

## Monitoring Student Attendance Policy and Procedure<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy and set of associated procedures documents the monitoring of each student's attendance, where the absence of such procedures could adversely affect compliance with the requirements of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (The National Code).

### 2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all intending and current students under the age of 18 of a High School, Foundation, or ELICOS course delivered and awarded by a SGA College listed in the footer of this document and staff of these college.

### 3. Policy Provisions

SGA will systematically monitor students' compliance with student visa conditions relating to attendance over the length of each study period. It will be proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet the attendance requirements of at least 80 per cent of the scheduled course contact hours.

This notification and counselling will commence before the student's attendance falls below the 80 per cent level for the designated study period. The student will be informed that if his or her attendance falls below the required level and compelling and compassionate circumstances do not apply, the student will be reported, and the student's visa may be cancelled. If the student has questions about the student visa condition and the possible outcome of breaching the condition, SGA will refer the student to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

Attendance is monitored and reported according to the requirements of the National Code, SGA will monitor attendance and action intervention strategies where a student's attendance is at risk of falling below the desired 80 per cent for the following SGA programs:

- Taylors English Language Program
- Taylors High School programs
- Taylors Foundation programs
- Flinders International Study Centre Foundation programs
- Academic English Preparation

All monitoring for reporting purposes will be in accordance with the requirements of the National Code.

### 4. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to keep accurate records of student attendance by correctly marking the class roll in every lesson. Teachers who are concerned about the attendance of a particular student should notify relevant student support services or student welfare staff. According to the procedures implemented at the campus level, student support staff and/or student welfare staff are responsible for monitoring and reporting on student attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy is currently under review.

## **5. Procedures for determining, recording and reporting upon attendance**

Procedures for reporting upon students who are at risk due to poor attendance are implemented at the campus level. There may be a number of reporting phases. At each reporting phase, a student identified as being at risk will be subject to an intervention strategy.

Intervention strategies include:

- referral for counselling relating to study skills/motivation/personal issues
- referral to Student Support Services or Student Welfare Services with regard to living arrangements
- assistance to the student in developing a tutorial programme to complement their standard classes
- alerting all teaching staff to students at risk
- development of an agreement with the student detailing the intervention strategy and expectations, to be signed by the student
- addition to the participant list of the staff member who will oversee the at risk student's participation in the intervention strategy
- a letter to the student and parents/sponsors, if the student is under 18, explaining the consequences of continued non-attendance and the assistance offered by the SGA
- telephone communication with parents, if the student is under 18, detailing the contents of the letter

If a student is undertaking a course leading to another course at a partner university, the partner university is informed of any variation in the student's study program (unit withdrawals).

## **6. Special Consideration**

It is understood that from time to time, a student may not be able to attend classes due to circumstances beyond his/her control.

In such cases, SGA may agree to continue the enrolment of a student whose attendance is at least 70 per cent of scheduled contact hours within any study period and:

- for High School, ELICOS and Foundation Program courses, the student provides genuine evidence demonstrating that compassionate or compelling circumstances apply.

### **6.1 Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances**

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. In relation to attendance, these could include, but are not limited to:

- a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- b. bereavement of a close family member such as a parent or grandparent (where possible a death certificate should be provided);
- c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student's region of origin requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies; or
- d. a traumatic experience which could include:
  - involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident, or
  - witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime; and
  - this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports)

Please note that the above are only some examples of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances. The designated manager will use his/her professional judgement to assess each case on its individual merits.

When determining whether compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, the designated manager will consider documentary evidence provided to support the claim, and will keep copies of these documents in the student's file.

## **7 Reporting of International Students**

### **7.1 Letter of Intention to Report**

The relevant Student Support Services or Student Welfare Manager, in consultation with the Academic Manager, is responsible for the process of notifying students during each study period who have not met the attendance requirements. These students will be handed a letter notifying them of SGA's intention to report to DHA for unsatisfactory attendance. A copy of the letter is mailed to the student's parents (and sponsor, if applicable), if the student is under 18. The student has 20 working days from a date specified in the letter to invoke the SGA complaints and appeals process to appeal the decision to report.

SGA will maintain the student's enrolment in the course while the Complaints and Appeals process, including the External Case Review process, is underway.

Appeal by the means of engaging an External Review – Overseas Student Ombudsman (The Office of Training Advocate in South Australia)

In the event of the complainant remaining dissatisfied with the result or conduct of SGA's internal procedures for handling of the complaint, the complainant in relation to being reported to DHA, has the right to access an external appeals process. The College recommends the student contact the International Ombudsman who provides an External Students Appeals Service. This service is free of charge. The form is available from the OSO: [www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint/overseas-students](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint/overseas-students) or the OTA (South Australia only): [www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/home/international-students-or-the-NSW-ombudsman-\(USHAPP-and-USFP-only\):](http://www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/home/international-students-or-the-NSW-ombudsman-(USHAPP-and-USFP-only):) [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)

### **7.2 Reporting to DHA**

Once a decision to report to DHA is made, the student may or may not choose to access SGA's complaints and appeals process. If an international student who has not met the mandatory attendance conditions, accesses the Complaints and Appeals Process within the required 20 working days, and the process results in a decision that supports SGA, SGA must report to the Department of Education and Training (DET) as soon as possible that the student is not achieving satisfactory attendance. The College will keep a copy of the document in the student's file.

