Support for Students Policy

Academic Board Approved Document

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Version Control

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Review	The Academic Board will review this Policy in accordance with the Institute's *Policy Review Schedule*.
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Policy owner	Dean
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Related Policy	Dictionary of Terms Mental Health Strategy and Implementation Plan New Student Orientation Policy Sexual Assault and sexual Harassment Policy Course Progression and Graduation Policy English Language Policy Student Consultation Policy
Related Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth) Higher Education Support Act 2003
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Benchmarking Institutes	Australian Institute of Higher Education King's Own Institute Macquarie University Southern Cross University University of Newcastle Western Sydney University

Version History	

1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Churchill Institute of Higher Education's ('CIHE' or 'the Institute') commitment to providing adequate support services to students to assist them successfully completing their studies at the Institute. The Policy also outlines the Institute's mechanisms for ensuring students and staff are aware of relevant support services for students. This policy is published in accordance with the Institute's obligations under Section 19-43 of the Higher Education Support Act.

1.2 Background

The Institute recognises that the provision of a variety of support services for students is critical to assist students to successfully complete their studies at the Institute. This includes the provision of academic support; assistance with enrolment, program progression and administrative systems; student health, safety and wellbeing support; and general support regarding career and financial advice.

This Policy has been structured to meet the requirements of the Institute's policies, quality assurance standards, accreditation requirements and relevant administrative standards.

1.3 Definitions

For definitions, refer to *Dictionary of Terms*.

2. Scope

This Policy provides information about the Institute's support for all students enrolled in coursework award programs at the Institute. Furthermore, this Policy applies to:

2.1 all students enrolled at the Institute regardless of study modal or cohort characteristics; and

2.2 all academic and administrative staff, and people contracted by the Institute with responsibility for designing, administering and making decisions relating to support for students on behalf of the Institute.

2.3 in the event of any inconsistency arising between this policy and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) the ESOC Act will take precedent.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 The Institute is committed to providing ongoing and relevant support to students to assist with the successful completion of their studies and that students are made aware of the services available to them.

3.2 Support services will be designed to cater for the academic, administrative and pastoral support needs of our diverse student body.

3.2 CIHE is committed to ensuring support services will be equally available to all students regardless of cohort characteristics, study mode or place of study from their enrolment to graduation.

3.3 CIHE will provide multiple means and modes of support that are can be self-accessed by students, provided by Institute staff or by referral to external services.

3.4 The Institute will maintain strict privacy standards to protect student information when accessing both internal and external support services.

4. Student Support Categories and Related Policies

The following table details the categories of student support the Institute will provide with a reference to the related policy that deals with that support in detail.

Support Category	Related Policy
Administrative Support (Enrolment, Orientation and Program Administration)	New Student Orientation Policy Student Consultation Policy
Academic Skills Development Support (Academic Skills and English Language Support)	Library and Information Services Policy English Language Policy Student Consultation Policy
Program Specific Academic Support	New Student Orientation Policy Student Consultation Policy Course Progression and Graduation Policy Diversity and Equity Policy
Academic Adjustment Support	Assessment Policy Student Consultation Policy
Student Program Progression Support	Course Progression and Graduation Policy Student Consultation Policy
Student Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support	Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy Diversity and Equity Policy Mental Health Strategy and Implementation Plan Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy Student Consultation Policy

Career, Financial and Living Advice	Student Consultation Policy
	New Student Orientation Policy

5. Administrative Support (Enrolment, Orientation and Program Administration)

5.1. The Institute's *New Student Orientation Policy* prescribes that all students must attend a compulsory Orientation day program prior to commencing their studies. Late arriving students are also required to attend a special orientation session upon their arrival.

5.2 Section 4 of the *New Student Orientation Policy* outlines specific activities and foci to encourage and support:

Academic Achievement (Section 4.1),
Student Development (Section 4.2),
Student Attainment and Retention (Section 4.3) and to
Support international students adjust to study and life in Australia (Section 4.4).

5.3 The Institute's *Student Consultation Policy* states that, with respect to administrative support, (refer policy for full details) students who wish to consult on administrative related matters can request to meet with the Student Support Officer, in consultation with the Academic Manager, at any time via reception. If students raise welfare or academic-related issues during the consultation session, the student advisor is required to refer the students to the relevant parties.

