

PURPOSE

To assist all overseas students to achieve successful completion of their education and training through the provision of quality training and support services and orientation.

To achieve this, 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 as well as how student information on these services is disseminated and how students may access them.

SCOPE

All students who study at Austin Institute of Trades (AIT) will be provided the appropriate support from Student Support Staff 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.

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. Student Support Staff members (Student Support Officer) are the designated personnel in this context.

Academic performance Assessment of competency as a student progress through the qualification

Course Refers to the specific course a student is enrolled

Face to face Usually classroom based but may also entail practical laboratory, workshop and other learning environments, provided the trainer assessor is present. It should be noted that face-to-face training may involve the use of online/electronic tools and media; for instance, Moodle platforms and eLearning. Providing the online/electronic tools and media do not replace to negate the need for a trainer assessor to be present. Face-to-face mode should be trainer assessor-lead rather than self-paced learning. Some electronic mediums, such as Skype, make live-time discussions possible.

SSO Student Support Officer(s)

Unit Unit of Competency

VET Vocational Education and Training

SMS Student Management System

Study Period A study period is the regular scheduled term of study between study breaks, often of ten to thirteen weeks duration

POLICY

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 AIT either by providing the service in-house or having an arrangement to refer overseas students to affordable externally provided services:

- student support services available to students in the transition to life and study in a new environment
- legal services
- emergency and health services
- English and academic support services
- tutoring support
- study skills centres;
- counselling and mental health support
- housing and tenancy services
- financial support services
- health and disability services
- facilities and resources
- complaints and appeals services
- any student visa condition relating to course progress and/or attendance as appropriate
- career services and working and employment rights and conditions

Introducing Student Support

Engaging students through an orientation day within the first week of their study period, orientation day will cover key points of the Student Support Program and role of the SSO, such as:

- Who are their Student Support Officers / Student Contact Officer?
- When are they available?
- Contact details

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.

- AIT provides free services designed to assist students in achieving academic progress, with sufficient student support personnel to meet the needs of the overseas students enrolled.
- Electronic methods of disseminating such information include the RTO website, emails, SMS and pod casts.
- Written formats methods of disseminating such information include the student handbook, noticeboard, newsletters or even a wallet-sized card with useful numbers may be provided as required.
- 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.
- Student Support staff are engaged to provide such assistance, with at least one designated member of staff to be appointed as Student Contact Officer / Student Support Officer, this officer or officers must have access to the most up-to-date details regarding support services.
- AIT has comprehensive *Critical Incident policy and procedure* to support students in times of need. These procedures contain immediate, during, after and post CI event and are well documented with feedback and review components.

- AIT have dedicated staff as points of contact on all issues pertaining to a student's academic, living in the community and social concerns.
- AIT are committed to ensuring that their Student Support Officers as well as any 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 our obligations and any possible implications of these obligations.
- 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.

Safety and personal security

AIT 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.

- Advice on possible actions taken to enhance safety and personal security is given at orientation and in the student and staff handbooks.
- Personal security and safety information is provided and readily available at any time to both students and staff.
- Detailed information will be provided to all overseas students about how to seek assistance for and report any incidents which may significantly impact upon their wellbeing, (including critical incidents).
- AIT 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).

RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of Student Support Officers to respond to student enquiries and 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 their manager.
- Student Support Officers shall be responsible for initiating the Critical Incident procedures if they have deemed it a Critical Incident.
- Student Support Officers shall maintain a written record of any 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.
- Student Support Officers must update student management system for each enquiry and all documentation is to be filed in the student's file.
- Student Support Officers must ensure that any written response to a student enquiry is generated from the Student Management System, so it has a contact log and a copy of the information sent. No verbal outcomes are to be acceptable practice by AIT staff.
- Responsibility for briefing all staff of obligations under the ESOS Framework and National Code Standards and the implications of these for students lie with senior staff.
- Day to day responsibility for the oversight and management of student welfare support services lies with RTO Manager.
- The Director/CEO will have overall responsibility for this policy and the ensuing procedures.
- The day-to-day management of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the RTO Manager, to whom the Student Support staff report.
- It is the responsibility of the Director/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.

