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# COURSE PROGRESS, ATTENDANCE AND INTERVENTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify Sydney Metropolitan International College's approach to recording and monitoring student attendance, course progress and intervention in compliance with Standards 8 and 11 of the National Code 2018 and student visa requirements. The policy and procedure document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Support Officer Policy and Procedure.

## 2. Policy

Sydney Metropolitan International College seeks to ensure that students can complete their course within the duration specified on their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and that timely interventions are implemented for students at risk of failing to meet course progress requirements as per Standard 8 of the National Code 2018. Students who do not make satisfactory course progress will be at risk of being reported to Department of Home Affairs through PRISMS. This document outlines appropriate intervention strategies to be employed by SMIC.

In addition, Standard 11 of the National Code 2018 requires a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week for overseas students. Sydney Metropolitan International College implements and monitors course attendance as part of its course progress requirements.

Students coming to Australia to undertake a vocational education qualification are granted entry on a student visa. One of the conditions of the student visa is that the student shows satisfactory course progress. An additional condition of the student visa is that a student needs to maintain a satisfactory attendance record. Course attendance and participation is monitored as part of the monitoring of course progress.

Sydney Metropolitan International College will:

- a. systematically monitor and assess course progress of all students.
- b. monitor attendance as one of the key indicators in determining the successful course progression of an overseas student
- c. be proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet course progress requirements
- d. support students who are at risk of meeting course progress requirements by implementing appropriate intervention strategies
- e. report students (on student visas) to the Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs and DHA (via PRISMS) who have breached the course progress requirements.
- f. provide this policy to students and staff

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all Sydney Metropolitan International College overseas students studying onshore at Sydney Metropolitan International College campus/es. An overseas student is a student studying in a CRICOS registered course at Sydney Metropolitan International College on a student visa (subclass 500).

All overseas students are required to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy to ensure they are aware of the Sydney Metropolitan International College's policy and procedure on attendance and course progress.

#### **4. Responsibility**

The Director of Studies is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and to ensure that staff and students are aware of its application and that staff implement its requirements.

The Director of Studies is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions, hearing appeals relating to intention to report visa breach decisions and making appeals decisions.

The Director of Studies and CEO are responsible for reporting visa breaches via PRISMS.

Administration staff have the direct responsibility for reviewing and identifying the attendance and course progress of overseas students, including any follow up required based on that review.

#### **5. Requirements**

Sydney Metropolitan International College must comply with the following requirements regarding overseas students' course progress and attendance.

##### National Code Standard 8

- 8.4 At risk and intervention strategies
- 8.9 The registered provider of a VET course as defined in the NVETR Act must have and implement a documented policy and process for assessing course progress that includes:
  - 8.9.1 requirements for achieving satisfactory course progress, including policies that promote and uphold the academic integrity of the registered course and meet the training package or accredited course requirements where applicable, and processes to address misconduct and allegations of misconduct
  - 8.9.2 processes for recording and assessing course progress requirements
  - 8.9.3 processes to identify overseas students at risk of unsatisfactory course progress
  - 8.9.4 details of the registered provider's intervention strategy to assist overseas students at risk of not meeting course progress requirements in sufficient time for those overseas students to achieve satisfactory course progress
  - 8.9.5 processes for determining the point at which the overseas student has failed to meet satisfactory course progress.

##### National Code Standard 11

11.2.1...the expected duration of the course does not exceed the time required to complete the course on the basis of full-time study – for VET courses, this is a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week unless specified by an accrediting authority

Visa condition – 8202 which states that: “The visa holder must satisfy the requirements of course enrolment, course level, course progress and course attendance.”

ESOS Act 2000 Section 19, as below:

1. A registered provider must give the following information within the applicable number of days after the event specified below occurs:
    - (d) any termination of an accepted student’s studies (whether as a result of action by the student or the provider or otherwise) before the student’s course is completed;
    - (e) any change in the identity or duration of an accepted student’s course;
- (1A)The **applicable number of days** is:
- (a) if the accepted student is less than 18 years old and the information is of a kind referred to in paragraph (1)(c) or (d)—14 days; or
  - (b) otherwise—31 days

## 6. Procedures

### 6.1 Course Attendance

#### a. Attendance Requirement - Full Time Study

International students are required to study a full-time study load. A full-time study load is normally a minimum of 20 hours per week (13.5 hours of face to face and 6.5 hours of distance/online learning) for the term.

Trainers mark student attendance each day for each class. The completed Attendance Rolls are given to the administration staff for completeness check before they are recorded in the Attendance Registers on a weekly basis.

