

# Student Support Policy and Procedure

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## 1 Purpose and scope

This policy and procedure provides information for staff and students regarding support provided by AIE Institute to assist students so that they have the best opportunity for success. Support services provided by AIE Institute are compliant with the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)*.

This policy and procedure applies to all members of AIE Institute's higher education community.

## 2 Objectives

AIE Institute is committed to providing a harmonious and supportive environment for all our students. AIE Institute provides academic and non-academic support to enhance students' experience during their studies and to assist students to achieve success.

AIE Institute:

- a. Supports students to settle into the AIE Institute community through a compulsory orientation program, Student Support services and Student Council
- b. Provides a Student Council as a student representative body that regularly attends the Academic Board meetings as a guest
- c. Ensures that the AIE Institute is free from discrimination
- d. Accommodates student diversity by providing support to the under-represented equity subgroups listed below:
  - I. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
  - II. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds
  - III. People with disability
  - IV. People from remote, rural or isolated areas
  - V. Gender, especially women in the Game Programming specialisation
- e. Recognises and accommodates the needs of neurodivergent students
- f. Promotes an environment where students are supported in all aspects of learning and are encouraged to undertake scholarly endeavours
- g. Promotes ethical and professional behaviour.

## 3 Implementation

The Academic Director and Student Support staff on each campus endeavour to support all students in their learning at AIE Institute, monitor students identified as 'potential at risk' and provide support to students who have been identified as 'at risk' under the processes described in the *Assessment, Moderation and Progress Policy and Procedure*. The Academic Director leads the development and implementation of a Student Council.

Equity subgroups and neurodivergent students are identified through the Admissions application process for domestic and international students. Ongoing opportunities are available for students to self-identify and seek additional support. Reports on course participation, progress, and completion of identified student subgroups are generated through the Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Management System (SMS) for continuous benchmarking and QA review.

### 3.1 Responsibilities

Student Support staff implement non-academic support, including referral to private counsellors, mental and physical health professionals. Student Support staff liaise with all academic and other support staff to ensure that students' welfare is treated holistically and confidentially.

AIE Institute:

- a. Ensures students who have the potential to need support are identified prior to starting study
- b. Ensures that students who need support are identified early through mechanisms such as student analytics and the Student Support staff
- c. Ensures that staff are trained in identifying and providing support for students, and refer students to external services as required
- d. Ensures that students have access to academic advice and that advice on areas of study assists students to make sound decisions which are likely to lead to successful outcomes
- e. Disseminates information about student support services to all staff and students
- f. Ensures that communication with students is timely, clear, respectful and effective
- g. Encourages students to access support as early as possible
- h. Ensures that academic assistance is available through an Academic Mentoring Program that provides one-on-one, staff-to-student support for students who have experienced significant challenges during their studies.

Students are expected to:

- a. Take responsibility for their own study and make informed choices
- b. Seek advice on all aspects of study decisions
- c. Be aware of support available and seek help where relevant
- d. Undertake support recommended as a result of risk identification and interventions
- e. Undertake additional English language studies where necessary.

The Student Council:

- a. Elects a President as the head of the Student Council and is a guest of the Academic Board
- b. Provides a voice for students studying at the AIE Institute
- c. Provides advocacy for students in all areas of their study and assists with interpreting AIE Institute's rules, policies and procedures
- d. Represents students as a guest of the Academic Board via the President of the Student Council.

## 4 Procedure

The Academic Director, Student Administration or Student Support staff can assist with all matters relating to academic and non-academic issues. Students may also request additional support from lecturers or Student Support staff. Students may be referred to dedicated counsellors, medical authorities or other third-party specialists. Staff with direct student contact are trained as part of induction processes on referral protocols for students needing support.

Student Administration and Student Support staff can advise on all aspects of student life, and support students, directly or indirectly by referral, with issues including, but not limited to:

- a. Learning pathways and possible RPL opportunities
- b. Provision for special learning needs
- c. Support with creating a resume, interview skills and finding work
- d. Academic learning support
- e. Personal support and pastoral care
- f. Support for international students

- g. Provision of low sensory spaces.

#### **4.1 Equity subgroup needs**

AIE Institute recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other equity subgroups such as those listed below may experience educational disadvantage:

- a. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- b. People with disability
- c. People from remote, rural or isolated areas
- d. Gender, especially women in the Game Programming specialisation.

AIE Institute is committed to providing additional support to the equity subgroups through English language support, peer mentoring, scholarships, and reasonable adjustment of learning.

