

Student Welfare Policy

Version number	2
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of approval	17/09/2020

Purpose

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SI) is dedicated to fostering a secure and safe environment in which the wellbeing of all students is actively supported. To this end, SI provides comprehensive academic and non-academic support services and ensures that policies, procedures and processes are designed to protect student wellbeing throughout their studies at SI.

This *Student Welfare Policy* establishes a framework for ensuring the welfare of students during their studies at SI, outlining the various support mechanisms available to students and indicating the relevant policies that establish each. It outlines the process of identifying student needs and reviewing the effectiveness of student welfare initiatives.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students at SI.

Principles

All students have the right to a safe, supportive, and fair higher education learning environment.

Discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated (see *Anti-Discrimination Policy*).

SI will ensure that all student difficulties are taken seriously. All students who approach student support staff will have their case considered individually, taking into account their specific context.

As per the *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*, SI will identify and offer support to students who are at risk of unsatisfactory progress.

SI will make specific efforts to ensure the wellbeing of students from under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

Procedures

Information for students

Information on the welfare and wellbeing support services available to students, advice for students on

protecting their own safety and wellbeing (on campus and online), and contact details for student services will be available to students via:

- The SI website
- The *Student Handbook*
- SI Orientation
- The Learning Management System
- The unit outlines for each unit
- Flyers and posters around campus.

SI will ensure that students know how to access, at minimum, personal safety and security advice, referral to health services, counselling, legal advice, student advocacy, accommodation and emergency services.

Identifying student needs

Student support services will be tailored to each student cohort based on information provided by students to SI on enrolment, and early term assessments.

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

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students who are part or full-time carers
- Students with disabilities
- Students experiencing mental or physical health concerns
- Mature-age students
- Students who are single parents
- International students
- Students for whom English is a second language

All academic staff will be trained to identify students in need of additional support and sensitively and confidentially refer them to the relevant SI services. For more information see the *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*, *Student Counselling Policy* and *Student Welfare Policy*.

Training will be included in staff induction and professional development.

Transition support

SI has measures in place to support students in the transition into higher education studies.

The orientation program allows students to meet SI staff, meet their peers, and learn about how the SI campus operates and what support services will be available throughout the term. Specific sessions tailored to the needs of international students are delivered. See the *Orientation Program Policy* for more details.

All SI programs have transition support measures embedded into them. These include:

- A dedicated time at the start of each program (in the first lectures and tutorials) for students to ask questions about the program

- Formative assessment tasks that enable academic staff to ascertain the level of progress in knowledge development and provide the appropriate support
- Assessable components of the program that induct students into the culture and practices of higher education

Physical safety and wellbeing

SI must ensure that the campus is safe and secure at all times.

Amenities, facilities and infrastructure on the SI campus must be accessible to all students, including those with special accessibility needs.

Physical spaces must be monitored to ensure compliance with relevant health and safety legislation. Hazards, if identified, must be reported to the Provost and either mitigated or eliminated.

All staff must be trained in responding to injury, illness, and emergencies.

SI will maintain an emergency response plan as per the *Critical Incident Response Policy*.

Details of emergency plans including evacuation and emergency contact numbers will be prominently displayed around campus.

Online safety and wellbeing

SI will ensure that student online safety, security, and wellbeing is protected as per the *IT Resources and Online Conduct Policy*.

Mental wellbeing

SI will ensure that the campus environment supports the psychological wellbeing of students, firstly by fostering a safe and inclusive environment, and secondly by providing free on-campus counselling services for all students as outlined in the *Student Counselling and Welfare Plan*.

Refer to the *Anti-Discrimination Policy* and *Student Counselling Policy* for more information.

Health Services

In addition to mental health services, SI will ensure that support staff have the capacity to refer students to external health services.

Academic wellbeing

SI will support students in developing their academic language and learning skills through the support mechanisms outlined in the *Academic Support Policy* and *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*.

One key mechanism is to provide targeted support for students for whom English is an additional language, covering reading, writing speaking and listening skills.

Disability Support

SI will provide targeted support for students with disabilities. Refer to the *Disability Support Policy*.

Evaluating effectiveness

The following information, collected in annual review and reporting cycles, will be used to assess the effectiveness of efforts to support student welfare:

- Student assessment data
- Attrition and retention rates
- Statistical data concerning students given the status of 'at risk' of unsatisfactory progress
- Data describing student support service usage
- Student program feedback data
- Student feedback on the adequacy of support services
- Hazard and critical incident reports
- Risk management plans and reports.

Ensuring student and staff safety with online delivery of all SI programs

In response to COVID-19, SIHE will make flexible class timetables to accommodate face-to-face teaching and/or online delivery until further notice. SIHE aims to continue to deliver a high-quality educational experience and exceptional student engagement through interactive online and face-to-face learning.

Where required, all SIHE programs are available in an online delivery mode where face-to-face teaching is not possible. This decision is to ensure the safety of SIHE staff and students as well as the wider community and is made in accordance with the current government health advice and regulations.

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Academic Board* delegates responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy to the Dean who will delegate to the Student Counselling and Wellbeing Officer, Student Administration Coordinator and supervisory staff working in student-facing roles.

The *Academic Board* will review all periodic reports 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* must provide a report to the *Corporate Governance Board* 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 and learning support services: the support services SI offers a 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.

Corporate Governance Board: the governing body responsible for oversight of all higher education operations, including the ongoing viability of the institution and the quality of its higher education delivery. The *Corporate Governance Board* guides management and delegates responsibility for academic matters to the *Academic Board*.

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 Counselling and Wellbeing Officer: a non-academic member of SI staff responsible for providing students with information regarding non-academic support services. A student support officer can refer students to counsellors, general practitioners, and other health services.

Review schedule

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

Version History				
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:
1	Academic Board	05/02/2018	Adopted	05/02/2021
2	Academic Board	17/09/2020	Revision to include online delivery for all SI programs	17/09/2023

End of document: "Student Welfare Policy"

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Related Documents

		Academic and Professional Integrity Policy
		Academic Support Policy
		Anti-Discrimination Policy
		Program Development and Approval Policy

		<u>Critical Incident Response Policy</u>
		<u>Disability Support Policy</u>
		<u>Information For Students Policy</u>
		<u>International Student Services Policy</u>
		<u>IT Resources and Online Conduct Policy</u>
		<u>Orientation Program Policy</u>
		<u>Student Counselling Policy</u>
		<u>Student Welfare Policy</u>
		<u>Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy</u>
		<u>Work Health and Safety Policy</u>