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 the RTO 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 any health insurance (OHSC) as a condition of their visa.

PROCEDURE

Student Support Services

AIT has officials designated to support students as Student Support Officers, who are approachable as first point of contact at AIT during business hours. Students can approach any AIT Student Support Officer for help or general enquiries. For emergency and after hours, Student Support Officers are available using official email. Student can also approach other staff members at AIT, if required.

Pre-Enrolment

- Pre-enrolment information is supplied to all potential students in accordance with the *Enrolment Policy and Procedure*, Course information and *Student Handbook*.
- Student Support Services information is provided to all potential students via AIT website, *Student Handbook*, and via staff. This information can also be obtained by email.
- On enquiry students are directed to the website, e-mailed a copy or posted a copy of the *Student Handbook*, *Course Information material*, *Enrolment Policy and Procedure* and *Enrolment Application Form*.
- Students are provided sufficient information to assist them in making an informed decision on course and education provider.
- Students are forwarded clear information on how to apply for a course, what information to supply and provided contact details for accessing support if they have any questions or difficulties.
- Students are encouraged to seek assistance with any part of this process and to contact the Student Support Officer with questions.
- Students are consulted if any information on their application requires clarification or further investigation prior to coming to a decision on their application.

Please refer to *Enrolment Policy and Procedure* for detailed enrolment process and requirements.

Enrolment

Students with special learning needs

- AIT provides access and equity to candidates with special learning needs. Please refer to *Access and Equity Policy and Procedure* for details of resources and services provision.
- As special needs extend to more than physical or learning difficulties, our trainers also consider the best approach when dealing with candidates with needs such as low literacy, lack of confidence or non-English speaking background.
- AIT trainers take special needs into consideration from the planning stage onwards and adopt particular delivery and assessment methods as appropriate.
- Depending on any specification given in the standards, the trainer may be able to accept alternative evidence from a candidate with special needs.
- AIT staff contact other RTOs, external support organisations or RTO consultant for assistance and guidance, as required.

- In making arrangements for students with special learning needs all meeting minutes, advice and amended delivery/ assessment material is stored in the student file in accordance with *Records Management Policy and Procedure*.
- The delivery and assessment processes, materials, resources and equipment may be adjusted to address a student's learning needs. Adjustment to the assessment process is undertaken in accordance with Training package guidelines, the rules of evidence and principles of assessment.
- The student is kept fully informed of the process during the enrolment and afterwards.
- AIT may refer students to external organisations for support to enable them to successfully enrol and complete their course.
- AIT liaises with external organisations to facilitate students learning and course progress / achievement.
- Where a student's learning needs cannot be addressed by AIT, the Institute will not enrol the student.
- AIT may refer student to undertake a course prior to commencing the AIT course to satisfy entry requirements and address learning needs.

Post-Enrolment

Support Provided at Arrival in Australia

For international students after enrolment, AIT can arrange for students to be met at the airport and taken to their accommodation. Student needs to indicate the need of this service when submitting the *Enrolment Application Form*.

Cultural Awareness

For international students;

- All staff have access to information and/or training on cultural awareness to build a sensitivity for the issues related to a multi-cultural environment.
- Students will also receive some information to help assist them to deal with the cultural challenges associated with living and studying in a new country.

Orientation and Transition Support

All students go through an Orientation Program during their first week at AIT. The Orientation program involves familiarisation with the campus, facilities and living and studying in Australia (for international students).

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

The orientation program should be accessible to all overseas students and allow for late arrivals and students who begin at different entry points.

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

It is a requirement that all students attend an orientation session upon commencement of their studies with AIT. Along with general orientation activities, new students may have particular needs or issues requiring specific support and interventions, therefore question time should be included.

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

Orientation Session

During the orientation it is ideal that commencing students meet with their course coordinator, trainers and student support staff.

