

STUDENT SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

1. Overview

Astra Institute of Higher Education (“the Institute”) is responsible for and committed to ensuring that appropriate student support services are provided to assist students in completing their studies and achieving their academic and professional goals.

The Institute provides a comprehensive student orientation program for all commencing students that includes information on and means of accessing support services resources, including those of particular importance to international students.

To ensure that students are made aware of the support available, all staff in the Institute are required to understand their responsibilities in providing students with support and, where necessary, referral to others for appropriate advice.

2. Support mechanisms

Mechanisms for student support will be provided within a framework in which students are responsible for their own learning while being actively supported by the Institute. The below provides examples of the services provided by the Institute.

2.1 Student orientation

The Institute conducts an on-campus Orientation Day the week before the beginning of every trimester. Attendance at orientation is compulsory for all commencing students. Orientation Day is managed by the Student Support Officer and will include:

- i. information about academic calendars and learning resources, including using the Institute’s learning management system;
- ii. information about the students’ enrolled course and details of expectations and commitments to study, including academic integrity;
- iii. a tour of the Institute identifying classrooms, library, student areas, student administration area, and any other relevant areas, such as toilets, and fire exits;
- iv. information about emergency procedures on campus;
- v. information for international students about living, working, and studying in Australia;
- vi. information about relevant academic policies and procedures including academic integrity, course progression and exclusion, and grievance policies and procedures specifically;
- vii. information about support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and
- viii. information about the available student support services and library workshops, and how to access these.

The Dean, Campus Manager, Course Coordinator, and IT and library staff will normally also be in attendance at Orientation Day to present the relevant information sessions to students.

A schedule of Orientation Day activities will be made available to all commencing students prior to the commencement of their first trimester. Information provided to students at Orientation Day is augmented by information and resources made available to students on the Institute's learning management system.

2.2 Student Support Officer

While all academic and professional staff employed by the Institute have the responsibility to provide support to students as appropriate, the Institute shall nominate a dedicated Student Support Officer who will be available to all students by appointment, phone or email, during the Institute's normal hours of operation.

As part of their responsibilities, the Student Support Officer ensures up-to-date information is available for student support services and that any referral contacts provided are current.

Details of the current Student Support Officer and information for students to contact them will be provided via the Institute's website (www.astra.edu.au) and learning management system.

2.2.1 Monitoring and referral

All students' academic progress, attendance and engagement is monitored during the trimester, and guidance and support provided as appropriate. A student may be directly referred to the Student Support Officer by a staff member when the student:

- i. fails to complete, or achieves unsatisfactory results, in an early diagnostic or formative assessment task, or when issues related to academic literacy and English language proficiency are identified;
- ii. has failed to log into the learning management system for an enrolled unit; or
- iii. fails to maintain a satisfactory record of attendance at class.

Students identified at risk of academic progression, after the completion of each trimester, under the Institute's *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure* may also be referred to the Student Support Officer for academic, study, and personal and/or social support as relevant.

2.3 Student support services

The following support services are available and accessible for all students studying with the Institute. Advice to students about support services provided by the Institute is made available during Orientation Day sessions and reinforced via information and resources made available through the 'Student Hub' on the Institute's learning management system.

The Institute will provide students with contact details to refer any matters that require further follow up with relevant professionals. Any referrals to external services are made by the Institute at no cost to the student but fees and charges may apply where an external provider is used by the student and this will be clarified with the student prior to using such services outside of the Institute.

2.3.1 Academic issues

Students may have concerns with their attendance, academic performance or other related issues that are placing them at risk of not achieving the academic progression requirements of their course. Students are able to gain advice and support in ensuring they maintain appropriate academic levels and commitment to ensure they achieve satisfactory results in their studies.

A student is able to access the Student Support Officer to discuss any academic, attendance, or other related issues at any time. The Student Support Officer will be able to provide advice and guidance, or referral, where required.

Advice about academic support services provided by the Institute is specifically included via information and resources made available through the 'Support' tab within each unit of study's module on the Institute's learning management system.

2.3.2 Study assistance

The Student Support Officer is able to assist in times of stress or pressure during the course. Students may contact the Student Support Officer at any time for advice relating to study, such as:

- i. time management issues;
- ii. setting and achieving learning goals;
- iii. motivation;
- iv. ways of learning;
- v. managing assessment tasks;
- vi. self-care.

