International Students Course Progress and Attendance Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this procedure is to outline Melbourne Polytechnic's terms and conditions relating to the monitoring of international students' course progress and, where applicable, attendance for each course in which the student is enrolled, with adherence to the requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework, including the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth), National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018(the National Code).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to new and continuing international students at Melbourne Polytechnic who hold an Australian student visa and all Melbourne Polytechnic staff with responsibilities for international students.

Section 3 - Procedure

(3) Students must ensure they are aware and remain compliant with their visa conditions which require that they must maintain satisfactory attendance and adequate course progression for each study period as required by Melbourne Polytechnic.

(4) Melbourne Polytechnic has processes in place to identify, notify and assist a student who is at risk of not meeting course progress or attendance requirements, and determines the point at which they have failed to meet these requirements.

Expected Course Duration

(5) Except in limited circumstances, the expected duration of study as specified in a student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) must not exceed the CRICOS registered course duration.

(6) In order for a student to complete their study within the CRICOS registered course duration, they are required to study the full-time load for which the course was CRICOS registered for:

(7) Higher Education courses, a full-time load is usually 4 subjects per semester (48 credit points) or Equivalent Full Time Study Load Hours (EFTSLs) of 96 credit points per year.

(8) ELICOS and VET courses, a full-time load is at least 20 hours per week.

Extension to Course Duration

(9) In limited circumstances, Melbourne Polytechnic can enable a student to extend the expected duration of their study as a result of:

a. compassionate or compelling circumstances;
b. through the implementation of an intervention strategy because the student is at risk of not meeting course progress requirements; and/or
c. approval of a deferment, leave of absence or temporary suspension of study as described in the International Students Deferral Suspension Cancellation of Enrolment Procedure.

Enrolment Variation

(10) Where there is a variation in a student's enrolment load which may affect their expected duration of study, Melbourne Polytechnic will record this variation and reasons for it on the student file and report the variation via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) and/or issue a new CoE when the student can only account for the variation/s by extending his or her expected duration of study.

(11) A variation in study load may lead to the expected duration of study exceeding the CRICOS registered duration. Approval to reduce a student's study load to less than a full-time load will only be given in accordance with the limited circumstances where an extension to a student's expected duration as specified on the student's CoE is allowable, such as:

a. academic reasons, including circumstances where:
    i. Melbourne Polytechnic is unable to offer a pre-requisite unit or subject;
    ii. there is an unavoidable timetable clash; and/or
    iii. the student is completing the final units or subjects in the course.
b. compassionate of compelling circumstances; or
c. where the student is subject to an intervention strategy.

(12) Melbourne Polytechnic will inform a student that a variation in their study load may result in a change to their expected duration which may have visa implications and that the student should seek advice with a registered migration agent.

(13) Where there is an extension to an international student's course duration that will result in the student's visa expiring prior to the completion of their course, the student will need to apply for a new student visa.

(14) Where it is a requirement or where a student requests to have a variation in study load, the student and the relevant Manager HE or Manager VET teaching areas are to refer to the International Students Extension of Course Duration Procedure and prepare International Students Reduced Study Load Application Form.

Distance and/or Online Learning

(15) Melbourne Polytechnic will ensure that in each compulsory study period for a course, an international student is studying at least one unit that is not by distance or online learning, unless a student is completing the last unit of their course.

(16) Melbourne Polytechnic cannot:

a. deliver a course exclusively by online or distance learning to an international onshore student; or
b. deliver more than one-third of the units (or equivalent) of a higher education or VET course by online or distance learning to an international onshore student.

Monitoring Course Progress - Higher Education (HE) Students

(17) The course progress of each international student studying a HE course will be monitored, recorded and assessed

in accordance with the Student Academic Progress (HE) Policy and Student Academic Progress (HE) Procedure.

Monitoring Course Progress - Vocational Education and Training (VET) Students

(18) For each CRICOS registered VET course, a minimum satisfactory course progress requirement is detailed in Schedule 1.

(19) At the end of each compulsory study period, the teaching department will assess a student's course progress against the minimum course progress requirements and identify if they have made 'satisfactory course progress'.