If a student’s attendance drops below 80% over the term Sydney Metropolitan International College will review their involvement, counsel them, implement an intervention strategy and, if poor attendance persists Sydney Metropolitan International College reserves the right to

- Require that all assessment tasks are completed on campus
- Refuse permission for the student to undertake an assessment which may require them to repeat a unit
- Cancel or suspend the student’s enrolment, which may put their visa at risk. Students have a right of appeal. See section 7

#### b. Absences

Students are advised at Orientation of the importance of notifying the college when they are absent due to illness or any other matter.

Absences are dealt with by:

- Academic Support Officer or delegate sending an SMS or phoning or sending an email to all students who do not notify the College of their absence on the day of absence. A record is

- maintained of all absences and attempts to contact students
- Academic Support Officer/Director of Studies will analyse student absences a minimum of fortnightly and take action for students 'at risk'.
  - Students who have been absent for more than five consecutive days or are at risk of falling below 80% will be contacted, counselled and reminded of the attendance policy. The actions described in 6.1a may be commenced.

All absences due to illness should be accompanied by a medical certificate. Sydney Metropolitan International College will only accept medical certificates signed by a registered medical practitioner, health practitioner or approved health specialist.

Written notification is required for all absences where it is known by the student in advance that they will not be attending class. These absences will still be counted when calculating an attendance percentage.

Sydney Metropolitan International College has a duty of care to its students and any absences of 5 consecutive days without approval will be investigated to ensure the safety of the student.

Sydney Metropolitan International College will undertake the following actions:

- The Academic Support Officer will attempt to contact the student by phone and/or SMS
- If student is not able to be contacted their agent will be contacted
- If contact cannot be made the Academic Support Officer will discuss with CEO whether to contact the next of kin or the relevant authorities (eg police, DHA)

### **c. Attendance Review**

- Administration staff review the attendance data to identify individual student's attendance rates.
- Students are sent the appropriate attendance notification based on the attendance level at the time when the monitoring report is reviewed fortnightly
- If a student's attendance falls below 85 per cent, they will be sent a Reminder Email by student services staff. This reminder will notify the student the attendance requirements of Sydney Metropolitan International College as well as the student attendance requirement as per Visa Condition 8202.
- If a student's attendance falls below 80 per cent, they will be sent a Warning Letter. This letter will ask the student to make an appointment with the Director of Studies and provide Sydney Metropolitan International College with information and evidence explaining their absences. Sharing of this information will occur through a private counselling session.
- If required, the Director of Studies will decide if it is necessary to implement an intervention strategy. The strategy will aim to assist the student to maximise his/her attendance for the remaining scheduled contact hours for the duration of his/her course.
- If a student is unable to reach 70% of attendance for the remaining scheduled contact hours for the duration of their course and the intervention strategies have previously been

implemented, the student's enrolment may be cancelled by the Sydney Metropolitan International College.

## 6.2 Course Progress

### a. Academic Course Progress Requirements

- In order to progress satisfactorily, overseas students must demonstrate competency in fifty percent (50%) or more of enrolled units of competency within each term.
- Academic progress is monitored by trainers and administration staff to enable appropriate intervention strategies to be implemented as soon as progress issues emerge for individual students who are identified as 'at risk'
- Should an overseas student fail the same unit twice, they will be deemed as not making satisfactory course progression. This includes previous versions of the unit.
- A student who has not demonstrated satisfactory course progress for **two consecutive study periods**, is not meeting the Sydney Metropolitan International College's course progression requirement and will be unable to complete their course within the duration specified in the student's COE. This will be a breach of their student visa conditions.

### b. Identifying Students 'At Risk'

- Early identification of students 'at risk' is critical to ensure that early intervention strategies can be provided to support and assist the student's academic success.
- Training and administration staff use a variety of indicators or assessments to identify any students who are 'at risk' of making unsatisfactory progress. These may include, but are not limited to, the review of:
  - The student's attendance record
  - Class participation and level of engagement
  - Formative assessment completions
  - Completion of self-study activities
  - Late submissions of assessments
  - Number of resubmissions
  - Requests for extension of class work or assessments
  - Requests for additional help with assessments or class work
  - Feedback from other training staff
  - Not yet competent on unit assessments
  - English ability
  - Results of assessments and unit
- Administration staff have responsibility, in consultation with trainers and the Director of Studies, for identifying individual students who are 'at risk' of not meeting satisfactory course progress.
- A final review of student academic performance will occur following the unit results release at the completion of each study period.
- Once a student has been identified as making unsatisfactory course progress, the administration staff will issue the student with a Course Progress Warning Letter.

- The Course Progress Warning Letter will require the student to meet with the Director of Studies (or other designated staff) to discuss their course progress, and if necessary, activate an intervention strategy.

