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Attendance Monitoring and Reporting Policy and Procedure - ELICOS

Purpose

This policy is in place to monitor and report the attendance of international students studying ELICOS courses at Newton College (NC). It allows NC as the registered provider to meet its obligations under ESOS National Code 2018.

Scope

This policy applies to all international students who are studying an ELICOS course at NC and all staff with responsibilities for teaching and supporting students enrolled in ELICOS at NC.

Policy

- NC will systematically monitor students' compliance with visa conditions relating to attendance;
- NC will be proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements;
- NC will report students (under *section 19 of the Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000 (ESOS)* who have breached attendance requirements;
- NC must record the attendance of each ELICOS student visa holder students for the scheduled course contact hours which are 20 hours per week; and
- ELICOS students must meet their visa requirements for achieving satisfactory attendance, which at a minimum of 80% of the scheduled course contact hours.

Procedure

ELICOS do not have structured study periods by term. Each level of course is 11 weeks. Students' duration of their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) vary between 1 week and 44 weeks for the General English (GE) course and between 11 weeks and 33 weeks for the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. As such, student individual attendance is recorded and calculated over the period of the enrolment as stated on the CoE.

In the cases that a CoE duration is greater than 25 weeks, the student attendance is monitored over two periods: the first period is for the maximum 25 weeks; the second period is calculated on the remaining part as stated on the total duration of the CoE.

This is exemplified below:

Student 1 – CoE of 11 weeks

Attendance is calculated according to timetabled course contact hours over a period of 11 weeks

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<u>Student 2 – CoE of 44 weeks</u>

Attendance is calculated according to timetabled course contact hours over two separate periods

Attendance period 1: 25 weeks

Attendance period 2: 19 weeks. Attendance is monitored by CoE.

Process for assessing satisfactory attendance

Administrative staff review student attendance regularly to identify students who are at risk of not maintaining satisfactory attendance requirements. Regular assessments will be undertaken at intervals which will ensure that the administrative staff will be able to make an accurate assessment of whether the student:

• Is absent for more than 4 consecutive days without approval,

• Is maintaining satisfactory attendance,

• Is at risk of not attending at the required level for the relevant attendance calculation period,

• Has actually fallen below the required attendance level within an attendance calculation period.

Regular assessment/calculation of attendance

A review of weekly attendance assessment is conducted by NC and a report is published and displayed on student notice boards.

Process for calculating a student's projected maximum possible attendance and for monitoring attendance

Student attendance data is taken from the rolls and is entered into the student management system (Axcelerate) weekly by the administrative staff. Reports showing a student's projected maximum possible attendance are generated from Axcelerate and posted on student notice boards. Students at risk of not satisfying attendance requirements are identified on these reports. The attendance reports show the student number and the projected maximum possible attendance for each student for data entered onto Axcelerate from the hard-copy rolls at the date of the generation of the report.

Calculation of Attendance

The projected maximum possible attendance figure for a student is calculated by a formula set within Axcelerate.

The formula will include the maximum potential timetabled hours for the period for which the attendance is being recorded and monitored.

Attendance is calculated from the start date of the attendance-monitoring period, for no more than 25 weeks, to the end date of the attendance-monitoring period and incorporates the absences from attendance data that has been entered on the class rolls. This data is entered into individual student records on Axcelerate.

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The projected maximum possible attendance figure, which is expressed as a percentage, incorporates the actual number of hours absent together with a figure to incorporate the assumption that the student will not be absent for any timetabled class for the remainder of the attendance calculation period.

It is the student's responsibility (as advised during student orientation) to ensure that they are regularly checking the attendance reports, and if they have any concerns about the data on these reports, they are urged to make an appointment with the administrative staff.

A session absence report for each student, can also be generated from the database if a student wishes to query and/or review their attendance information at any time.

A student may present at a Complaints and Appeals hearing a medical certificate or other suitable documentation as evidence of a compelling or compassionate circumstance which may have prevented the student from maintaining the 80% attendance requirement.

Current practice is to consider public holidays as attended classes.