Where an international student who has not met the mandatory attendance condition chooses not to access the Complaints and Appeals Process within the required 20 working days, SGA must report to DET as soon as possible that the student is not achieving satisfactory attendance.

This provision applies to both current accepted students and former accepted students (e.g. A student cannot avoid being reported for failure to satisfactory attendance by cancelling his/her CoE with a SGA provider).

DHA may cancel a student's visa based on the SGA's assessment of a student's attendance. DHA does not assess whether a breach has occurred, that is done by SGA. However, DHA does retain the ability to consider exceptional circumstances as to why the visa should not be cancelled and to refer the matter back to SGA if it has not given the student access to an appropriate appeals process or considered compassionate or compelling circumstances, where relevant. It is expected that these circumstances will be limited.

## **8. Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed at a minimum of every 5 years by the policy owner (or delegate) to ensure alignment to appropriate strategic direction and its continued relevance to current and planned operations. The next scheduled review of this document is listed in the document history section of this document.

## 9. Records

Records in association with this policy will be kept in accordance with SGA's Records Management Policy. Confidential documents related to the implementation of the policy will be maintained according to relevant privacy requirements.

## 10. Related Documents

SGA Student Privacy Policy, SGA Records Management Policy, SGA Student Complaints and Appeals Policy, SGA Cancellation and Refunds Policy, SGA Student Progression Exclusion and Graduation Policy, and SGA Student Code of Conduct. These documents can be accessed from the College's Policy webpage.

## 11. Related Regulations

This policy has been developed in line with requirements set out in the: Education Services for Overseas (ESOS) Act 2000 (and its amendments); National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code) which complements existing national quality assurance frameworks in education and training including the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) Standards 2018, the Foundation Standards (operating adjunct to the National Code), the NSW Education Act and related regulations for NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) registered High Schools, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the Tuition Protection Service (TPS), and other Commonwealth and State legislation and regulatory frameworks and standards including the Privacy Act 1988, Corporations Act 2001; and Competition and Consumer Act 2010.

### Document Approval

Document ID	SGA Monitoring Student Attendance Policy and Procedure		
Policy Owner(s)	Principal, TCS, College Director, TCP and Centre Director, FISC		
Approved by	Head of International Study Centres – ANZ	Date Approved	7 September 2018
		Date Commencing	15 September 2018

### Document History

Commencing Date	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
11 May 2012	v1.0 Initial approval Codification of rules into policy	May 2017
17 Mar 2016	v4.3 Amendment approved by National Compliance Manager - HE (replacing v4.2)	March 2021
15 September 2018	v5.0 Administrative amendments to maintain business and regulatory currency and change of approval authority to Head of International Study Centres – ANZ	September 2023
18 December 2018	v5.1 Minor typographical update to point 6.0	
7 June 2019	v5.2 Minor administrative amendment to maintain currency. Extension of scope to include University of Sydney Foundation Program (CRICOS Course Code: 022310D) delivered by SGA's Taylors College (Sydney campus) on behalf of the University of Sydney (CRICOS Provider code 00026A). (Authorised by COO-ANZ. Effective from 7 June 2019)	September 2023

## Appendix A – SAMPLE LETTERS

### Sample Letter About Absence

[DATE]

[STUDENT NAME1] [STUDENT NAME2]

[ADDRESS1]

ADDRESS2]

Dear [STUDENT NAME1]

Through my regular checks of the College Attendance Rolls, it has come to my attention that your recent attendance has been at risk of less than satisfactory.

As an international student, your student visa conditions state that you **must** attend at least 80% of the contact hours scheduled for each term. The College is required to report any students who do not maintain satisfy attendance in their course to the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training (DET) through PRISMS. This action automatically alerts the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

Currently, your attendance is rated at [ENTER ATTENDANCE%].

Please report to the Student Support Services Manager or Dean within seven (7) days to discuss the situation.

Yours sincerely

[NAME OF SENDER]

[TITLE]

## Sample Notification of Intention to Report

### - Attendance

[DATE]

[STUDENT NAME1] [STUDENT NAME2]

[ADDRESS1]

[ADDRESS2]

Dear [STUDENT NAME1]

On [ENTER DATE] we sent you a letter in regard to your attendance at Taylors College.

If a student's attendance falls below 80% of the scheduled contact hours for the term and he/she is unable to achieve 80% attendance for the remainder of the term, the College is required to report that student to the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training (DET) through PRISMS. This action automatically alerts the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

Currently, your attendance is rated at [ENTER ATTENDANCE%].

I must now inform you of the College's intention to report you to the Secretary of the DET through PRISMS for unsatisfactory attendance. If you think there are reasons why you should not be reported, you may appeal against the College's decision. You may appeal if you believe one or more of the following have happened:

- the College has not recorded or calculated your attendance outcomes correctly;
- there are compassionate or compelling reasons which have contributed to your unsatisfactory attendance;
- the College has not implemented its intervention strategy in accordance with its documented policies and procedures;
- the College has not made relevant policies available to you.

The procedure for making an appeal is located within your Handbook and on the College website. You have 20 working days beginning on [include start date of period, allowing time for delivery] to make your appeal. During this time (and if you choose to make an appeal, while your appeal is being considered) you must continue to attend classes and work towards completing course requirements.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please make an appointment with [contact person]. You can bring a friend with you if you wish.

Yours sincerely

[NAME]

[POSITION]