They will also receive a Student Course Information which informs students of the essential requirements of their course being studied and covers delivery and assessment methods of the course.

Orientation Topics

Information to be presented at orientation to commencing students includes, but is not limited to:

Non-Academic

- Emergency evacuation from building and muster points
- Emergency protocols, services and contacts
- How to report harm (abuse, neglect or other)
- What's nearby i.e. shops, food, ATMs, services, parking and medical
- Essential services and contacts
- Transport and travel
- Legal Services

VET Study in Australia

- Credit transfer and RPL
- Competency based assessment
- Qualifications and Statements of Attainment
- Study Visa Requirements and conditions
- Health insurance and maintaining OSHC
- Keeping student address and contact details up-to date
- Completion of the course within the expected amount of time
- Reporting requirements: Department of Education, Skills and Employment and Australian Department of Home Affairs

- Working and your student visa
- Banking and tax file numbers

Academic – RTO Specific

- Student Support Services and Staff, as well as how to access these
- Campus and facilities
- Courses, class calendar study periods and important dates
- Fees and refunds
- Student Management System and record keeping
- Course progress / attendance requirements
- Procedures and methods for assessment of competencies
- Process for submitting or re-submitting assessments
- Work placement requirements
- Student code of conduct
- Misconduct and discipline
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Complaints and Appeals
- Communication (e.g. internet and mobile phones)

Orientation Forms

- Students will receive
- Student handbook containing all information listed above
- Relevant RTO and course information publications
- Forms to be completed
- Student Education Agents Survey
- Student Orientation Checklist and Acknowledgement to be completed

Course/ Unit of Competency Orientations

At the commencement of each course, the orientation is provided for the group or commencing student, covering learning outcomes, delivery and assessment methods of the course / unit(s).

Student Handbook

All students are provided with a copy of the *Student Handbook* during their first week at AIT, which is already available on website as well. It contains information on:

- Services, facilities and resources available to students
- Visa requirements (for international students)
- Policies and Procedures
- Other relevant information in assisting students to adjust to life and study in Australia

The specific support is also identified during the Pre-Enrolment Review and LLND test. Student general support is available to all student and it is part of policy at AIT to mention the same during the Pre-Enrolment Review of the student. During the Pre-Enrolment Review process, the assessors are instructed to acknowledge the student about the availability of support services, and tick it as support identified during the process because of the compulsory availability to student from AIT.

Identifying learner needs

- AIT assesses whether the course applied for is suitable for addressing a student's learning needs in accordance with the *Enrolment Policy and Procedure*. The Institute also identifies students learning needs

through assessing their Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN) Test and Pre training Review during the orientation.

- Students are consulted if any information on their LLN Test or Pre-training review requires clarification or further investigation prior to commencement of their training.
- An Assessor guides are available to assist the AIT staff member when supervising LLN Test or undertaking Pre-Training review of the student.
- A decision is made whether the course is suitable for addressing a student's learning needs and the outcome, communicated to each student.
- If the student has special learning needs the Institute will implement reasonable actions to support these needs and enrol the student (given that entry requirements are satisfied) where appropriate and feasible. Please refer to *Access and Equity Policy and Procedure* of AIT.
- A support plan will be negotiated with the student with needs and the level and type of support documented.

Support for Students with Disabilities

- AIT will endeavour to support students with their disabilities in a fair and respectful manner.
- Students should advise AIT in advance and provide documentation of any disabilities that may affect the student's academic progress prior to commencement of the course.
- AIT will provide students with a disability access to appropriate facilities and specialised equipment to aide their learning, as appropriate.
- Where staff are aware of a disability affecting a student, reasonable adjustments can be made to teaching arrangements, assessment and/or materials and access to assist these students with their learning.

Academic, Language and Learning Support

Academic support is the responsibility of the trainers/ teachers during the course. Students are advised to approach their trainers, Training Manager, or the Student Support Officers if they need assistance in meeting course requirements.

