

# Student Support Policy and Procedure

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## Purpose

This Policy describes the commitment of the Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce (SISTC) to providing its students with the necessary resources and support to assist them to be successful in their studies.

This Policy outlines how SISTC identifies students who are at risk of not successfully completing their units of study, the support made available for students, and information to students on how to access the support.

This Policy also provides staff with guidance on their responsibilities and ensures adequate support is available for students who have additional academic or personal needs. It also aims to assist staff to identify students who may require additional support and ensure appropriate interventions are implemented. The Policy is available to prospective and enrolled students as part of their induction and orientation processes. The Student Handbook also covers the necessary information on the types of academic and other support available for students.

## Scope

This Policy and supporting procedures apply to all SISTC staff and students.

## Principles

We are committed to providing a supportive teaching and learning environment where students benefit from a rich and personalised educational experience. This commitment is embedded in the Strategic Plan 2023-27 and underpins this Policy and related services.

Our approach to student support operates within the context of mutual responsibility recognising student agency. Students take responsibility overall for their own learning, with active support from us in a range of identified support areas throughout their study. We aim to foster an environment which encourages student independence in learning, while taking steps to identify, respond to and support students with personal and/or academic issues that may negatively impact student educational outcomes.

Our student support services are designed to assist students “at risk” without compromising the integrity of academic standards. Strategies are based on identifying and responding to potential barriers to learning as early as possible, and any intervention to provide additional support is respectful, timely, and consistent.

We recognise that international students, especially those in the first year of studies, are transitioning to a new culture and life in Australia and we seek to ensure that a supportive learning environment is provided for them.

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## Key Definitions

“At risk” students refer to those failing to make satisfactory progress in their course of study and who:

- do not meet attendance requirements
- perform poorly in their assessment tasks
- fail 50% or more of the units in a study period

*Academic support* refers to a range of academic support services provided by SISTC to assist students who are having difficulties with their study demands.

## Policy Statement

Our support services encompass academic, English language, financial, and personal support in a framework of mutual responsibility. A range of complementary initiatives operate to promote the safety and wellbeing of our student body under the *Health and Safety Policy and Framework*.

We provide dedicated staffing resources for student support. Where specialist support services are required beyond this capacity, staff are encouraged to assist students to link with service providers including medical, counselling, welfare, legal, financial, or housing community support services near our campuses. Contact details for these services are provided at the end of this document.

International students are required to have private health insurance under their student visa provisions.

We communicate with students identified as ‘at risk’ to ensure they are aware of support services available to assist them in successfully completing their units of study.

### Students are expected to:

- be aware of and follow student conduct and behaviour requirements outlined in our *Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy*
- make informed and considered choices in relation to course and unit selection, with assistance and advice from the student support team
- seek out relevant support where a personal issue is impacting or is likely to impact their educational progress
- seek and follow advice from academic staff to fulfill academic requirements, including the requirements for academic progression
- inform us of any difficulties in completing their academic requirements
- respond to any formal communications from us regarding academic progress and/or meeting invitations

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### Support for Students

SISTC recognises that a student's academic performance and outcomes may be not only be impacted by the lack of necessary academic skills (planning the study, reading and notetaking for assignments, academic writing, referencing etc) but also by personal circumstance or factors, such as:

- medical illness, injury, psychological condition, or disability
- changes in family or carer responsibilities
- factors in their private lives which disrupt their ability to study and/or attend teaching sessions
- difficulties including, but not limited to, financial and/or housing stress

Therefore, we take a holistic approach to student support to assist students succeed in their studies without compromising academic standards. Any intervention is to support students to the greatest extent possible in keeping their academic performance on track and ensuring success in their studies.

### Access to Support

Information on student support services:

- The Student Handbook is provided on our website [www.sistc.edu.au](http://www.sistc.edu.au)
- Available on the student learning platform; access is provided upon enrolment.

### Learning Resources

We provide:

- access to a learning Management System (LMS) to all students, which contains information and learning resources specifically designed for each subject in their course of study
- comprehensive Subject information, as hosted on the LMS, includes course content, assessment requirements and learning resources available
- a variety of other subject specific resources for each subject including introductory and assessment videos, study guides to accompany the required text or materials for each subject, webinars, audio guides and activities, and current articles
- access to eBook Central, a comprehensive online library platform with a vast collection of academic eBooks from a variety of disciplines. In addition, we have subscriptions to the ProQuest database and IEEE Xplore, which provide access to more than 250 magazines and journals
- access to online journals with open access
- laptops for labs and class activities for students
- access to Azure and AWS cloud services with our students receiving a \$230 credit to use on Azure services

### Transition to Study:

The Orientation program is designed to prepare students for study and to familiarise them with the academic skills required for the course and the processes for the course of study.