Students in the above categories are identified initially through the Admissions application process. The transition and progress of equity subgroups is monitored through LMS and SMS reports on course participation and progress.

#### **4.2 Identification of academic support needs**

Staff are alert to individual students or cohorts of students in need of support. Student Administration staff and academic staff use the following events to trigger the activation of discussions and academic counselling when an individual student:

- a. Struggles with early formative assessment
- b. Does not submit an assessment
- c. Is struggling with the English teaching medium
- d. Submits assessments, but submits more than two days after the due date, without prior consultation or approval
- e. Consistently has late assessment submissions
- f. Fails an assessment
- g. Fails to attend class, arrives late or leaves early without informing administration on a regular basis
- h. Does not contribute to group discussions, behaves disruptively in groups, fails to contribute to group work.

Staff also use other mechanisms to identify and report the needs of student cohorts, such as data gained from learning support software, student surveys and feedback forms, and from student complaints.

##### **4.2.1 Learning support**

Workshops relating to all aspects of academic learning are held in orientation week to assist cohorts of students with transition to higher education study and campus life. An orientation schedule is available upon enrolment, and attendance is compulsory.

The orientation program will provide information about:

- a. Support services available to assist domestic and international students to help them adjust to study and life in Australia
- b. How to achieve expected learning outcomes
- c. Tutoring support
- d. English language and study assistance programs
- e. Emergency and health services
- f. Facilities and resources
- g. General information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia, such as beach safety or the etiquette and laws concerning smoking in Australia

- h. Personal security and safety
- i. How to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on their wellbeing, including critical incidents
- j. Any relevant legal services
- k. Complaints and appeals processes
- l. Requirements for course attendance and progress, as appropriate
- m. The support services available to assist students with general or personal circumstances that are adversely affecting their education in Australia
- n. Basic IT skills for navigating the website for enrolment, LMS, SMS, and obtaining student and library cards
- o. Career services
- p. Services to access information on employment rights and conditions and how to resolve workplace issues, such as through the Fair Work Ombudsman.

AIE Institute offers academic support to students including:

- a. English language and academic support services such as:
  - I. Academic study skills workshops, including:
    - i. Academic writing skills in English
    - ii. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills
    - iii. Referencing techniques and searching online databases
    - iv. Using the LMS and SMS and any other current learning platforms
  - II. Learning support, including course attendance and progress, support for online or distance units of study
  - III. Tutoring support
  - IV. Study skills centres
- b. Internal English Language Proficiency (ELP) support or referral to external ELP service providers
- c. Academic advice, including consultation time with a lecturer or tutor
- d. Individualised learning support strategies for students with disability and specific needs, part time study load or for other reasons
- e. Guided Peer Support program
- f. Academic Mentoring Program
- g. Links to all AIE Institute's policies and procedures
- h. Access to classrooms, computers and library facilities during school hours.

AIE Institute uses verbal and written or electronic formats to deliver information so that students can listen in the class environment and refer to material later. Lectures are recorded and accessible to students for 120 days. After this time, the lectures will no longer be available.

Individual support is also available for students and may be offered by staff at AIE Institute or via external support services. *Student Support Services Information* aims to assist in identifying appropriate support either internally or externally.

The Guided Peer Support program is run by students, for students, led by the Guided Peer Support Program Coordinator. Peer Support Facilitators run peer-led study groups to offer students a place to connect, collaborate, develop study skills, and gain confidence in their studies within an online study space.

### 4.3 Identification of general and non-academic support needs

Staff should be alert to individual students or cohorts of students in need of general or non-academic support. Information sessions are held during orientation to assist cohorts of students with transition to higher education study and campus life and support available. An orientation schedule is available upon

enrolment, and attendance is compulsory. Staff at AIE Institute endeavour to identify general or non-academic support needs for individual students to enable early intervention in a timely manner. Staff are encouraged to observe student behaviour and be alert to changes in their regular behaviour, disruptive, or other behaviours that may breach the *Student Code of Conduct*. Discussions with students is conducted in a respectful and timely manner and considers referral protocols.

#### **4.3.1 General support**

AIE Institute offers general support to students, including information on:

- a. Emergency and health services
- b. Facilities and resources
- c. Accommodation, housing and tenancy services
- d. Relevant legal services
- e. Complaints and appeals processes
- f. Employment rights and conditions and the Fair Work Ombudsman.