5.4 Assistance with accessing the Institute's Information Technology and Information systems is provided at Orientation. Students experience difficulty accessing IT systems are advised to contact the Academic Manager. The Librarian/Learning Support Officer also provides training and support for student accessing electronic library resources.

6. Academic Skills Development Support

6.1 English Language Support

The Institute's English Language Policy stated purpose is to:

provide a mechanism for support and development of students' English language proficiency, specifically Academic English. This encompasses avenues for pre-semester assessment, post enrolment support and remedial activity in accordance with the Institute's objectives and regulatory threshold standards for higher education.

The English Language policy also requires the Institute to utilise its teaching and assessment techniques to conduct, on an ongoing basis, an English language assessment of all students in the degree to identify those whose English language proficiency may adversely affect their studies. The policy also provides for the Institute to offer a range of English language development programs and opportunities to all students to further develop their English language proficiency in line with the diverse nature and backgrounds of the student body. The Librarian is tasked to provide ongoing study skills sessions to students who need help with study and/or English language. The Dean is also indicated as ultimately responsible for monitoring the English language proficiency of the student body and is able to direct "students at risk" of satisfactory progression in their program to attend English Language Support sessions if deemed beneficial.

6.2 Academic Skills Support

The *Institute's Student Consultation Policy* states that, with respect to study skills and learning support consultation,

students may consult the Librarian/Learning Support Officer and seek help for study-skills and learning support related matters such as advice on additional learning resources, study skills (e.g. writing and referencing), exam

strategies, teamwork issue resolution and library and online database research.

The Institute's *Library and Information Services Policy* provides for the acquisition of sufficient, suitable learning resources and electronic databases available for student research. The policy also provides for the appointment of a permanent Librarian who also fulfills the role of Learning Support Officer. The policy also outlines the following student support duties of the Librarian/Learning Support Officer:

    i.   Provide information sessions for students to assist them to develop their information literacy skills shall be regularly scheduled and may include (but not limited to):

    ii.   Schedule library tutorials;

    iii.   Organise group and one-on-one library information sessions;

    iv.   Schedule academic writing skills and referencing tutorials.

    v.   English language development programs

The policy also anticipates that students who are deemed 'at risk' in relation to their course progression are to initially seek assistance through the Library's information and skill development sessions. Students on academic probation are also, in the first instance, offered support through an academic intervention program accessed through the Library.

Support for the avoidance of academic misconduct will also be in the first instance offered through an online Library service.

7. Program Specific Academic Support

7.1 Academic support related to issues specific to a student's completion of units in a program is available to students throughout teaching periods including the pre-examination study break week and examination weeks. The primary contact for program specific academic support is the unit coordinator. The Institute's *Student Consultation Policy* outlines the following requirements of unit coordinators to support students undertaking their unit:

    i.   Unit-related Consultation – Lecturers are required to allocate consultation sessions to allow students to seek advice on any issue related to the unit. Those consultation sessions can be arranged as a weekly scheduled session or by appointment.

    ii.   Availability of Consultation – each full-time academic staff member is required to be available for consultation for a minimum of four hours per week during teaching periods. Sessional Staff should also provide consultation hours - generally one hour per week per unit.

7.2 Students may also contact unit coordinators outside of scheduled consultation sessions using the appropriate Learning Management System function for that unit or the staff email contact details contained in every unit outline.

7.3 In addition to unit coordinators, Program Convenors are also available to assist students with issues relating to their academic support for their particular program. Program Convenor contacts are made available to students on the Institute's website, the Student Handbook and during orientation.

7.4 The Institute has also appointed a Director of Teaching and Student Experience who can assist students to resolve issues relating to units studied outside of their major discipline, complex issues or academic issues that relate across units of study. The Director of Teaching and Student Experience can also refer students to the Dean for support.

7.5 Section 5 of the Institute's *Course Progression and Graduation Policy* recognises that CIHE students with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background may require special attention and support for academic success. The policy requires Course Coordinators to provide the Academic Board with a report of the progression of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the supports offered where deemed necessary. The Institute's *Diversity and Equity Policy* also acknowledges the importance of providing tailored support to students from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait background and indicates partnerships will be sought with relevant external support providers.