Unsatisfactory Course Progress

(20) If a student has been identified as not making satisfactory course progress for the compulsory study period, the teaching department will activate an 'intervention strategy' within the first four weeks of the following study period.

(21) If a student has been identified as not making satisfactory course progress in a second consecutive compulsory study period, the teaching department will provide a written notice to the student of an 'intention to report' the student to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for unsatisfactory course progress and a breach of their student visa conditions.

Intervention Strategy

(22) An intervention strategy will be implemented when a student has been identified as not making satisfactory course progress for the compulsory study period, and will be implemented within the first four weeks of the following study period. At a minimum, the intervention strategy must be activated where a student has failed or not yet deemed competent in 50% or more of the course requirements for the study period.

(23) With consideration to different student needs and course requirements, teaching departments will prepare and tailor individual intervention strategies for each student identified as not making satisfactory progress.

(24) An intervention strategy may be developed after consultation with (but not limited to) the student, teachers, Melbourne Polytechnic Student Services, and Melbourne Polytechnic International Office.

(25) A variety of measures may be adopted to assist the student achieve satisfactory course progress, which may include, but not limited to the following:

a. academic skills support;
b. additional English support;
c. addition tutoring/study group;
d. increased monitoring of attendance;
e. a mentor program;
f. personal counselling;
g. placement in a more appropriate class; and/or
h. reduction in course load.

(26) Teaching departments are encouraged to closely monitor course progress and where possible, identify students 'at risk' of not making satisfactory progress for the study period. An 'early intervention' strategy may be offered to students at risk and activated prior to completion of the study period to assist the student achieve satisfactory course progress.

Intention to Report

(27) Where the International Office has issued written notice of an intention to report, a student has the right to appeal the decision, they can progress their appeal via Melbourne Polytechnic's Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure within twenty working days. A student may appeal on the following grounds:

a. the institute's failure to record or calculate a student's marks accurately;
b. compassionate or compelling circumstances; or
c. the institute has not implemented its interventions strategy and other policies according to its documented policies and procedures that have been made available to the student.

(28) Where an appeal is successful and the appeal shows that a student did make satisfactory progress, they will not be reported, and an intervention strategy will not be activated for the following compulsory study period.

(29) Where an appeal is successful and the appeal finds that a student did not make satisfactory progress, but there are compassionate or compelling reasons for the lack of progress, they will not be reported, but ongoing support will be provided and an intervention strategy activated for the following compulsory study period.

(30) Melbourne Polytechnic will report a student's unsatisfactory course progress to DHA, withdrawing them from the course due to student default as described in the International Students Withdrawal Transfer and Refund Procedure, where they:

a. choose not to access the complaints or appeals process;
b. withdraw from the complaints and appeal process; or
c. have an unsuccessful outcome of appeal.

Monitoring ELICOS Attendance

(31) Melbourne Polytechnic is required to record and monitor the attendance of each student studying on a student visa enrolled in the English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) course.

(32) Attendance will be monitored by session and then recorded against a ten (10) session per week basis. The attendance hours to date will be measured against the scheduled course contact hours, which is indicated by the period of the CoE.

Attendance Requirements

(33) To achieve satisfactory attendance, at a minimum, a student must attend at least eighty (80) per cent of their scheduled course contact hours of the ELICOS course enrolled.

(34) A student will be marked absent for sessions when they are not present in class, including sessions for which a medical certificate has been submitted.

(35) Students who have been absent for more than five (5) consecutive days without approval will be notified and offered assistance at the earliest possibly opportunity.

(36) Students who are deemed at risk of not achieving satisfactory attendance (80% of scheduled contact hours) are subject to an attendance warning process well before the attendance becomes unsatisfactory. These students will be contacted by the ELICOS operations team, advised of their poor attendance, reminded of the conditions of their student visa, warned of the consequences of a breach of these conditions, and counselled to determine if additional support to assist the student to maintain satisfactory attendance can be offered by the institute.

Unsatisfactory Attendance

(37) A student is deemed, at any stage of the course, to have not met satisfactory attendance requirements when the projected final attendance will be less than 80% of the scheduled contact hours, and 'full attendance' for all remaining scheduled contact hours is assumed.

