

Academic Support Policy

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Approved by	Academic Board
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Purpose

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SI) recognises that the provision of academic language and learning skills support is crucial to enhancing student participation in education and academic outcomes. Academic language and learning skills support services tailored to the needs of student cohorts will greatly improve the student experience and quality of learning and teaching at SI.

This *Academic Support Policy* identifies the principles underpinning the development of academic language and learning support services at SI. It details the key roles and responsibilities in administering support, and the processes that will facilitate student access to support services.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students at SI.

Principles

Academic language and learning support services at SI are tailored to each student cohort and specific disciplines. The services will remain flexible in order to respond to student needs as they arise, and may include:

- Workshops
- Seminars
- One-on-one consultation

SI will evaluate the needs of each student cohort. This will be undertaken by the Program Directors and the Academic Skills Advisor who will monitor the effectiveness of academic language and learning support services.

SI will enable students to access academic language and learning support at any point during the term. Students who are identified as needing extra support, for example, those at risk of unsatisfactory progress, will be specifically directed to support services. See *Academic Support Plan*.

The Academic Skills Advisor will review academic language and learning skills support services regularly to ensure students are fully supported. The findings of these reviews should also inform new student admissions policies and processes.

SI will ensure that all students, including domestic and international students, have access to academic language and learning skills support. SI will offer services tailored to those for whom English is not their first language.

SI will make specific efforts to ensure that the participation in the education of underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups is fully supported, including:

- Students who are part or full-time carers
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Students with ATSI backgrounds
- Students with disabilities
- Students experiencing mental or physical health concerns
- Mature-age students
- Students who are single parents

Academic language support services will address using English for academic purposes, for example, essay writing, report writing, editing and proof-reading skills, while academic learning support services will cover topics such as note-taking, time management, and exam preparation.

Academic language and learning support services work alongside non-academic support services to ensure students are fully supported in their studies. See the *Student Counselling Policy* and *Student Welfare Policy* for policy frameworks regarding non-academic support services.

Procedures

Responsibilities

Program Directors

Program Directors are responsible for ensuring that students enrolled have the capacity to meet, and continue to meet, program progression requirements.

Program Directors will monitor the progression of the cohort as a whole, as well as handling individual incidents of students presenting as at risk of unsatisfactory progress.

Program Directors will determine student needs through the monitoring activities described in this policy and the *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*, as well as through collecting and analysing student feedback on academic support services (see *Student Feedback Policy*). Program Directors will pass on information to the Academic Skills Advisor to inform adjustments to academic support services.

Academic Skills Advisor

The Academic Skills Advisor will develop English language and academic skills workshops and seminars, and provide on-on-one-consultation for students where needed.

They will consult with Program Directors to ensure that the overall program of academic language and learning support is tailored to each student cohort and discipline. Throughout each term, the Academic Skills Advisor may take advice from Program Directors in order to adjust support services to meet

changing student needs.

In consultation with the Program Directors, the Academic Skills Advisor will monitor the effectiveness of academic language and learning support services.

Academic staff

Staff involved in learning and teaching activities at SI play a central role in ensuring that students are aware of the support services available to them. They communicate this information to students at the beginning of each term, and they refer students to support services on detection of poor performance, as per the *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*.

Academic staff will be available for students to approach them with any concerns. For more information see the *Learning and Teaching Policy*.

Academic staff will be trained to implement this policy through induction, professional development activities, and communication with the Academic Skills Advisor.

Information for students

All prospective and current students will be informed of their options for support services available to them during their studies at SI.

Students will be informed in writing and verbally of what academic support services are available and how to access them, including contact details for the Academic Skills Advisor, via:

- Information accompanying the Letter of Offer and Welcome Letter
- Orientation sessions
- The SI website
- The student portal
- The Student Handbook
- Email announcements
- In lectures and tutorials

Students will be introduced to the Academic Skills Advisor at the Orientation Program.