If the need arises to seek additional counselling services the Student Support Officer will maintain a list of the contact details of appropriate external support services.

2.3.3 Personal and social issues

There are many issues that may affect a student's social or personal life and students have access to the Student Support Officer during the Institute's normal hours of operation to gain advice and guidance on personal and social issues that are adversely impacting their academic performance. Where the Student Support Officer feels further support may be required, a referral to an appropriate support service will be organised.

2.3.4 Accommodation for international students

While the Institute does not offer accommodation services or take any responsibility for accommodation arrangements, the Institute is able to refer students to appropriate accommodation services and the Student Support Officer will be available to discuss any issues or concerns a student may have with their accommodation arrangements. All international students are encouraged to have accommodation organised prior to arrival in Australia but, if not, the Student Support Officer can refer students to appropriate accommodation services.

2.3.5 Special needs assistance

A student is requested to advise their teacher of any special needs that may affect their learning. The Student Support Officer is available to provide advice to students and will consult with the Course Coordinator when necessary.

2.3.6 Hardship

The academic requirements of study may present some students with hardship due to economic, social or other difficulties. Where genuine hardship exists, a student may make application to their Course Coordinator seeking permission to review their academic workload.

To make an application a student is required to provide a letter to the Course Coordinator describing the reason for their hardship. It is essential to include evidence supporting a claim of hardship, for example:

- i. Financial hardship: government benefit statements, pay slips or bank statements which indicate financial status;
- ii. Medical grounds: medical certificates stating nature of condition, and duration;
- iii. Single parent: evidence by way of statutory declaration and supporting government documentation.

In making any determination on reduced study load, the Course Coordinator will consult with the Student Support Officer.

An international student who is an applicant under this category must still meet the requirements of the relevant regulations affecting student visas in these circumstances.

3. Review and improvement

In order to ensure that the Institute has support services for students that are appropriate in scope and quality for the capacity of the Institute and mode of delivery of its courses, the Executive Management Committee oversees a schedule of regular review and feedback from relevant stakeholders to monitor the efficacy of the availability and accessibility of the support services and action enhancements and improvements where necessary.

3.1 Stakeholder feedback

Regular stakeholder feedback through the use of survey instruments will guide the Institute when reviewing the adequacy of its support services through the following process:

- i. Surveys of students will include a section on the quality of the Institute's support services soliciting suggestions on any improvements that might be made to improve the student experience.
- ii. The Dean will review the surveys, analyse the feedback and summarise any issues raised in regard to support services.
- iii. The Dean will meet with the Student Support Officer to discuss any issues raised and to formulate possible strategies for improvement.
- iv. The Student Support Officer will recommend any improvements to support services via the Dean to the Executive Management Committee for action.
- v. All improvements that have been recommended by the Student Support Officer via the Dean to the Executive Management Committee for action will be allocated to a responsible person for completion within an agreed timeframe.
- vi. Outstanding actions will be monitored by the Executive Management Committee until evidence of completion.
- vii. Where amounts not allocated in the budget are required for the improvement of student support services, the Institute's Chief Executive Officer will include it in their report to the Board of Directors in conjunction with a request for additional funding.

3.2 Ongoing Review

Individual members of the Executive Management Committee will continuously review the efficacy of support services in their areas of responsibility through the following process:

- i. Members of the Executive Management Committee will be required to report at each meeting on any issues related to support services that have arisen since the previous

meeting. This is a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the Executive Management Committee.

- ii. Where improvements to the Institute’s support services need to be addressed, any actions required will be decided upon by the Executive Management Committee and will be allocated to a responsible person for completion within the agreed timeframe.
- iii. Outstanding actions will be monitored by the Executive Management Committee until evidence of completion.

4. Related documents

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Education Policy
- Student Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure

5. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Executive Management Committee	20 September 2021	Document creation
1.1	Executive Management Committee	19 June 2023	Updates at ‘2.1 Student orientation’, and ‘2.3 Student support services’. Addition of ‘2.2.1 Monitoring and referral’, and ‘4. Related documents’.

Document owner: Dean

Listed: Public document