(38) Where a student is deemed as not having met satisfactory attendance requirements, the institute will provide a written notice to the student of its 'intention to report' (ITR) the student to DHA for unsatisfactory course attendance and a breach of their student visa conditions. The notice will clearly state its purpose, informing the student of the reasons for the ITR, and clearly advise the student of the right of internal appeal.

Reporting Non-Compliance

(39) Melbourne Polytechnic may decide not to report a student for breaching their attendance requirements if the student:

a. lodges an internal appeal against an 'intention to report' notice;
b. has attended at least 70% of the scheduled contact hours; or
c. produces genuine evidence clearly demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances to support the above-mentioned appeal.

(40) After failing to complete a successful internal appeal, Melbourne Polytechnic will advise the student of their right to access an external appeal process within ten (10) working days. If any such external appeal results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, Melbourne Polytechnic will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventative or corrective action required by the decision. It must also advise the student of that action.

(41) The institute will report the student for failing to meet attendance requirements via DHA to PRISMS, by withdrawing the student from the course due to student default in line with the International Students Withdrawal Transfer and Refund Procedure where the student:

a. has chosen not to access the complaints or appeals process within the twenty (20) working day period; or
b. withdraws from the complaints and appeal process; or
c. is unsuccessful in their internal and/or external appeal.

Section 4 - Responsibility and Accountability

(42) International students are responsible for:

a. complying with the conditions as set out in their student visa;
b. maintaining satisfactory academic progress and attendance and competing their studies within the prescribed duration as specified on their CoE;
c. participating in agreed strategies set out in, and attending any meetings in relation to, an intervention strategy; and
d. maintaining their enrolment, attending classes and submitting assessments until the conclusion of any appeals process.

(43) Teaching departments are responsible for monitoring the course progression and attendance of international students in line with this procedure.

(44) Staff within the International Office are responsible for monitoring student visa compliance, and reporting non-compliance where required under the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework. Staff are also required to inform students of appeal opportunities afforded to them internally at Melbourne Polytechnic, and externally.

(45) The Vice President International Development, International Partnerships (International Office) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.

Supporting Documents and Templates

(46) Related Melbourne Polytechnic policies and procedures:

a. Student Enrolment, Fees and Charges Policy
b. Engagement and Progression (VET and Foundation) Procedure
c. International Students Reduced Study Load Application Form
d. International Student Studying on a Student Visa Policy
e. International Students Deferral Suspension Cancellation of Enrolment Procedure
f. Recording Attendance (VET) Policy
g. Recording Attendance (VET) Procedure
h. Student Academic Progress (HE) Policy
i. Student Academic Progress (HE) Procedure
j. Student Complaints and Appeals Policy
k. Student Discipline Policy

(47) Related Legislation and Regulation

a. Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework
b. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
c. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
d. Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
e. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

Section 5 - Definitions

(48) For the purpose of this procedure the following definitions apply:

a. CoE: means Confirmation of Enrolment issued by DHA.
b. Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances: are circumstances assessed on the basis of demonstrable evidence that is generally beyond the student's control, such as:
    i. cases of Illness, disability or injury providing a medical certificate is submitted stating the reasons affecting full time study;
    ii. bereavement of a close family member;
    iii. natural disaster or major political upheaval in student's home country;
    iv. any experience which has left a student feeling traumatised, for example, being a victim or witnessing a serious crime or other exceptional personal experience; or
    v. any other exceptional circumstances assessed and approved by the International Office where external supporting documentation is provided.
c. Deferral: means the temporary delay to the commencement of studies, initiated by a student.DHA: means the

Department of Home Affairs.

d. Intervention Strategy: are measures applied during the semester to assist students to improve academic performance such as attending academic skills support programs or study group.
e. Leave of Absence: means the temporary postponement of studies, initiated by a student.
f. Suspension: means the temporary postponement of studies, initiated by Melbourne Polytechnic due to student misbehaviour or misconduct.

Status and Details

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Policy Owner	Cathy Frazer Executive Director People and Student Success
Policy Implementation Officer	Timothy Gilbert Vice President International Development
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