

Overseas Student Support Services Policy

1 PURPOSE

This policy aims to provide a framework for supporting students in adjusting to study and life in Australia, to achieve their learning goals and to maintain satisfactory progress towards meeting all learning outcomes.

This policy outlines support services available to overseas students, how students may access support, and how this information is disseminated.

This policy has been developed to satisfy the requirements of The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, known as 'the National Code 2018' Standard 6.

2 SCOPE

All students who study at FIT Education will be provided appropriate support from Student Support Officers in relation to study, academic issues, accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements. Overseas students and staff will be given information and advice pertaining to their personal safety and security.

3 DEFINITIONS

Student contact officer	The National Code 2018 Standard 6.5 requires the provider to have a designated member of staff to be the official point of contact for students.
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4 POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Students will be provided with contact details referring them to relevant professionals in the instance that they require assistance outside the scope of student services. Any referrals are conducted at no cost to the student, however there may be fees and charges involved where an external service is used by the student. This should be clarified with the student prior to using external services. The following student support services are available and accessible for all overseas students studying with FIT Education:

- transition to life and study in a new environment
- legal services
- emergency and health services
- facilities and resources
- complaints and appeals processes; and
- student visa issues relating to course progress and/or attendance as appropriate
- working and employment rights and conditions

4.2 ORIENTATION

A culturally sensitive and age appropriate orientation will be undertaken, in support of assisting students (and their families) to adjust to living in Australia, commencing their study and achieving the academic progress. All information will be provided without cost to the student.

The orientation programme will be accessible to all overseas students and will allow for late arrivals and students who begin at different entry points. (Refer to: Overseas Student Orientation Policy CRICOS)

Information provided on orientation should be included in, and not conflicting with the student handbooks and website

The orientation will cover information regarding studying in Australia, such as the following:

- support services available to assist in the transition into life and study in Australia
- legal services
- information on visa conditions relating to course progress and, if applicable, attendance
- emergency and health services i.e. police, hospitals, fire, ambulance
- English language and study assistance programs
- personal and crisis support services available and how to access them
- information on employment rights and conditions, resolving workplace issues and services available such as the Fair Work Ombudsman
- key points and information on housing and accommodation with regulators contact information
- Australian currency, banking and shopping
- Personal security and safety

The orientation will also cover information about the RTO such as

- a comprehensive student handbook
- outline of facilities and resources
- relevant course information
- requirements for course attendance and progress, as appropriate
- important dates such as term/study period/semester, breaks and public holiday dates
- complaints and appeals processes
- information on mediation and or Overseas Students Ombudsman
- critical Incidents and how they are handled
- reinforcing the RTO expectations on behaviour and academic progress

4.3 INTRODUCING STUDENT SUPPORT

Engaging students through an orientation day within the first week of their study period will assist a smooth transition into study at FIT Education. The orientation session will include key points of the Student Support Program and role of the SSO, such as:

- Who is the Student Support Officer / Student Contact Officer?
- When are they available?
- Contact details

4.4 PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Assistance shall be provided to all students, regardless of a student's place of study, to access study support and welfare-related services, both at orientation and throughout their time as a student of FIT Education.

4.4.1 FIT Education provides free services designed to assist students to achieve academic progress, with sufficient student support personnel to meet the needs of the overseas students enrolled.

4.4.2 Electronic methods of disseminating such information include FIT Education website, emails, SMS and pod casts.

- 4.4.3 Written formats methods of disseminating such information include the student handbook, noticeboard and newsletters,
- 4.4.4 Students have the right to privacy and as such all staff, policies and practices must consciously safeguard the student's privacy and confidentiality in order to satisfy the Privacy Act.
- 4.4.5 Student Support staff are engaged to provide such assistance, with at least one designated member of staff to be appointed as Student Contact Officer. The Student Support Officer must have access to the most up-to-date information regarding support services.
- 4.4.6 FIT Education has comprehensive Critical Incident policies and procedures to support students in times of need. These policies and procedures contain immediate, during, after and post CI event, (6.8)
- 4.4.7 FIT Education has dedicated staff as points of contact on all issues pertaining to a student's academic progress, living in the community and social concerns.
- 4.4.8 FIT Education is committed to ensure that its Student Support Officer and all staff members who interact with overseas students are well informed and up to date with the ESOS framework and have an understanding of that framework, including FIT Education's obligations and their implications (6.7)
- 4.4.9 All modes of study and learning needs will be catered for to facilitate access to and the provision of student support services, such as students undertaking practical or industry work placements, or online units of study.

4.5 SAFETY AND PERSONAL SECURITY

FIT Education is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure a safe, secure and beneficial environment is maintained for overseas students, both on campus and at practical or industry work placements.

- 4.5.1 Advice on possible actions taken to enhance safety and personal security will be given at orientation and in the student and staff handbooks.
- 4.5.2 Personal security and safety information will be provided and readily available at all times to both students and staff.
- 4.5.3 Detailed information will be provided to all overseas students about how to seek assistance for and report any incidents which may significantly impact on their wellbeing, (including critical incidents).
- 4.5.4 FIT Education will provide overseas students with general information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia, or refer them to such information as appropriate (including electronically).

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1.1 It is the responsibility of the Student Support Officer to respond to student enquiries and the Course Co-ordinator to be a first contact for students. Where student enquiries or needs are beyond the scope of training, knowledge or experience of the Student Support Officer they must seek advice from the CEO.
- 5.1.2 The CEO will be responsible for initiating the Critical Incident procedures if they have deemed it a Critical Incident.

- 5.1.3 The Administration Co-ordinator will maintain a written record of all critical incident and remedial action taken by the registered provider for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.
- 5.1.4 The Administration Co-ordinator will update student management system for each enquiry and all documentation is to be filed in the students file.
- 5.1.5 The Administration Co-ordinator will ensure that all written responses to student enquiries are generated from the Student Management System so that a contact log and a copy of the information sent is retained by FIT Education.
- 5.1.6 The CEO is responsible for briefing all staff of obligations under the ESOS Framework and National Code Standards and the implications of these for students.
- 5.1.7 The Student Support Officer will be responsible for the oversight and management of student welfare support services.
- 5.1.8 The CEO will have overall responsibility for this policy and the procedures.
- 5.1.9 It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that all staff members who interact directly with overseas students are aware of the ESOS framework, in particular the providers' obligations under the ESOS framework.

5.2 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students shall be made aware of the following responsibilities at orientation and in their student handbook:

- Overseas students on a student VISA have responsibilities to satisfy their visa conditions
- Overseas students must advise FIT Education of any changes in their Australian and/or country of origin addresses and phone numbers within 7 days
- Visa and health insurance renewal is the compulsory responsibility of the student. All overseas students must ensure that they maintain a valid visa and health insurance (OHSC) as a condition of their visa

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000
- *The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, known as 'the National Code 2018' Standard 6
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015– 1, 4, 5

7 RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS

- Younger Overseas Student Policy
- Complaints & Appeals Policy
- Complaints & Appeals Procedure
- Critical Incident Policy
- Critical Incident Procedure
- Critical Incident Form
- Overseas Student Orientation Policy
- Overseas Student Orientation Checklist