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Orientation includes a specific section on Academic Integrity. The Orientation program is updated regularly to ensure customised and contemporary information is provided to students. Staff and student feedback informs the review and update of orientation materials as part of our ongoing self-assurance and continuous improvement processes.

### Support for Access and Equity Groups

Our *Equity and Diversity Policy* establishes the principles relating to support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disabilities or special support needs and outlines the various types of support including personal support, mentoring and community support that are made available to this group of students.

Where students notify us of any academic and/or special support needs before commencement of studies or we identify students who require additional support early in their studies, we provide appropriate resources and infrastructure to meet these needs.

SISTC Strategic Plan targets include obtaining FEE-HELP approval in 2025. Once the enrolment of domestic students commences, we will actively seek to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into its courses. SISTC will seek to provide a supportive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that respect and acknowledge their cultural needs and other requirements.

### Additional Support for Students with Special Needs

Our *Reasonable Adjustment Policy* is relevant in this context and provides the process for considering applicable reasonable adjustments in a range of existing (as well as emergent) student situations which justify formal consideration.

Students with special needs:

- can advise if they require additional support. These special needs could relate to disabilities, health or learning issues or requirements for cultural support or ancillary services
- to let us know on the enrolment forms if they require any special learning support or adjustment so that we can reasonably consider any additional services or resources prior to the student commencing studies

When deciding whether a request for an adjustment is reasonable, we take into account financial and other resources required to make such an adjustment and whether it would result in an unjustifiable hardship to SISTC to provide quality education to all students.

### Academic Support

We provide a range of academic learning support and resources for students including:

- weekly academic support classes
- English language support classes
- 24 x 7 access to online library resources
- academic advisory support (an Academic Advisor appointed by the Dean)

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- additional computing support (IT services)
- academic integrity or misconduct advisory support (through Associate Dean Learning and Teaching).

We ensure that all new students have an opportunity to meet with an Academic Dean and academic and professional staff (e.g. Student Support Officer/s). All commencing students attend an orientation/welcome/transition session. The purpose of this session is to advise students of their obligations, apprise them of support services, introduce them to academic and professional staff and familiarise them with campus facilities and learning resources, such as the library.

### English Language Support

Feedback from the Student Consultative Committee (SCC) indicated that some students may benefit from English language support classes for academic purposes. We will therefore commence English language support classes from semester 1, 2024.

### Access to Teaching Staff

We ensure that for every unit of study, each teaching staff member (lecturer and tutor) makes at least one hour available per week outside of classroom hours during which students can 'drop in' and seek their advice, or ask questions about academic, assessment and study matters. The consultation times and location for each unit are advised to students at the beginning of each teaching period.

Academic staff who are teaching units are required to:

- support students throughout the subject duration
- monitor and engage in unit online interactions and forums
- respond to all student emails/enquiries within two business days

Students have the option of meeting with a more senior academic staff member if they are unable to resolve questions with the teaching staff for their units, or if they are not satisfied with a response or proposed course of action. These escalation and review provisions are set out in the *Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedures*.

### Students "at risk" or not progressing satisfactorily

We offer additional academic support to students who are having difficulty progressing satisfactorily in their studies (or are at risk of not progressing satisfactorily) or where their wellbeing is reasonably considered to warrant some form of staff intervention. Our *Course Rules, Progression and Completion Policy* outlines how we handle students making unsatisfactory progress, including the use of Conditional Enrolment where this is warranted.

Students may be referred to additional support services by a staff member or be a self-referral. Students who are identified as potentially benefitting from additional support based on academic performance are not compelled to access a particular support service.

However, all students who are identified as being "at risk", including those students who have made unsatisfactory progress in their studies, are required to have an agreed plan (a Program of Support and Supervision) which may include additional group or individualised support and/or consideration

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of reasonable adjustment variations to the learning arrangements/requirements. In all cases, the Program details are recorded and signed by the student and the Academic Advisor with arrangements for further monitoring and review set out clearly.

The Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching takes overall responsibility for the cohort of students who are receiving assistance under such arrangements. The Director of Operations approves the provision of resources where such support is likely to require additional funding.

