Student Excursion Policy

Section 1 - PURPOSE

(1) The policy outlines the principles and requirements for conducting student excursion activities at Melbourne Polytechnic.

Section 2 - SCOPE

(2) This policy applies to all Melbourne Polytechnic students, staff and individuals engaged through agencies and partner organisations involved with excursion activities. It covers all courses in Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training and Foundation learning programs.

(3) It does not include work placements, work integrated learning (WIL) activities, overseas study tours or student social activities such as those organised by SLAM (Student Life @ MP).

Section 3 - POLICY

Policy Statement

(4) Melbourne Polytechnic is committed to supporting applied learning experiences that provide students with purposeful education and training. Maintaining the safety and wellbeing of students participating in excursions is crucial as is ensuring staff have the information and skills necessary to support student learning experiences.

(5) The Policy:

a. supports Melbourne Polytechnic's Strategic Plan 2024 - 28, in particular Objective 3: ''our programs are contemporary, high quality and industry connected.''
b. aligns with education principles described in Melbourne Polytechnic's Education Strategy. (applied, integrated and inquiry as practice)
c. addresses Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 – Standard 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety.
d. complies with Child Safe Standards for students under 18 years of age. (VRQA)

Policy Principles

(6) This policy is guided by the following principles:

a. Supporting students to experience activities related to their studies in a real-world environment.
b. Offering student excursions in a way that enables all students to participate.
c. Maintaining a duty of care for students participating on excursions.
d. Approving excursions in advance of the event and adequately maintaining records in accordance with legislative obligations, including privacy requirements.
e. Completing a risk assessment prior to the excursion date and defining reasonable controls to mitigate risks and

support the safe conduct of excursions.

f. Students and staff behave in a safe and responsible manner when attending excursions.
g. Addressing any incidents that may occur during the excursion promptly and with care.
h. Supporting a framework of review and continuous improvement of child safety requirements.

Policy Topics

Excursion Participation

(7) All students have an opportunity to participate on available excursions.

(8) Students with disabilities have the same opportunities and may require reasonable adjustments to allow participation.

(9) Students who are registered and supported by a Melbourne Polytechnic Equity Access Worker (EAW) and would like them to attend an excursion, can submit a request to the Equity & Access Team.

(10) Parents/guardians or additional family /support people who are not registered with Equity & Access Team should not attend excursions.

Excursion Planning and Preparation

(11) Excursions may include the following:

a. field trips to industry locations including hands-on practical activities.
b. specialist visits to museums and galleries.
c. community, industry and government events and presentations.
d. music and performance events.
e. parks, gardens, and sporting grounds.
f. camps.

(12) Head of Program/Program Leader must approve all excursions in advance of the event.

(13) A General Risk Analysis Tool Report is completed prior to the excursion to identify potential risks and determine mitigation strategies.

(14) Based on the risk level of the activity and cohort, a determination is made as to whether a first aid trained staff member will attend the excursion.

(15) One General Risk Analysis Tool Report may be completed for multiple excursions with similar low risks.

(16) For any new activities and where the risks for an event vary and/or are considered a higher risk, a new General Risk Analysis Tool Report is required.

(17) There may be a combination of under 18 and over 18-year-old students in the one class.

(18) Educators are responsible for identifying students under 18 years of age participating in the class and ensuring they adhere to requirements included in paragraph 19 and 27-33.

(19) For students under 18 years of age the following staff/student ratios (supervision requirements) apply unless the Head of Program/Program Leader approves an exemption after reviewing the risk assessment and deciding there are adequate mitigation strategies in place:

a. minimum of two (2) staff members attends each excursion unless an exemption is approved.
b. where an exemption is approved, no more than 1:20 ratio applies for a day excursion.
c. where an exemption is approved, no more than 1:10 ratio applies for overnight stays (where possible staff attendance will consider gender representation).

(20) For students over 18 years of age the following staff/student ratios (supervision requirements) are provided as a guide with a final determination made based on the type of excursion activity and the level of risk associated with the activity and cohort:

a. no more than 1:20 ratio applies for a day excursion.
b. no more than 1:10 ratio applies for overnight stays (where possible staff attendance will consider gender representation).

(21) Some excursions may require a fee to be paid and students are advised in advance of the cost associated with an activity.

(22) Students are advised of the excursion itinerary and arrangements in advance of the event to allow for adequate preparation and completion of relevant paperwork.

(23) A record of all relevant documentation/information relating to the excursion (refer to paragraph 29 in the Student Excursion Procedure) is prepared prior to the excursion and stored in a secure and accessible location.

(24) All required equipment for the excursion is gathered prior to the excursion.

(25) Transport arrangements are determined and must take into consideration the needs of students with disabilities and specific requirements for under 18-year-old students (see paragraph 27–33).

(26) Transport options include the following:

a. public transport
b. private bus hire
c. private car (student's own or other students)

Students under 18 years of age

(27) All students complete an Excursion Consent and Medical Report Form for each or multiple excursions including details of any health/medical conditions to:

a. enable an accurate risk assessment to be completed.
b. ensure appropriate planning and preparation is completed prior to the excursion.