The Trainers / Training Manager can assist students with the following:

- Study Skills
- Timetables
- Learning Support Strategies
- Academic issues

Monitoring course progress

- AIT supports international students to maintain satisfactory course progress in accordance with the *Course Progress Policy and Procedure*.
- AIT provides international students with information relating to course progress at pre- enrolment, at orientation and throughout their course. The support services and outcome of not achieving satisfactory course progress is communicated to all students.
- The emphasis of the *Course Progress Policy and Procedure* is on clear communication to international students before and after enrolment, of the importance of maintaining satisfactory course progress and early identification and intervention where issues arise.
- The support services identified in course progress and student lifecycle are to assist the student in successfully completing their course within the expected duration.

Academic support

- AIT provides all students access to a range of academic support services to support them to successfully complete their course within the expected duration.

- Students can access academic support at any time by contacting their trainer or Student Support Officer or through email.
- AIT will attempt to assist the student where feasible by:
 - Providing access to training and assessments staff
 - Reviewing learner materials with the student
 - Re-phrasing explanations
 - Providing information in a context that the student understands
 - Providing extra time to complete tasks
 - Providing access to supplementary reference materials
 - Providing supplementary exercises to develop understanding
 - Providing access to calculators
 - Providing access to dictionaries
 - Providing information in larger text
 - Arranging access to computers with relevant software
 - Arranging access to modified resources
 - Adjusting the students timetable and/ or course schedule
 - Providing opportunities to re-attempt assessments
 - Providing opportunities to undertake additional units to catch up
 - Minimum attendance requirements are established
 - Providing English language support
 - Referral to external support services

Please refer to *Access and Equity Policy and Procedure* and *Course Progress Policy and Procedure* for further details.

- If the student has language, learning/ academic issues that Institute staff cannot address then the student may be referred to external organisations for assistance.
- Institute staff liaise with the student and the organisation (if permitted by the student) to review the students learning needs and make arrangements to adjust the learning and assessment processes and materials where feasible and appropriate.
- Appropriate Institute staff contributes to supporting the student.
- Intervention strategies may be implemented in accordance with the *Course progress Policy and Procedure* to assist the student in successfully completing their course within the expected duration.

Financial advice

- Students should initially contact the Student Support Officer for any financial matters.
- Where students have financial concerns during the course of their studies, they will be referred to the RTO Manager for their financial options.
- Students can use online resources and help them budget and save money:
 - GENERAL BUDGETING
[Budget Your Money](#) is a government website calculator that helps check:
 - where the money is going
 - if spending more than one can afford
 - that the money is going towards the prioritiesIt allows to enter weekly, fortnightly, monthly and annual expenses without the need to convert.
 - VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
VU's [cost of living estimates](#) will help figure out how much it costs to live in Melbourne.
VU's [rental advice](#) for information about bonds, tenancy rights, and selecting an affordable suburb.

Legal advice

- Students should initially contact the Student Support Officer for any support on legal matters.
- The Student Support Officer will refer students to further sources of legal aid if required.
- A Student Support Officer can also refer the student to the following services:
 - [Law Institute of Victoria](#)
 - [Moonee Valley legal service](#)
 - [Brimbank Community Legal Service](#)
 - [Victoria Legal Aid](#)
 - [WEstjustice](#)
 - [Youth law](#)
 - [International students legal information](#), provided by Inner Melbourne Community Legal
 - [Northern Community Legal Centre](#)

Medical Issues

- The Student Support Officer will always have an up-to-date list of medical professionals within the local radius of the campus location.
- Any student with medical concerns may inform the Student Support Officer who will assist them in finding an appropriate medical professional.
- In emergency situations the Student Support Officer or a manager will call for an ambulance to attend to the student.
- Refer to student Handbook.

Student Safety

- AIT will implement strategies to raise student awareness to personal safety risks and issues and what to do in the event of a personal crises.
- Information will be provided to students on the types of behaviour's which are considered unacceptable and what to do if they experience such events.
- AIT has policies and procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of students including to monitor and address any reported or identified hazards, manage critical incidents and emergency situations.