Our tailored Support and Supervision is intended to facilitate an identifiable improvement of academic performance of a student, or in the prognosis for/likelihood of performance improvement. Normally such an improvement would be expected to be in evidence within 4-6 weeks, in line with when the student's next assessment task is due.

Where the student is at risk of failing multiple units, the Program of Support and Supervision takes on additional importance in ensuring student enrolment is not varied to *Conditional Enrolment*. If the student has failed multiple units, a variation to *Conditional Enrolment* status would indicate that SISTC believes the student is significantly at risk of not meeting the progression requirements of their program and/or the terms of their student visa.

For an international student, a *Conditional Enrolment* with a reduced study is likely to extend the duration of the student's study beyond their current visa period and they may need to apply for a new visa.

The conferral of *Conditional Enrolment* status would indicate a clear intention by SISTC that the student's ability to continue their studies has become conditional on a level of measurable improvement. Such conditions are discussed with the student and set out in writing in the advice to them about Conditional Enrolment. Such advice includes timeframes and details for a suite of performance improvements and outcomes required for a reinstatement of full enrolment.

Failure to achieve these improvements may lead to either a revision of the *Conditional Enrolment* terms if there has been measurable improvement in some aspects of their performance, or to suspension of their enrolment.

The *suspension status* includes the student being invited to show cause why their enrolment should not be cancelled. The suspension stage also provides the student with an opportunity to access the internal and external review facilities set out in our *Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedure*, including access to external advocacy through the Resolution Institute.

If a student has exhausted all available appeal processes without a change in their student status, the final action is to terminate their enrolment.

### Personal Support

A student may be identified as requiring personal support and assistance where their psychological or medical welfare is reasonably considered to warrant this action.

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All staff and students are encouraged to be alert to the possibility of students in personal difficulty. At orientation, students are advised to approach the Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching or the Deputy Director of Student Services (DDSS) if they are facing any health, financial or other personal issues that are impacting their wellbeing.

SISTC also ensure ongoing awareness through mechanisms such as notices, posters, and screen reminders.

Students identified by the DDSS as requiring professional mental health care services will be able to access up to **5 free counselling sessions** with the **Australian Counselling Service** (1300 374 033).

### Financial Support

We provide financial support by way of reduced fees/ partial fee scholarships for students facing financial difficulties.

The Director of Operations approves the provision of financial support within this framework on the basis of advice from the DDSS.

### Support for Resolution of Complaints, Appeals and Grievances

We provide students with access to a comprehensive internal and external review facility, which they can access in relation to any decision, action or matter which affects them as students. These provisions are set out in detail in our *Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedures*.

The policy provides that in most cases, an internal review would first be conducted confidentially by an Investigating Officer. The Investigating Officer would be a staff member who has had no involvement in the matter that is the subject of the complaint, appeal, or grievance. During the internal review process, students may approach SISTC about providing them with access to external advocacy services to help them present their case. This would normally happen if the Investigating Officer was not able to resolve the matter on an initial review of the evidence after preliminary discussions with the student and the relevant parties.

Students may also apply for an external review if they are not happy with the outcome of an internal review. In this situation, students are provided with access to assistance from the **Resolution Institute**, which automatically includes advocacy services. Detailed information on complaints and grievances as well as on applying for external review are provided in the *Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedures*.

### Legal Services

We do not offer a provision to pay for student legal services in respect of any matters, including independent legal advice in relation to complaint, appeal, and grievance matters.

International students in Sydney can access the *International Student Legal Service* at Redfern Legal Centre, Sydney and those in Melbourne can access the International Student Employment and Accommodation Legal Service for assistance. Contact details are provided in **Attachment A**.

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## Monitoring and Review

Our *Student Participation and Feedback Policy* sets out the arrangements for the operation of the Student Consultative Committee and the Student Feedback Survey Framework, which enables students to provide structured feedback on the operation of support services to help inform the future development of these services.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors has oversight of this Policy, with input from the Academic Board.

The Chief Executive Officer - in consultation with Executive Management Committee - is responsible for leading the development and review of the policy and for overall management of student support services, systems, and processes for SISTC.

The Dean is responsible for implementing processes for monitoring the progress of students in all units including:

- attendance at lectures, tutorials, workshops, and other scheduled activities that are part of their academic program;
- attempts at assessment;
- overall progress towards completion of course;
- failure to attend or to complete units, practical placements, assessments; and Teaching staff in any unit who form the view that a student may benefit from additional support due to factors such as poor class attendance, participation, progress or behaviour, or due to issues raised by the student, ensures that the student is aware of support services available to assist the student.