(28) Parent or guardians:

a. provide informed written consent for a student to participate on an excursion in advance of the excursion date.
b. provide approval for a student to travel on their own directly to the excursion location.
c. provide consent for staff to address any medical emergency that may occur during the excursion.
d. may withdraw permission for a student to participate on an excursion in advance of the event.

(29) When participating on an excursion students must not travel in the vehicle of another student without parental/guardian approval.

(30) Students assessed as mature minors may sign their own excursion form.

(31) Staff must not transport students in their own private vehicle to an excursion or at any time in accordance with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Policy.

(32) Students may be required to travel in an approved private bus organised by Melbourne Polytechnic.

(33) Where students travel on public transport, a staff member must supervise them while in staff care for the duration of the excursion.

Students over 18 years of age

(34) All students complete an Excursion Consent and Medical Report Form for each or multiple excursions including information of any health/medical conditions to:

a. enable an accurate risk assessment to be completed.
b. ensure appropriate planning and preparation is completed prior to the excursion.

(35) Students may withdraw from participating on an excursion prior to the event.

(36) Staff must not transport students in their own private vehicle to an excursion.

(37) Students may be required to travel in an approved private bus organised by Melbourne Polytechnic.

(38) Students using their own transportation must advise the organiser in advance of the event.

Insurance coverage for participating in excursions

(39) Students participating on approved excursions are covered by the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA). This cover is similar to the cover provided for students participating in on campus activities.

(40) Melbourne Polytechnic staff participating in approved excursion activities that relate to learning and teaching aspects of the course are covered by Work Cover.

Excursion safety and incident management

(41) Prior to the excursion, the Excursion Leader monitors weather condition updates, fire bans/fire danger and flooding that may impact the excursion and determines if the excursion is to proceed or be cancelled.

(42) Where an excursion is cancelled, parents/guardians and students will be advised of the cancellation in advance of the event.

(43) Staff attending an excursion with students under 18 years of age, must have the necessary Working with Children Checks in place.

(44) The nominated first aid trained staff member attends the excursion (if appropriate) and carries the first aid kit.

(45) Emergency response strategies are in place in case any issues arise during the excursion.

(46) In the event of an emergency, the Excursion Leader will refer to the completed General Risk Analysis Tool Report and take the appropriate action.

(47) Any issues that arise during an excursion are immediately reported to the Head of Program/Program Leader/Manager.

(48) The Incident & Near Miss Reporting Form is used to report all incidents or injuries that may occur during the excursion.

Expected student behaviour on excursions

(49) Any misbehaviour during an excursion considered sufficiently serious will be treated as misconduct and addressed under the Student Discipline Policy.

(50) The Excursion Leader is responsible for advising students of the requirements under the Student Code of Conduct Guidelines and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour during excursions.

(51) Any issues that occur during an excursion will be reported to the Head of Program/Program Leader/ Manager and recorded on the Student Excursion Register.

Recording and reporting on excursion activities

(52) Excursions will be recorded on a central Student Excursion Register accessible by each Directorate.

(53) Sufficient details will be included on the Student Excursion Register to allow for annual reporting to relevant Committees and Boards.

Records maintenance and confidentiality

(54) All information collected is strictly confidential and only made available to relevant staff.

(55) All documentation is securely stored in accordance with the Melbourne Polytechnic Records Management Policy and Procedure.

Policy Implementation Transition

(56) Following approval the policy will be implemented in two stages.

a. Phase 1 – In semester 1, 2024 each Directorate will identify one course in each Department to trial the approved policy.
b. Phase 2 – In semester 2, 2024 each Directorate will fully implement the policy across all courses in their Directorate.

Section 4 - RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(57) Academic Directors are responsible for:

a. ensuring this policy and associated procedures/supporting documentation are applied consistently across their teaching areas.
b. ensuring Student Excursion Registers are maintained for their area of responsibility.
c. reporting annually on excursion activities and any incidents that occur during an excursion to relevant Departmental Committees and Boards. (VET and Foundation Board).

(58) Head of Program/Program Leader is responsible for:

a. approving excursion requests for course/unit/programs.
b. reviewing and approving completed General Risk Analysis Tool Reports.
c. approving exemptions to under 18 years of age supervision requirements.
d. ensuring staff monitor the Student Excursion Register following review/approval of excursion activities.
e. ensuring material/documentation for an excursion is stored in a secure location and easily accessible by

relevant staff.

f. supporting the Excursion Leader as required with any issues that may occur during the excursion.
g. receiving reports from Excursion Leaders of any incidents that occur during the excursion.
h. working with staff to identify strategies to mitigate any identified incidents from recurring.
i. supporting continuous improvement of safety aspects related to excursions.
j. preparing an annual report on excursion activities for relevant Departmental Committees and Boards. (VET and Foundation Board).

