund entitlements, if any.

You must notify ACPET if you are declining their offer.

If you enrol in a new college, remember that you will be entering into a new written agreement. Please make sure that you are aware of the provisions in your new agreement.

Q. My visa has been refused by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. What should I do?

A. Please email esosmailbox@deewr.gov.au and attach a copy of your visa refusal letter and copies of receipts for all course money paid to the Academy. A DEEWR officer will respond to you as soon as possible.

Q. I have paid money to the Academy for my course but I have not yet left for Australia. What happens to me.

A. If you have paid a deposit to Spark Academy before the college closed you may be entitled to be considered for assistance under the Australian Government's consumer protection framework. You will be contacted shortly with details of the options which may be open to you under these arrangements and we urge you to check back regularly at the ESOS website for updated information.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

- For information regarding your consumer protection entitlements, visit Australian Education International: www.aei.gov.au/ESOS or phone the ESOS Helpline on 1300 363 079.
- For visa information, visit www.immi.gov.au/students/education-providers-approval.htm or phone 131 881 in Australia; or
- For students located outside Australia, contact details are available on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's website at www.immi.gov.au/contacts/overseas/index.htm
- For ACPET TAS questions, contact Spark@acpet.edu.au
- If you cancelled your course before 11 January 2010, or are not an overseas student, and have questions about consumer protection law:

- For questions about Queensland state law, contact the Office of Fair Trading Queensland on 13 13 04 (Monday to Friday 8 am to 6 pm). Further contact details are available on their website:

<http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/contact-us.htm>

- For questions about Commonwealth Consumer Protection Law contact the Australian, Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC):

ACCC Infocentre: 1300 302 502

Translating and Interpreting Service for information in languages other than English: call 131 450 and ask for 1300 302 502

<http://www.accc.gov.au/>