Procedure to outline how a student is contacted and counselled when absent for more than 4 consecutive days without approval:

(i)   Administrative Staff conduct a manual check of every class roll once per teaching week. Those students who have been absent more than 4 consecutive days are identified.

(ii)   Academic staff members are required to also check their students' attendance every day. They will email the Academic Manager the details of any who have missed 4 or more consecutive days.

(iii) A list of students in items (i) and (ii) is created manually by the administrative staff.

(iv)   An attempt to contact each student is made via telephone.

(v)   Contact is also made both via email and via SMS to the students' email accounts, and registered mobile accounts respectively.

(vi)   This contact is used to understand the students' reasons for continued absences, to decide if they might be experiencing transition issues, need welfare counselling or are encountering any issues otherwise relating to their personal or academic welfare.

(vii) If the above in item (vi) is the case, the students are immediately offered an appointment for academic and/or welfare counselling.

(viii) For those who do not appear to have such issues, a reminder is given of the importance of attendance in their ELICOS program. They are also reminded of the importance of adhering to the stipulations required on the holders of an International Student visa in Australia, in that attendance is compulsory (as per standard 8 of the ESOS National Code 2018).

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(ix)   For those students for whom contact is unsuccessful, attempts are made to contact and counsel them through NC Marketing or Admissions Department staff in coordination with the students' migration/education agent.

(x)   A full log of all successful or unsuccessful attempts to contact the students is kept on Axcelerate.

Procedure to determine the point at which the students are at risk of not maintaining a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours

Reports of students' potential attendance generated from Axcelerate are posted on student noticeboards. Students are advised during Orientation to refer to attendance reports posted on student noticeboards. The attendance reports identify when students are at risk of not meeting attendance requirements by showing every student's projected maximum possible attendance. Students are also informed as to how they can make an appointment to seek advice or counselling about Student Visa attendance requirements.

NC endeavours to contact the student to determine the reason for their absence/not returning to classes after a term break and to advise the student that NC may cancel their enrolment.

(i)   When a student's projected maximum possible attendance falls between 92% and 85% over the calculation period, a first attendance warning email is sent to these students. The email advises students of their obligation to maintain satisfactory attendance whilst undertaking their course of study with NC, and the consequences of not doing so. The email will also refer the student to NC's Student Support Services and Administrative Staff, to assist them in maintaining satisfactory attendance requirements. Students are advised to make an appointment with the Administrative Staff to discuss their issues at an Attendance Warning Session (see below).

(ii)   The above process is repeated fully for students whose attendance continues to fall and is now below 85%.

(iii)   Throughout the above, students are also communicated with via SMS to inform them that they have emails regarding their low attendance in their inbox, and that they should make an appointment to explain their issues with Administrative staff.

The following are some examples (although not limited to these) of what might be discussed, at an Attendance Warning Session:

• Current attendance levels,

• Reminding the student of the action that could occur when a student is in breach of the attendance requirement of their visa,

• Aim to identify why the student has been absent,

• Inform the student to collect and collate any documentation in support of their absences,

• Inform the student that the Student Welfare Counsellor is available to assist if required.

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Procedure for notifying students that they have not maintained the 80% satisfactory attendance requirement

(i)   Where the student has not maintained satisfactory attendance as per NC's documented requirements, the student will be sent a Notice of Intention to Report (NIR) advising them of NC's intention to cancel their enrolment and report the student to DHA. The letter also informs the student that, if they wish to lodge an appeal against NC's intention to report them to DHA for Breach of their Student Visa attendance requirement, that they have 20 working days from the date of the NIR (plus an additional 5 calendar days) to access NC's Internal Complaints and Appeals Process. Students are advised that, if they are not satisfied with NC's conduct of the internal complaints and appeals process, they will be able to access an External Complaints and Appeals Process with the International Student Ombudsman (ISO).   See the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

(ii)   The NIR is sent to the student email as stipulated at orientation. Any letters and additional correspondence are scanned and uploaded on Axcelerate.

(iii)   Students are advised that their enrolment will be maintained until the completion of internal (and external with ISO) complaints and appeals processes, and that they should continue to attend their classes whilst enrolled in their course.

