

B2.1(b) Monitoring Attendance Policy and Procedure

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Responsible Officer	Director of Studies
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Approved by	CEO/ PEO
Stakeholders	Students, Student Services Personnel, Education Agents

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to address the requirements of Standard 11 of the National Codes for ELICOS Providers 2007. It is Scots English College's (Scots) policy to ensure that student attendance is systematically monitored. Scots is proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements. Scots must report students under section 19 of the ESOS Act who have breached the course progress requirements.

B. Policy:

Under the section 19 of the ESOS Act, holders of student visa are required to maintain a minimum rate of 80% attendance over their course of study in order to retain their enrolment and student visa. As an ELICOS provider, Scots is responsible for monitoring students' attendance records. Students whose attendance falls below 80% and it is clear that the student will not be able to reach 80% by the end of the course must be reported to DIBP through PRISMS.

To ensure that students and staff understand their responsibilities in relation to these requirements and the consequences of poor attendance, the following procedures outline the steps the institute will take to monitor and report attendance, and indicate the appeals process available to students whose attendance has been identified as unsatisfactory.

C. Procedure:

Verbal and written notification to student of attendance requirement:

- The ELICOS DOS is to provide students with a Student Contract of Learning. Students sign this form to acknowledge understanding of their attendance obligations.
- The Student Services Officer or DOS also provides a verbal explanation of its importance and the consequences of poor attendance during the Orientation Session.

- The student is required to sign the Student Contract of Learning which includes an undertaking to maintain at least 80% attendance at the time of enrolment.
- The ELICOS class teacher will again verbally advise the student on the attendance requirement on the first day of classes.

Attendance recording

- The Class teacher will record the student attendance every class on the attendance roll. If a student is absent from classes or lessons for any reason, the student will be marked absent on the roll.
- A daily 5 hour class consists of 2 x 2.5 hour periods and 1 x 1-hour period. Teachers record attendance for all three of these lesson periods
- Student who arrive more than 15 minutes late for any class period are marked 'A' for Absent.
- Students attending on time (no later than 15 minutes into a class period) are marked 'P' for Present.
- If a student is sick, the student must notify the College. A Doctor's certificate must be submitted when the student resumes the class if absent for two or more days.
- At the end of each week (usually Thursday for AM shift), each teacher leaves the completed attendance roll for that week at Student Services located at reception

Calculation of attendance record

- The Student Services Department staff reconciles and assess students' attendance on a weekly basis.
- The Student Services Department calculates student's attendance as follows:
 - i. At the end of each two-week period a percentage attendance is calculated for each student
 - ii. Student attendance is calculated on a cumulative 'projected attendance' basis. For example, if a student has enrolled for 20 weeks and, at the end of week three, she/he has non-attendance of one week, then their projected attendance is 95%

Attendance Certificate:

- The Student Services Department issues a Certificate of Attendance to students by the end of their course as it may be necessary if students wish to extend their visa for further study. A Statement of Attendance may be issued to a student, on request, prior to completion of his/ her course.

- A Certificate of Attendance will contain the name of the student's ELICOS course and provider, date of commencement and completion and their overall attendance at the end of their course.

Leave of Absence:

- If a student has been on an approved leave of absence and do not return to the course when expected., the Student Services Department will contact the student by telephone and email to identify when the student intends to return to study and ascertain if he/she has compassionate or compelling circumstances.
- If the student does not respond within 10 working days, the Student Services Department must cancel the student's CoE and report to DIBP as Cessation of Studies.
- If the student does not provide a compassionate or compelling reason for not attending ELICOS class, then the unsatisfactory attendance procedure will continue.
- If student wish to return to study in the future, he/she must apply to the Student Services Department.

Identifying Student at Risk:

Students with Consecutive Non-approved Absences

- If a student is absent from class for five consecutive days without approval, the Student Services Department will attempt to contact the student by telephone and email.
- If after two further working days, the student is still absent from the class without approval and not in contact with the Student Services Department, the Director of Studies will be notified for intervention.
- The absent student will be issued with a '*Non-Compliance Rate of Attendance - 5 Consecutive Days Absent*' letter
- Records of any contact with the student or any counselling and support provided to student will be maintained by respective departments.
- The student's absence will be recorded as part of the regular monitoring of attendance procedure.

First warning letter

- When projected attendance reaches 85%, a '*First Warning Letter - Unsatisfactory Attendance*' letter will be given to the student or emailed to their registered email address informing them of their current level

of attendance and warning them that they are at risk of being reported for non-compliance should they continue to be absent.

- The student is required to sign and date the file copy of the letter acknowledging its receipt, when the student comes to Student Services.
- This letter also provides the student with the date and time of an appointment with the Director of Studies to discuss the attendance issue.
- The student and Director of Studies will endeavour to put in place an intervention strategy to improve the student's attendance.