#### **4.3.2 Non-academic support**

Students are encouraged to refer to *Student Support Services Information* to contact the relevant AIE Institute personnel if they need support related to:

- a. ATSI and other equity subgroups
- b. Medical conditions or disability – AIE Institute can provide referrals to health practitioners
- c. Mental health conditions
- d. Disability and special needs support
- e. Emotional instability resulting from trauma, such as victimisation or sexual harassment
- f. External issues such as financial hardship
- g. Safety and personal security including sexual harassment or gender-based harm
- h. Advocacy support for assistance with rules and procedures from personnel independent to AIE Institute, including Student Council
- i. International student support services to assist with adjusting to study and life in Australia
- j. Personal and counselling support via referral to a relevant professional. Referral to services is provided at no cost to the student. AIE Institute offers financial support for the first consultation session with a counsellor from AIE Institute's approved list
- k. Sensory overload or over stimulation
- l. Career services.

##### **4.3.2.1 Students with special needs**

In line with AIE Institute's access and equity practices, students with special needs are offered the same opportunities as any other candidate. Any student identified as having the 'Potential for Risk' are include in a worksheet next to the 'At Risk' students for regular review. AIE Institute's courses take special needs into consideration and provide 'Reasonable Adjustment' for students with a disability or other conditions affecting their study. Flexible learning and assessment methods are adapted according to specific requirements if necessary. To ensure that appropriate assistance can be provided, students should advise AIE Institute preferably at the time of enrolment or any time during study. Refer to *Diversity, Equity and Fair Treatment Policy and Procedure* for further details on 'Reasonable Adjustment'.

##### **4.3.2.2 International student support services**

As per 4.2, information sessions are held in orientation week to assist students with adjusting to study and life in Australia. An orientation schedule is available upon enrolment, and attendance is compulsory for international students.

As per 4.1.1., international students are also required to attend the compulsory learning support workshops.

In addition to these, AIE Institute will offer international student support sessions. International student support sessions are age and culturally appropriate, and cover information such as:

- a. English language and academic support services, such as:
  - I. Academic study skills workshops
  - II. Learning support, including course attendance and progress, support for online or distance units of study
  - III. Tutoring support
  - IV. Study skills centres
- b. Internal English Language Proficiency (ELP) support or referral to external ELP service providers
- c. Academic advice, including consultation time with a lecturer or tutor
- d. Individualised learning support strategies for students with disability and specific needs, or for other reasons
- e. Emergency and health services such as:
  - I. Counselling and mental health support
  - II. Health and disability services
  - III. Critical incidents
- f. Facilities and resources
- g. Accommodation, housing and tenancy services
- h. Relevant legal services
- i. Complaints and appeals processes
- j. Personal support such as:
  - I. Safety and personal security
  - II. Financial support services
  - III. Career services
  - IV. Employment rights and conditions and the Fair Work Ombudsman
- k. Guided Peer Support Program
  - l. Mentoring Program
- m. Links to all AIE Institute's policies and procedures.

AIE Institute gives international students access to a range of services, either by providing the service in-house or having an arrangement to refer international students to affordable externally provided services.

AIE Institute designates at least one member of staff to be the official point of contact for international students. The contact officer must have access to up-to-date details of the support services. Students are encouraged to refer to *Student Support Services Information* to contact relevant AIE Institute personnel if they need support during their study. Data is also gathered from received complaints and surveys of international students to determine if support is satisfactory.

AIE Institute ensures its staff members who interact directly with international students are aware of their obligations under the framework provided in the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)* and the potential implications for international students arising from the exercise of these obligations. Training workshops during their induction or emails and discussions at staff meetings about the ESOS framework are used to educate staff members about the ESOS framework. Examples include basic classroom administration and keeping accurate attendance records that has different ramifications for international students compared with domestic students.

## 4.4 Referral protocols

Staff should be aware of their own personal and professional limitations. In certain circumstances, staff may determine that external support may be required from specialists outside of AIE Institute. In such instances, staff should encourage students to contact an external specialist from *Student Support Services Information*.

Staff members who are concerned about the welfare of a student should notify the head of school at their campus as a priority and the Academic Director.

## 4.5 Reporting

Reports to the Academic Board on student support uptake and support offered are developed by the Academic Director and Student Support staff at least annually. The report should include statistical information on student support need and whether current support is adequate. Recommendations should be included for additional support where necessary.

# 5 Definitions

**At risk** means a student who has been identified as having the potential to not meet student progress requirements and may need additional support; or students who have not met milestones such as submission of assignments or failed a subject and may need support to progress successfully.