(59) Excursion Leader is responsible for:

a. including excursion activities in the Subject/Unit Outline.
b. preparing and submitting an Application to Conduct an Excursion Form for approval.
c. completing a General Risk Analysis Tool Report for each or multiple excursions and submitting for review/approval.
d. preparing an excursion itinerary.
e. compiling relevant information as part of the planning and preparation phase and storing in a secure location that is easily accessible by relevant staff.
f. recording the excursion on the Student Excursion Register for their area.
g. identifying if a staff member with first aid training needs to attend the excursion.
h. completing an Incident & Near Miss Reporting Form for all incidents or injuries that occur during the excursion and notifying the Head of Program/Program Leader/Manager.

(60) Educators participating on approved excursions are responsible for:

a. assisting with updating the Student Excursion Register.
b. assisting with excursion planning and preparation.
c. assisting with conducting the excursion.
d. assisting with completing an Incident & Near Miss Reporting Form for all incidents or injuries that occur during the excursion.

(61) Student Equity & Access Services are responsible for:

a. receiving student requests for an Equity Access Worker (EAW) to attend an excursion.
b. maintaining accurate records of students who are normally supported by an Equity Access Worker (EAW) and any carers.

(62) Manager Delivery Innovations and Projects is responsible for:

a. implementing the Student Excursion Policy and associated processes across all teaching areas.
b. developing systems to support effective implementation.
c. developing and/or updating relevant forms and supporting documentation.
d. conducting training as required across teaching areas.
e. responding to queries from teaching areas.
f. identifying and recording improvements for subsequent policy review.

(63) The Directorate Administrator is responsible for overseeing the secure storage of all documentation in accordance

with the Melbourne Polytechnic Records Management Policy and Procedure.

(64) Administrative staff are responsible for:

a. assisting teaching areas with excursion preparations.
b. assisting with associated workflow activities related to the Student Excursion Register.
c. being the nominated on-campus contact point (as required) for any queries/or issues that arise when educators are conducting excursions.

(65) VET and Foundation Board, is responsible for:

a. receiving an annual report for noting on excursion activities and any incidents that occurred.

(66) Students are responsible for:

a. completing required paperwork to participate on excursions.
b. advising the educator if their medical conditions have changed.
c. lodging a request with the Equity & Access team if they would like an Equity Access Worker (EAW) to attend an excursion.
d. advising the educator if a registered carer will be attending the excursion.
e. ensuring if under 18 years of age they have parent/guardian approval to participate on an excursion unless a mature minor.
f. ensuring they adhere to travel/transport requirements.
g. behaving responsibly when participating on the excursion and abiding by the Student Code of Conduct Guidelines.

(67) The Executive Director Academic Operations is accountable for ensuring the Student Excursions Policy and associated processes are fully implemented and adhered to by all relevant staff and stakeholders.

Section 5 - DEFINITIONS

(68) For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

a. Excursion: an activity off campus organised and conducted for a group of students to support learning and/or achieve the learning outcomes of the subject/unit/course. The intent of an excursion is to gain valuable knowledge and understanding by extending the learning experiences outside the classroom setting. It may include observation and/or an opportunity to practice skills learnt in the classroom in a practical context. Activities may be conducted over a few hours, a day event or involve an overnight stay, e.g. camp activity.
b. Excursion Leader: a staff member who plans, organises, conducts, and manages a student excursion.
c. Mature minor: a student under 18 years of age that is considered to have sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to understand the nature and effect of a particular decision. For professionals working with students under the age of 18 must make an assessment as to whether a child has sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to understand the nature and effect of a particular decision. When making this determination include:
    i. knowledge of the student and the student's academic results, including correspondence and communication with the student
    ii. the age and level of maturity of the student, to understand the issues and consequences of a proposed decision.
    iii. If the student is living independently of their parents.

iv. Consider other professional working with the student and if they determine the student is capable of making decisions for themselves with have the appropriate understanding.
v. if the decision is within the student best interest with or without parent/carer consent.

d. Partner organisation: organisation Melbourne Polytechnic has entered into a contract with to deliver teaching and/or academic services on behalf of or in partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic. This includes 'third parties' contracted to provide VET or Foundation training on behalf of Melbourne Polytechnic.
e. Reasonable adjustments: measures and adaptations put in place to facilitate student participation in subjects/units and courses while ensuring that academic standards and inherent requirements of the course are not compromised.
f. Reasonable controls: processes, equipment, training, or changes to an activity to help manage potential risks.
g. Risk analysis: identifying potential risks associated with an activity, assigning a risk rating, and identifying relevant controls to mitigate risks.
h. Student/staff ratio: the number of staff required to safely supervise the number of students attending an excursion. For students under 18 years of age, a minimum of two (2) staff members will normally attend an excursion unless an exemption is approved.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	27th February 2024
Review Date	27th February 2029
Approval Authority	Chief Executive
Approval Date	27th February 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Marc Blanks Executive Director Educational Excellence
Policy Implementation Officer	Laura Dimos Manager Delivery Innovations and Projects
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