(iv)   If the student does not access NC's internal complaints and appeals process within 20 working days from the date of NIR (plus an additional 5 calendar days), the student is in breach of the abovementioned attendance requirement. Consequently, NC will proceed with reporting this breach to DHA via PRISMS and an email will be sent to the student informing them of this outcome.

(v)   The Admissions Department verifies that the information and documentation given is sufficient before the change of enrolment and/or reporting procedure is made in Axcelerate and PRISMS. Where necessary, the Admissions Department will clarify with the Administrative Staff any inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the information or documentation provided.

(vi)   After the documentation and information regarding the unsatisfactory attendance is assessed as correct and sufficient in following this policy and the Complaints and Appeals Policy, the Admissions Department proceeds with notifying DHA via PRISMS and the corresponding change of enrolment is recorded in Axcelerate.

(vii)   If the student withdraws informally (does not attend the Complaints and Appeals hearing as advised) or formally i.e. by way of letter, from the Complaints and Appeals process, then NC will proceed with notifying DHA as per the above process.

(viii)   A copy of the reporting notice generated by PRISMS will be kept on the student's file as a hard-copy and uploaded to the student's file on the student database.

Absence - Medical certificates/other acceptable documentation

Medical certificates or other documentation may be considered acceptable during a Complaints and Appeals Committee Hearing to substantiate compelling or

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compassionate circumstances which may have prevented a student from maintaining the 80% attendance requirement.

Public holidays

Current practice is to consider public holiday absences as attended classes.

Generation and filing of class rolls

(i)   On intake days, new students are given a timetable after the intake placement test and orientation process.

(ii)   Students go to their allocated class after orientation, generally the following day.

(iii)   Students are added to the classes in Axcelerate and new rolls are issued to teachers by the end of Orientation Day.

(iv)   Upon graduation, exiting students are removed from class rolls. Any teacher/coordinator's handwritten amendments to the rolls are also made to the Axcelerate generated rolls before printing.

(v)   The Administrative staff print and place the hard-copy rolls in attendance folders by COB every Friday. This class roll will be replaced by an updated after Monday orientation if any new students are enrolled.

(vi)   Class teachers are responsible for marking and recording the attendance in the class rolls with the codes indicated in the class roll. Teachers' signatures are required.

(vii)   The hardcopy class rolls are kept in a folder for archival purposes.

Alterations to the class roll

If the Teaching/Administrative Staff understand that an alteration is needed (for example, to change an absent/present notation), this should be clearly made, and signed by the Teaching/Administrative Staff in the class roll.

Roles responsible for recording, monitoring, counselling and reporting on attendance

•   Administrative Staff (Attendance Coordinator)

•   Admissions Department

•   Teachers

•   Academic Manager

•   Student Welfare Counsellor

•   Student Support Officers

Evidence and documentation to support the above procedures and processes

Axcelerate and hardcopy

•   Individual student attendance records

•   Weekly attendance reports

•   Low Attendance Warning email first stage 92-85%

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- Low Attendance Warning email second stage 84-80%

- NIR (Notice of Intention to Report) email

- Attendance review notes/records/email correspondence

- Course progress records

- Hardcopy class rolls

- Reporting notice generated by PRISMS

Other documentation:

• Medical documents

• Letters of Support from qualified professionals

• Other documentation to support legitimate assessment of student absences from class

• Applications to defer/suspend studies form

Definitions:

NC:	Newton College Pty Ltd.
CRICOS:	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DHA:	Department of Home Affairs
International Student:	A person holding an Australian Student Visa, enrolled in a CRICOS registered, onshore course
ESOS National Code:	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
Course:	Program of Education or Training defined as a course in the ESOS Act
ELICOS:	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
Confirmation of Enrolment:	An official document, which is issued to confirm that you have accepted a place in a course and have paid the fees
Complaints and Appeals:	A statement that something is unsatisfactory, and making a request to have something changed.
International Student Ombudsmen:	Government employees that investigate complaints and appeals that an international student may have with a registered provider.
PRISMS:	Provider Registration and International Student Management System

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