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### ATTACHMENT A

Service	Phone and online contacts	Address
<b>Emergencies</b>		
Police	000	
Fire Brigade	000	
Ambulance	000	
Home Doctor Service	137 425	
<b>24 Hour Counselling and Psychological Support</b>		
Lifeline	131 114	
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636	
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467	
<b>Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence</b>		
1800 Respect	1800 424 017	
NSW Rape Crisis	1800 211 028	
Sexual Assault Services Victoria	1800 806 292	
<b>Local Police Department</b>		
Sydney City Police	(02) 9265 6499	
Parramatta Police	(02) 9633 0799	
Dandenong (VIC) Police	(03) 9767 7444	
<b>Local Hospital</b>		
Hospitals Sydney CBD	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (02) 9514 6111 St Vincent's Hospital (02) 8382 1111	Missenden Road Camperdown Sydney 390 Victoria Street Darlinghurst Sydney
Parramatta	Westmead Hospital (02) 8890 5555	Cnr Hawkesbury Road and Darcy Road
Hospitals Melbourne	Dandenong Hospital (03) 9554 1000 Corymbia Day Hospital (03) 8769 8555 Monash Medical Centre (03) 9928 8111	135 David Street Dandenong, VIC 92 David Street Dandenong VIC Centre Road Bentleigh East VIC
<b>Legal and Advocacy Services</b>		
International Student Legal Service NSW	02 9698 7277	Redfern Legal Centre Sydney
International Student Employment and Accommodation Legal Service	1800 056 449 <a href="mailto:info@studymelbourne.vic.gov.au">info@studymelbourne.vic.gov.au</a>	Study Melbourne Hub (Online)
Overseas Student Ombudsman	1300 362 072	
Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) National Office	(02) 6264 1111	

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### Document Details

Accountabilities and review cycle		
Delegate (Implements, records and reports)	Associate Dean Learning and Teaching Deputy Director of Student Services	Ref: Student Support Policy and Procedure
Approval body	Academic Board	
Reporting Body	Academic Board	
Approval date	06.02.2024	
Review date	3 years from last review 202702	
Supporting information		
Related legislation	Educational Services for Overseas Students Act & Regulations (ESOS) (Commonwealth) <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021C01320">https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021C01320</a> Higher Education Sport Act (HESA) (Commonwealth) <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2022C00005">https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2022C00005</a> Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) (Commonwealth) <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2022C00105">https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2022C00105</a> National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Commonwealth) <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01182">https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01182</a> Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (NSW) 1998 (as amended) <a href="http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/papipa1998464/">http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/papipa1998464/</a> <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003 Section 19-43</i>	
Acknowledgements and sector benchmarking	Yes	
Supporting documents		
Related documents	This policy should be read in conjunction with associated guidelines and procedures and other relevant policies, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure</li> <li>2) Assessment Policy and Procedure</li> <li>3) Review of Grades and Academic Appeals Policy</li> <li>4) Critical Incident Policy and Management Plan</li> <li>5) Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy</li> <li>6) Reasonable Adjustment Policy</li> <li>7) Anti-Discrimination Policy</li> <li>8) Equity and Diversity Policy</li> <li>9) Course Rules Progression and Completion Policy</li> <li>10) Bullying Harassment and Violence Prevention and Response Policy</li> <li>11) Strategic Plan 2023-2027</li> <li>12) Student Transition and Orientation Policy</li> <li>13) Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>14) Privacy Policy</li> </ol>	

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	<a href="#">15) Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy</a> <a href="#">16) Student Participation and Feedback Policy</a>				
Definitions	Glossary of Terms Please see the SISTC Glossary for terms not defined separately within this document.				
Superseded documents	NA				
<b>Type and location</b>					
Policy type	Corporate Governance				
	Academic Governance				
	Academic Management				
	Operational Management				
Location/access	Website				
	Student access				
	Staff access				
<b>Document History</b>					
Version No	Delegate	Approving body/delegate	Approval date	Amendment type	Key changes
01.00 – 01.05	AD-IT	AB	20190306 - 20210721	Minor	V1.0-V1.2 updated 6 March 2019; 30 July 2019; 2 August 2019 and 10 June 2020 V1.3 updated with support for students impacted by pandemic/infectious diseases outbreaks on 5 February 2021 V1.4 updated with the approved senior management structure 28 April 2021. V1.5 updated with the changes to the HESF 21 1 July 2021.
02.00	D	AB	202304163	Major	Major rewrite of policy and procedure and combined into one document and form alignment