

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 1. Purpose of policy

This policy has been developed to ensure SMART English has appropriate support services available to all enrolled students to assist them in achieving their learning goals and satisfactory academic progress, and to ease their transition into life and study with SMART English and in Australia. This includes providing additional educational or personal support to students with special needs.

### 2. Scope

students enrolled in SMART English courses

all SMART English staff involved in the promotion, recruitment, admission, academic delivery, management and administration of students.

### 3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 SMART English determines the support needs of individual learners and provides access to the educational and support services necessary for the individual learner to meet the requirements of ELICOS courses.
- support services available to assist overseas students to help them adjust to study and life in Australia
  - English language and study assistance programs
  - any relevant legal services
  - emergency and health services
  - SMART English's facilities and resources
  - complaints and appeals processes as outlined in Standard 10 of the National Code 2018 (Complaints and appeals)
  - requirements for course attendance and progress, as appropriate
  - the support services available to assist students with general or personal circumstances that are adversely affecting their education in Australia
  - services students can access for information on their employment rights and conditions, and how to resolve workplace issues, such as through the Fair Work Ombudsman.
- 3.2 SMART English supports the overseas student in adjusting to study and life in Australia by giving the overseas student information on or access to an age and culturally appropriate orientation program that provides information about:
- 3.3 SMART English gives relevant information or provides referrals as appropriate to overseas students who request assistance in relation to the services and programs set out in Standard 6.1 of the National Code 2018, at no additional cost to the overseas student.
- 3.4 SMART English offers reasonable support to overseas students to enable them to achieve expected learning outcomes regardless of the overseas student's place of study or the mode of study of the course, at no additional cost to the overseas student.
- 3.5 SMART English facilitates access to learning support services consistent with the requirements of the course, mode of study and the learning needs of overseas student cohorts, including having and implementing documented processes for supporting and maintaining contact with overseas students undertaking online or distance units of study.
- 3.6 SMART English designates a member or members of its staff to be the official point of contact for overseas students. The student contact officer or officers have access to up-to-date details of SMART English's support services.
- 3.7 SMART English has sufficient student support personnel to meet the needs of the overseas students enrolled with SMART English.
- 3.8 SMART English ensures its staff members who interact directly with overseas students are aware of SMART English's obligations under the ESOS framework and the potential implications for overseas



students arising from the exercise of these obligations

3.9 SMART English has and implements a documented policy and process for managing critical incidents that could affect the overseas student's ability to undertake or complete a course, such as but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm. SMART English maintains a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by the college for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

3.10 SMART English:

- a. takes all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment on campus and advise overseas students and staff on actions they can take to enhance their personal security and safety.
- b. provides information to overseas students about how to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on their wellbeing, including critical incidents
- c. provide overseas students with or refer them to (including electronically) general information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia.

3.11 SMART English:

- a. employs or contracts a person or persons with formal qualifications in counselling and/or relevant experience who is able to advise and provide counselling to students in an intercultural context about:
  - academic and future progress advice
  - welfare matters.
  - mental first aid
- b. ensure that the counselling services are available and accessible by students at suitable times.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Assisting students in adjusting to study and life in Australia

SMART English requires that all students attend an orientation session upon commencement of their studies with SMART English. Orientation provides age and culturally appropriate information that assists students in adjusting to life in Australia and studying with SMART English.

Attendance at orientation is monitored and is compulsory as students are provided with vital information. An introduction to Student Support staff in orientation and in the Student Handbook ensures all students are aware of the support available throughout their study in Australia.

Student Support Services are available to discuss and assist with issues that may arise, including:

- understanding and adapting to Australian culture
- coping without student's friends and family - homesickness
- issues with accommodation
- course progress and attendance requirements
- language problems
- relationship problems on campus or socially
- coping with pregnancy and support available
- becoming the victim of a crime or having an accident
- violence at home or in a relationship
- cultural diversity
- childcare concerns
- religious issues
- complaints process
- external mental first aid counsellor and how to book an appointment
- employee's rights.



These services are provided at no additional cost to the student. Where Student Support Services are not qualified or when it is not appropriate to assist a student, a free referral will be provided to external support services.

#### Additional Support

Student Support Services maintain a current list of medical professionals within proximity to both Melbourne and Sydney campuses.

SMART English will maintain the contract with external accommodation providers who assist with information and placement in short-term and long-term accommodation and airport transfers.

Students who have financial issues during their studies can meet with Student Services Staff or SMART English Finance. Student Support staff can also assist students with enquiries regarding payment plans and direct them to the right division/person for further assistance.

While student support Officers can provide some advice and guidance, where it is appropriate for students to gain professional legal advice student support Officers will assist with a referral to professional legal services. Students may be entitled to free legal advice through the International Student Legal Advice Clinic (ISLAC), however generally students will incur a cost for professional legal services.

SMART English cannot and will not provide any assistance with regards to migration advice and all enquiries regarding migration will be referred to a registered Migration Agent.

#### 4.2 External Mental health First Aid – Professional Counsellor

In addition to the Student Support Team, SMART English provides all students with access to professional mental health first aid. The external counsellor is available for confidential one-to-one support sessions in person or via phone/email as needed by students. During orientation students are made aware of this support, who the individual members are, and the process for booking an appointment.

All requests for bookings can be either emailed to student services or made in person at the student services reception desk.

#### 4.3 Risk Management policy and Critical Incident form

SMART English has documented Risk management Policies and Student excursion risk assessment policy that cover the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, required follow-up to the incident, and records of the incident and action taken. These policies ensure the timely and effective management of a critical incident in the interests of students and/or staff, and SMART English stakeholders.

#### 4.4 Assisting student in meeting expected learning outcomes

SMART English provides enrolled students with access to and encourages participation in services designed to assist meeting course and attendance requirements. SMART English students are also monitored and supported throughout their studies.

SMART English provides personalized study plan and mid course report for enrolled students to assist their progress in academic skills.

To help students meet expected learning outcomes SMART English strongly encourages students to access academic support services including but not limited to: Weekly short course

Academic Manager works closely with Student Support Staff and teachers to identify and support all students at risk



of not meeting academic progress and/or attendance requirements. This includes:

- contacting students who have been absent for more than five consecutive days without approval
- intervention strategies and action plans for students who are at risk of course failure.

#### 4.5 Sufficient student support personnel

- SMART Student support and reception
- Student activity officer
- Academic manager
- Teachers
- Finance manager
- General manager
- Regional Marketing officers
- External professional mental health first aid counsellor

#### 4.6 Student survey analysis

Students receive a mid-course and an end-of-course survey. The former allows SMART English to tackle issues/areas for improvement in time before students finish their enrolment. The latter is conducted for statistical purposes. Student Support Officer receives and analyses the student surveys. If feedback is negative, the Academic Manager is immediately involved to investigate and start actions to improve services. If no irregularities are shown, samples are collected once every six months.

#### 4.7 Staff obligations regarding legislation

All staff members who interact directly with students are required to undertake relevant and appropriate training to ensure SMART English's obligations under the ESOS framework and National Code 2018 are met. Staff awareness and training includes.

- induction training and checklist on the National Code and ESOS Act, staff sign off confirming understanding of legislative requirements
- emails and discussions at staff meetings to communicate the ESOS framework.