Student Welfare Services

AIT has designated Student Support Officers to provide a basic counselling service to all students. This service provides assistance to students experiencing difficulties in any aspect of their lives, including issues of academic or personal nature.

The Student Support Officers are available to students to help them access study support and welfare-related services such as;

- Legal Services – AIT can refer a student who requires to a legal practitioner, the referral is at no cost to the student. Student would be responsible for any cost related to the legal advice provided.
- Accommodation – Accommodation advice is available to international students from the point of application through to the completion of their course. AIT will provide up to date information on accommodation options and or providers, this advice will be provided free of charge. The fees for external agencies will be at the cost of the student.
- Emergency and Health Services – During orientation students are advised on campus safety and how to access emergency and health services in Australia. For non-urgent services students are encouraged to talk with student services. For medical or other emergencies students are instructed to contact the appropriate services, e.g. 000 and inform AIT as soon as appropriate.
- Facilities and Resources – At orientation students are given a guided tour of the campus and all AIT facilities so that they will become aware of all the resources available to them.

- Complaints and appeals processes – The *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* is detailed on the website and made available from administration at any time. The policy is specifically explained in the *Student Handbook* and during orientation.
- Student visa condition relating to course progress and or attendance as appropriate – International students are advised at orientation of their requirements to continue to meet their visa conditions. Specifically, the expectations for course progress and attendance are laid out in the *Student Handbook* and explained during orientation.

AIT can also refer students to external counselling service for various issues if necessary however each issue is dealt with on a case-to-case basis. There is no fee attached to this welfare support and referral service. Any cost charged by the external services will be paid by students.

In addition to the normal support services, international students are provided with a range of specialist services such as assistance with resume-writing and looking for part-time work. Please refer to respective policies and procedures available on website and *Student Handbook*.

As stated earlier, AIT also has a documented *Critical Incident Policy and Procedure* that cover the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the required follow-up to the incident, the recording of the incident and the action taken.

- Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:
 - missing students;
 - severe verbal or psychological aggression;
 - death, serious injury or any threat of these;
 - natural disaster; and
 - issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse

For further information, please refer to *Critical Incident Policy and Procedure*.

OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURES

- All students will have access to our student support services through our Student Support Officers who will have access to available student welfare services available locally.
- Where the nature of the concern is beyond the Student Support Officer's experience and abilities, the student will be referred to an appropriate person for professional assistance.
- The Student Support Officers will respond to all questions pertaining to the student's progress, course requirements, satisfactory progress and/or attendance, and refer the student to other staff members as appropriate.
- The Student Support Officers will assist international students with accommodation or general welfare issues, through providing appropriate advice and direction. The Student Support Officers are authorised to refer the student to professional welfare assistance (Social Workers, Legal Aid, etc.) as they see fit.
- Student Support Officers will detail the student support services provided to each student, and will make ensure that details of services provided are placed on the students file.
- Academic counselling is provided by the Training Manager or delegate who is responsible for monitoring all aspects of student academic progress. Discussion notes, outcomes and follow up actions are recorded in student files according to *Records Management Policy and Procedure*.
- Trainers / teachers will report any concerns they have, to the Training Manager, about changes in a student's behaviour, attitude, health or general demeanour for immediate follow up.
- In circumstances requiring personal counselling and where there is no qualified counsellor employed as a staff, the Student Support Officers will be responsible for making a referral to a suitable outside agency for the student at no charge to the student. Student Support Officers will ensure that the student is well supported during the process, liaise with the outside agency if appropriate and follow up with the student as often as necessary.

Some recommended agencies are listed below.

Lifeworks Relationship Counselling & Education Services

Contact: <https://go.lifeworks.com/contact-us>

International Student Care Australia (ISCA)

Phone: +61 7 3851 0704

Contact: <https://isca.net.au/contact-us/>

Protective Group: International Student Care

Contact: <https://protectivegroup.com.au/contact/>

- The Compliance Officer will ensure that the Student Support Services are reviewed regularly in meetings, and corrective actions are applied as appropriate.

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