**Disability** is broadly defined in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* as having any of a wide range of physical, mental health or learning conditions, including: Loss or damage of a bodily or mental function. The *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, Part 1, 1.4 Definitions, states that '**disability**, in relation to a person, means:

- a. total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c. the presences in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:
  - I. presently exists; or
  - II. previously existed but no longer exists; or
  - III. may exist in the future; or
  - IV. is imputed to a person.

**English Language Proficiency** is the ability of students to use the English language to make and communicate meaning appropriately in spoken and written forms in the context of their studies.

**Learning Management System (LMS)** is an online portal for classrooms, with features for tutors, lecturers and students to view assignments, grades, and access learning materials.

**Neurodivergent** means the neurological ways information is processed in a person's brain is different from the majority population.

**Potential for risk** means a student who has been identified as possibly needing some form of support during the course but has not identified as needing support through the application, interview and enrolment process.

**Reasonable adjustment** refers to a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students (Disability Standards for Education 2005).

**Reasonable adjustment of learning** refers to a reasonable adjustment to a unit or program that may alter the activities or resources but still retains the overall learning outcomes of the program.

**Student Management System (SMS)** is a student information and management software that manages all the day-to-day operations of a training or higher education organisation.

**Student support officer** refers to the Head of School, Deputy Head of School, or another teacher who is qualified and/or the best support person for that student.

## 6 Related documents

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy and procedure:

- a. Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- b. Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy and Procedure
- c. Diversity, Equity and Fair Treatment Policy and Procedure
- d. English Language Proficiency Policy and Procedure
- e. Safety, Emergency and Critical Incident Policy and Procedure
- f. Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy
- g. Student Code of Conduct
- h. Student Grievance Policy and Procedure
- i. Student Support Services Information
- j. Student Support staff Referral Guide.

The following legislation and standards apply to this policy:

- a. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018).

## 7 Review

Review of the policy will occur annually.

## 8 Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy and procedure.

AIE Institute is responsible for distribution of this policy and procedure to students and the AIE Institute's higher education community via the website and other publications.

## Appendix A: Guided Peer Support Program

### Overview

AIE Institute's Guided Peer Support Program provides peer support advice. It is facilitated by the students nominated by the Student Council and Academic Director. AIE Institute encourages students to voluntarily participate in the Guided Peer support program for the wellbeing and skill development of all students, including peer support facilitators.

Peer Support Facilitators of the Guided Peer Support Program engage in activities for reducing and preventing stress and low mood in student participants. Benefits to student facilitators, anticipated and actual, include the development of skills and experience in group facilitation, teamwork and leadership, and build a greater sense of community and belonging.

The Guided Peer Support Program is run by students, for students. Peer Support Facilitators may run peer-led study groups to offer students a place to connect, collaborate, develop study skills, and gain confidence in their studies. Peer Support Facilitators may work with Study Buddies in an online study space. The online study space has a relaxed and productive atmosphere. Peer Support Facilitators and Study Buddies work together from 12–6pm Monday to Thursday from Week 5 until Week 13. The Peer Facilitators and Study Buddies can help students get organised, develop skills, work through assignments and refer students to more help.

AIE Institute offers training in Orientation week for students who volunteer to serve as a Peer Support Facilitator. Training sessions are organised by the Guided Peer Support Program Coordinator. Students can approach external organisations for peer support and training, such as:

- a. [Peer Support Australia](#) – Peer Support Australia has provided essential support to Australian schools to positively impact the wellbeing of children and young people for almost 50 years. Healthier relationships, positive school culture and improved student wellbeing can be cultivated by providing students with social and emotional knowledge and skills, partnering with parents to develop a shared language for guiding students through emotional responses and interactions with others, supporting educators to value student voice; and involve students in decisions about their school and learning.
- b. [The Community Disability Alliance Hunter \(CDAH\)](#) – The Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) strives for an inclusive and just society where people with disability have voice, choice, control and active citizenship through social, economic, cultural and political participation.

AIE Institute's Guided Peer Support Program Coordinator can be contacted at:  
[peersupport@aieinstitute.edu.au](mailto:peersupport@aieinstitute.edu.au).

### References

Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) 2013, Establishing a user led Disability Support Organisation - from idea to realisation, last accessed 30/12/2020,  
<[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/562441e8e4b083b724b967a2/t/5dafd64691ea786aad94349e/1571804753333/DSO\\_report\\_from\\_idea\\_to\\_realisation.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/562441e8e4b083b724b967a2/t/5dafd64691ea786aad94349e/1571804753333/DSO_report_from_idea_to_realisation.pdf)>.

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