Final warning letter

- When projected attendance falls to 80%, a 'Final Warning Letter - Unsatisfactory Attendance' letter will be given to the student by Student Services (or emailed to their registered email address if the students are not in attendance).
- The student will be advised to again meet with the Director of Studies to discuss their attendance. The Director of Studies will emphasise the importance of complying with the College's attendance requirements as Department of Education/DIBP regulations and the consequences of non-compliance.
- Leave of absence from a class for compassionate or compelling reasons will be taken into account if original or certified documents are provided.
- The Director of Studies will provide the students with continued proactive counselling and necessary support.
- The student will sign and date the file copy of the warning letter acknowledging its receipt.
- Comments on the interview will be written by the Director of Studies, on the file copy of the letter.

Notification of Breach of Attendance Requirements

- When a student's projected attendance reaches a 75% rate (or a projected rate of 75% by the end of his/her course), the student will receive written notification from Student Services of their breach of the attendance requirements and the College's intention to report the student to the Department of Education /DIBP for unsatisfactory attendance. This notification will be in the form of a '*Letter of Intention to Report - Unsatisfactory Attendance*' letter.
- The notification will include advice that the student may appeal to the Appeals Review Committee against this decision within 20 working days as specified in the letter.

- The notification will also include advice:
 - As to whom to contact if the student wishes to discuss the implications of their breach of the attendance requirements and the appeals process, for example, the Director of Studies or Student Services Officer.
 - That if lodging an appeal, it is the student's responsibility to clearly identify at that time all the information they hold or are aware of in support of their appeal.
- A copy of Breach of Attendance letter is to be retained in the student file and sent to the Student Services Department.

Reporting and Appeals Procedure

- A student has 20 working days from the date of receipt of the Breach of Attendance letter to lodge an appeal to the Appeals Review Committee.
- Appeals must be made in writing to the ELICOS Director of Studies using a *Complaints & Appeals Form* available from Student Services and must include:
 - The reasons for non-attendance (supported by documentary evidence)
 - Any additional information in support of their case.
- Students who are lodging an appeal can request to appear before the Appeals Review Committee. Students may bring a support person with them to this meeting.
- The Appeals Review Committee will meet within 10 working days after the end of the appeal period. All reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- The Appeals Review Committee comprises the General Manager, ELICOS Director of Studies and Student Services Officer.
- The Committee will consider:
 - Whether the decision to report the student for unsatisfactory attendance was based on the correct procedures
 - Any mitigating circumstances advanced by or on behalf of the student; and
 - Whether the appeal should be upheld or dismissed.
- During the internal appeals process the student will remain enrolled in all courses and continue to attend classes.
- Where the student has chosen not to access the appeals processes within the 20 working day period, or withdraws from the process, the Student Service Department will be notified and will issue a '*Final Letter- Notification to report to DIBP*' letter to the student which will outline the options to access the

College's Complaints & Appeals Procedures and the External Student Appeals agent, the Overseas Students Ombudsman, to lodge an external appeal.

Outcomes of the Appeals Procedures

- The student will be notified of the outcome of the internal appeals process within 10 working days of hearing the appeal.
- If the Appeals Review Committee determines that processes have not been appropriately followed, or that circumstances (e.g. extended illness) have prevented the student from attending, and if attendance has not fallen below the discretionary minimum allowed under Standard 11 of the National Code and the ESOS Act, it may uphold the appeal and not report the student's non-attendance to Department of Education/DIBP. The General Manager will notify the student in writing that the appeal has been upheld.
- If the Appeals Review Committee determines that due process has been followed and that there are no mitigating circumstances, it will dismiss the appeal and advises the Student Services Department to issue the student with the Institute's '*Final Letter to Report – Outcome of External Review*' letter. This final letter will outline the options to access the Institute's Complaints & Appeals procedures and the External Student Appeals agent, the Overseas Students Ombudsman, to lodge an external appeal.

Complaints and External Appeals

If the student is dissatisfied with the conduct of the Appeals Review Committee, the student has the right to refer his/her complaint to **The Overseas Students Ombudsman** within 10 working days from the date advised in the 'Final Letter to report – Outcome of External Review' letter and must advise the Student Services Department in writing that you have lodge an appeal. The student should go to the 'Making a Complaint' link on the Overseas Students Ombudsman's website,

www.oso.gov.au.au to find information and an online application form if he/she wishes to use the Ombudsman's External Student Appeals process. **The use of the Overseas Students Ombudsman is a free service for overseas students.**

Students may choose your own external Student Appeals agent if they wish. Students should inquire about current fees when you contact the agent.

After 10 working days, if the student has not lodged an external appeal or if the Student Services Department has not been notified of an external appeal, the student will then be reported through PRISMS. This will result in the student receiving a Section 20 Notice. This requires the student to contact the Department of Immigration and



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Border Protection (DIBP) within 28 days or make arrangements to leave the country. This breach results in possible exclusion from Australia for 3 years.

If the external complaint handling and/or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, Scots will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the student of the outcome in writing.

WHERE ENGLISH LEARNING GOES BEYOND

Attendance Complaints & Appeals Process Flow Chart

