

Overseas Student Support Services Policy

1 PURPOSE

To assist all overseas students to achieve successful completion of their education and training through the provision of quality education/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 toward 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.

2 SCOPE

All students who study at ACCS will be provided the appropriate support from the College Registrar or other designated staff in relation to study, academic issues, accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements. Overseas students will be given information and advice pertaining to their personal safety and security.

3 DEFINITIONS

Staff and support personnel	The National Code (Standard 6, 2018) requires providers must designate at least one member of staff to be the official point of contact for overseas students. The contact officer must have access to up-to-date details of the registered provider's support services.
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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 ACCS:^(6.2)

- living in Sydney
- student support services available to students in the transition to life and study in a new environment
- legal services
- emergency and health services
- safety at the beach and in the sun
- facilities and resources
- career opportunities
- attendance requirements
- complaints and appeals processes
- relevant policies and procedures, and

- any student visa condition 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 must be undertaken, in support of assisting students (and their families) to adjust to living in Australia. All information is to be provided without cost to the student.

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

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:^(6.1)

- support services available to assist in the transition into life and study in Australia
- legal services^(6.1.1, 6.1.3)
- information on visa conditions relating to course progress and, if applicable, attendance ^(6.1.7)
- emergency and health services i.e. police, hospitals, fire, ambulance^(6.1.4)
- English language and study assistance programs^(6.1.3)
- personal and crisis support services available and how to access them^(6.1.8)
- information on employment rights and conditions, resolving workplace issues and services available such as the Fair Work Ombudsman^(6.1.9)
- career opportunities
- health, safety and wellbeing
- key points and information on housing and accommodation with regulators contact information
- Australian currency, banking and shopping
- personal security and safety ^(6.9.1)

The orientation will also cover information about the College such as

- a comprehensive student handbook
- outline of facilities and resources
- relevant course information
- requirements for course attendance and progress, as appropriate ^(6.1.7)
- 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
- academic integrity
- Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment (SASH)
- reinforcing the College 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, orientation day will cover key points of the Student Support Program and role of the Registrar or other designated staff, such as:

- Who are their Student Support Officers / 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.(6.3)

- 4.4.1 ACCS 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.(6.6)
- 4.4.2 Electronic methods of disseminating such information include the College website, emails and SMS.
- 4.4.3 Written formats methods of disseminating such information include the student handbook.
- 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, this officer or officers must have access to the most up-to-date details regarding support services. (6.5)
- 4.4.6 ACCS has comprehensive Critical Incident policies and procedures 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.(6.8)
- 4.4.7 ACCS have dedicated staff as points of contact on all issues pertaining to a student's academic, living in the community and social concerns.
- 4.4.8 ACCS 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.(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.(6.4)

4.5 SAFETY AND PERSONAL SECURITY

ACCS 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 is given at orientation and in the student handbook.
- 4.5.2 Personal security and safety information is provided and readily available at any time to both students and staff.(6.9.1)
- 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 upon their wellbeing, (including critical incidents).(6.9.2)
- 4.5.4 ACCS 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). (6.9.3)

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1.1 It is the responsibility of Student Support Officers to respond to student enquiries and the Student Contact Officer 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 Registrar.
- 5.1.2 Student Support Officers shall be responsible for initiating the Critical Incident procedures if they have deemed it a Critical Incident.
- 5.1.3 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.^(6.8)
- 5.1.4 Student Support Officers must update student management system for each enquiry and all documentation is to be filed in the students file.
- 5.1.5 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 ACCS staff.
- 5.1.6 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.
- 5.1.7 Day to day responsibility for the oversight and management of student welfare support services lies with the Registrar.
- 5.1.8 The Principal will have overall responsibility for this policy and the ensuing procedures.
- 5.1.9 The day to day management of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the Registrar of other designated staff, to whom the Student Support staff report.
- 5.1.10 It is the responsibility of the Principal 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 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

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
- Higher Education Standards Framework 2015
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015– 1,4,5

7 RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS

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