### c. Course Progress Review

- The Administration staff will continue to monitor the course progress of a student with an intervention strategy for the remainder of the current study period and if required, into the next study period.
- A student who demonstrates competency in more than fifty percent (50%) of the units of competency undertaken in the study period in which they were earlier identified as 'at risk', or in the next study period, will no longer be considered 'at risk' and the intervention strategy may be cancelled.
- Any student provided with an intervention strategy during the study period (therefore identified as 'at risk'), who then achieves less than 50% competency in enrolled units of competency will receive an Intention to Report Letter.

## 6.3 Intervention Strategies

### *Addressing the National Code 8.4*

- Where necessary, the Director of Studies (or other designated staff) will develop an intervention strategy in consultation with the student and, if required, the Academic Support Officer /Training staff. The intervention strategy will outline the strategies to be adopted and the support services that the student can access to assist with improving their academic performance and/or attendance.
- If the student is identified as 'at risk' of making unsatisfactory progress or is making unsatisfactory progress before the end of the study period, an intervention strategy will be implemented as early as practicable. If the student is deemed as making unsatisfactory progress at the end of the study period the intervention strategy is required to be commenced within the first two weeks of the following study period.
- Intervention strategies may include the following:
  - advising the student of available study skills workshops, time management skills, academic counselling, English language support or other support Sydney Metropolitan International College offers
  - requiring the student to meet regularly with a trainer to review their progress before the end of the current study period or during the next study period
  - requiring the student to submit assessments or complete assessments within a certain timeframe
  - requiring the student to attend a minimum percentage of classes, which may include make-up classes
  - referring the student to other support services that may be relevant, e.g. counselling for personal issues, appropriate medical services, housing services, financial counselling services, etc.
  - considering a period of deferment or temporary suspension of studies
  - providing a mentor or study buddy

- requiring the student to undertake additional training or to re-enrol in English language training. This may require the award course to be suspended to attend the required number of English classes.
- Intervention strategies must be signed by both the Director of Studies (or the other designated staff) and the student.
- It is the student's responsibility to follow through on any assistance offered and to maintain contact with the nominated staff member/s identified to provide assistance.
- A student may receive an Intention to Report Letter if they fail to comply with the intervention strategy or is deliberately disengaging with the process.

## 7. Student Appeals

### 7.1 Internal appeal process

- Students who wish to appeal their attendance rate/academic progression determination or the Intention to Report Letter may lodge an appeal within 28 business days to Sydney Metropolitan International College staff. In addition to the Sydney Metropolitan International College internal processes, an overseas student may also wish to approach an external agent, see 6.2.
- Overseas students who wish to lodge an appeal against Sydney Metropolitan International College's Intention to Report letter or any other matter are advised to refer to the overseas student appeal flowchart on the Sydney Metropolitan International College website for further explanation.

### 7.2 External Agency process

- Overseas students may approach an external agent such as the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO). Such approach may be made after the internal resolution process has been finalised and the overseas student is not happy with the outcome of the internal resolution.
- Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) investigates complaints that overseas students have with private education providers. A private education provider can be a school, college or university in Australia. The Ombudsman provides support to future, current or former students.
- OSO's service is free and they do not charge for making a complaint.
  - Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO)
  - In Australia: 1300 362 072
  - Outside Australia: +61 2 6276 0111
  - [Online Complaint Form](#)
  - [OSO Factsheets for International Students](#)
  - [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

## 8. Reporting to Department of Home Affairs (DHA)

- All students identified as maintaining an unsatisfactory attendance level and/or academic progress will be notified in writing via an Intention to Report letter.
- The Intention to Report letter provides formal notification to the student that Sydney Metropolitan International College intends to report their poor attendance or unsatisfactory academic progress to DHA.
- Students who maintain unsatisfactory progress in two (2) consecutive study periods will receive an Intention to Report Letter.
- Students who maintain unsatisfactory progress in two (2) study periods that aren't consecutive will not be reported, unless they did not comply with the agreed intervention strategy.
- Sydney Metropolitan International College will only report overseas students for unsatisfactory course progress or unsatisfactory course attendance if:
  - The overseas student has chosen not to access the internal and/or external appeals process within the allowed timeframe, or
  - If an overseas student chose to access the internal and/or external complaints process, and the completed process decision or recommendation supports Sydney Metropolitan International College's decision, or
  - The overseas student withdraws from the appeals process by formally notifying Sydney Metropolitan International College.

### Associated Documents

- Academic Support Officer Policy and procedure
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy
- Intervention Record Form Student at risk report
- NYC Result Notification Letter
- Warning letter 1 - Unsatisfactory Course Progress Warning Letter
- Warning letter 2 - Intention to Report Letter
- Warning letter 3 – Report process commenced through PRISMS