Transition support

Academic language and learning support services form a key component of transition support into study at SI. Alongside the orientation program and non-academic student support services, SI ensures that:

- Students attend introductory workshops on academic language and learning skills at the start of their program
- Students are given written information skills such as referencing, research, and exercising academic integrity
- The academic language and learning support needs of students are assessed early in the term, as outlined in the *English Language and Academic Support Plan*.

Directing students to academic support

SI will identify students who require extra academic support and direct them to academic language and learning skills support services. The following processes will also inform adjustments to the overall program of support services for the entire cohort.

Academic staff will use a variety of assessment tools including:

- Administer informal activities at the beginning of the term that gauge English language proficiency
- Administer formative assessment tasks early in the term
- Monitor attendance and classroom participation
- Monitor assessment results
- Monitor student performance and progression
- Monitor and appropriately handle instances of academic misconduct (see *Misconduct Policy*)

In most cases, academic staff will refer students to academic language and learning support services. If performance is affected by non-academic matters, academic staff will be equipped to handle the matter sensitively and refer students to non-academic support services.

For more information on the above measures see the *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*.

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Academic Board* delegates responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy to senior academic and professional staff, learning and teaching staff and the [Academic Skills Advisor](#) as per 'Procedures' above and *Academic Support Plan*.

The *Academic Board* will review all periodic reports, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*, from relevant committees and staff members.

Additionally, the *Academic Board* will review all relevant student complaints, concerns raised by staff members, and instances of student or staff misconduct on an ongoing basis.

Based on these monitoring activities, the *Academic Board* will advise the *Corporate Governance Board* accordingly and ensure that findings are taken into account in planning, quality assurance and improvement processes.

Definitions

Academic Board: the governing body responsible for academic matters, including learning and teaching, program approval, workforce planning, academic staff appointments, research and professional development, academic policies and procedures, overseeing student grievances and appeals processes. The *Academic Board* advises the *Corporate Governance Board* on academic matters.

Academic language skills: the written and verbal communication skills required to effectively engage with academic texts and ideas in learning and study contexts, and apply in assessment tasks.

Academic language and learning support services: the support services SI offers students to help them

effectively read, understand, write and engage with academic language and learning. This includes workshops, seminars and one-on-one consultation sessions.

Academic learning skills: the skills and abilities that enable effective knowledge acquisition, understanding and critical thinking at a higher education level. Academic learning skills include effective study habits, note-taking, effective listening, reading critically, exam preparation, and time management.

Academic Skills Advisor: the SI staff member responsible for developing and delivering workshops, seminars and individual sessions that support students in the development of academic literacy, language and learning skills.

Domestic student: a person enrolled in a program of study at SI who is either an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or an Australian Permanent Resident.

International student: a person enrolled in a program of study at SI who is not a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, or an Australian Permanent Resident, and has been granted a student visa by the Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) to study full-time in Australia.

Non-academic support services: the support services SI offers students to assist with their transition into higher education in Australia and ensure their time while enrolled at SI is an enjoyable and satisfying experience. Non-academic support services include counselling, medical and housing assistance.

Orientation: an on-campus scheduled program of activities prior to the beginning of each term that provides students with opportunities to meet staff and other students, tour the campus, enrol in academic workshops and seminars, engage in social activities, learn more about SI and the services on offer, learn more about their rights and responsibilities as students, and access other important information.

Student handbook: a document produced for student use that serves as an important resource for students throughout their time at SI. The student handbook is available on the SI website and contains program information and contact details for student support services, identifies student policies and procedures.

Student portal: the online login access point for SI students to access the learning management system, student email and library resources.

Student support services: non-academic support services. A student support services officer can refer students to counsellors, general practitioners, and other health and wellbeing services.

Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Academic Board* every 3 years.

Version History				
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:

1	Academic Board	4 October 2018	4/10/2021
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Related Documents

		Academic Support Policy
		Misconduct Policy
		Assessment Policy
		International Student Services Policy
		Learning and Teaching Policy
		Moderation Policy
		Orientation Program Policy
		Student Counselling Policy
		Student Feedback Policy
		Student Welfare Policy
		Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy
		Learning and Teaching Plan
		Academic Support Plan
		Academic Skills Advisor