8. **Academic Adjustment Support**

Section 4.7 of the Institute's *Assessment Policy* outlines the procedures where students that are experiencing illness or misadventure can apply to request an extension to an assessment submission deadline. Special provisions relate to students that are experiencing an illness or condition over an extended period. Section 4.8 outlines similar procedures that apply to students that can not attend an examination due to illness or misadventure.

9. **Student Program Progression Support**

9.1 The Institute's *Course Progression and Graduation Policy* provides that the Institute will monitor each student's progression throughout their program and, if necessary, provide academic intervention and support when a student is deemed "at risk" of unsatisfactory progress in their program. A student will be deemed at risk where:

      i. they have not attended 80% of their compulsory learning activities in a unit; or

      ii. not attempted or performed unsatisfactorily in any assessment task; or

      iii. fail a unit more than once; or

      iv. failed 50% or more of the units attempted in a semester.

9.2 The Course Progression and Graduation Policy requires the Institute to record all attendance at compulsory learning events and outlines the academic intervention process that may lead to an academic counselling session where the student, Course Coordinator and Student Support Officer will determine what supports are appropriate. These forms of support include attending academic support sessions, receiving individual case management from the Student Support Officer, mentoring or a reduction in a student's study load.

9.3 Section 4.9 of the Institute's *Course Progression and Graduation Policy* stipulates the maximum time to complete a course and enables students to apply for an extension of course duration when their progress has been impeded by illness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control.

10. **Student Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support**

10.1 Section 7 of the Institute's *Student Consultation Policy* outlines the matters which students can discuss within welfare consultations with the Student Support Officer. These include, but are not limited to, physical and mental health, emotional, legal, financial and religious affairs. Students who wish to attend a welfare consultation can make an appointment at reception or directly by email with the Student Support officer. Lecturers can also recommend students seek personal advice and book an appointment for if they consider it necessary.

10.2 The Institute's *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy* outlines strategies to minimise the occurrence of sexual harassment and sexual assault including education, awareness-raising, provision of information as well as avenues of complaint by students and details of counselling and other support services available for complainants.

10.3 The Institute's *Mental Health Strategy and Implementation Plan* is designed to develop and implement a mental health strategy that promotes student mental health and well-being. Section 5 of the policy outlines the Institute's mental health strategy which has an important focus on promoting greater awareness of mental health, providing information, resources and support services, both internal and external, to students. The policy also details the processes in place at the Institute for students seeking support for their mental health including referral to external specialist support where necessary. The Institute has an arrangement with a suitable mental health care professional to deliver professional help support for students in need. The Institute, through the Student Support Officer or Dean will assist students with referrals and meet the cost of the initial consultation. Information regarding the Institute's Mental Health Strategy and resources aimed at enhancing student mental health and wellbeing will be made available during the New Student Orientation program, in the CIHE Student Handbook and via a dedicated Student Support section in the Institute's web page.

10.4 The Institute's *Critical Incident and Emergency Management Plan* outlines the Institute's responsibility to minimize the likelihood of critical incidents and emergencies that can impact students and details its response to any critical incidents or emergencies that may arise. An important component of that response relates to critical incident debriefing and provision of counselling services to students that may experience trauma as a result of the incident.

11.   Career, Financial and Living Advice

11.1 The Institute's *New Student Orientation Policy* provides that students will be provided with information regarding internal and external support mechanisms to inform students regarding financial advice, accommodation, careers and work rights and general advice related to life in Australia and external services that are available in the campus local area. This advice is also included in the Institute's Student Handbook and website.

11.2 Students who are experiencing financial hardship and cannot pay their full tuition fees by the due date can apply to the Dean for permission to pay their fees by instalment. The Dean will only grant such approval where the financial hardship arises due to special compassionate circumstances.

12.   Informing Students

Available supports will be advised to students through various channels including during orientation, the CIHE Student Handbook, Learning Management System, a dedicated student support section on the Institute's website and via direct student communication.

13.   Monitoring and Review

The Executive Management Team is responsible for the regular evaluation of and review of the effectiveness of student support services. The monitoring and review process will involve collecting qualitative and quantitative data on student access to support services and gathering feedback from students, staff and external providers of student support services. An annual report of the effectiveness of student support services will be prepared by the Dean for review of the Academic Board.