

International Student Services Policy

1. Background

Gateway Business College (GBC) recognises that its international student cohort forms a key part of its student body. It is therefore crucial that all international students are adequately supported during their time at GBC.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines the mechanisms through which GBC will provide support to its international student cohort. The provision of adequate support will ensure that all international students feel supported, safe, and comfortable and valued during their time at GBC. The policy will outline the support services that will be in place for international students, including orientation programs, accommodation support, English language support, academic language support, orientation programs, and all other services pertinent to international students. GBC will use the procedures outlined in this policy to both prevent and adequately deal with issues pertaining to international students.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Orientation Policy*, *Student Welfare Policy*, *Student Evaluation of Teaching Policy*, *Academic Language and Learning Support Policy*, *Student Counselling Policy*, *Cultural Diversity Policy*, and *Information to Students Policy*.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all prospective and current international students at GBC, as well as all staff members involved in international student support services.

4. Definitions

Academic Board: the Academic board is responsible for academic governance at GBC. The Academic Board reports and advises the Corporate Governance Board on academic activity. This board oversees academic activities such as teaching, learning, scholarship, research, course approval, student outcomes, academic standards and academic policy.

Academic language support services: The various types of assistance GBC offers its students to help students effectively read, write and engage with academic language. Academic language support services can include workshops, seminars and individual counselling sessions.

Course Coordinator: a senior academic staff member responsible for the management, coordination and delivery of a course at GBC. A Course Coordinator is expected to hold a PhD, and is responsible for supervising academic staff teaching within a course of study, developing course design and content, reviewing course design and content, teaching into a course of study, remaining research active and contributing to the improvement of academic standards.

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Corporate Governance Board: the formally constituted governing body accountable for the governance of GBC as a higher education operation.

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act): the established legislative requirements and standards for the quality assurance of Australian education and training institutions offering courses to international students who are studying in Australia on a student visa. ESOS provides tuition fee protection for international students.

English learning support services: Academic language support services tailored specifically to students for whom English is a foreign language.

International student: an enrolled student who has been granted a student visa (subclass 500) by the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), which entitles them to study full-time in Australia.

Student Support Services: Services offered to students at GBC that provide academic and non-academic assistance.

5. Principles

5.1 Creating a culture of inclusion

All students at GBC have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment regardless of their background. GBC is committed to ensuring equitable access to higher education and will develop a teaching and learning environment that caters to students from groups who are under-represented in the student population, and to students who face extenuating circumstances that may affect their learning. This may include students who:

- have a disability or long-term illness
- experience difficult family circumstances
- have been unduly affected by socio-economic circumstances
- completed secondary school in a regional or isolated area

This policy focuses on providing services for GBC international students, however all measures implemented must take into consideration additional barriers to access that students may face, as listed above

GBC recognises the value of its international student cohort.

GBC recognises that students form a key part of its identity, and strives to ensure that all students feel safe and comfortable throughout their course.

5.2 Minimum support requirements for international students

GBC will ensure at minimum that the following support services are available to international students at all times:

New student orientation services

GBC provides all international students with comprehensive orientation services. Orientation must take place two weeks before each semester's class commencement,

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and must be used for GBC to identify any new or emergent issues that international students may face during their studies.

Academic language and learning support services

International students for whom English is not their first language may require additional English language support. While GBC implements minimum English language requirements as part of its admission process, GBC must ensure that international students who require additional academic and non-academic English language support have access to this.

International student welfare services

Welfare services will be available free of charge to all international students. GBC acknowledges that as international visitors, international students may lack access to the same support networks of domestic students. As such, GBC must maintain a number of support services to cater to international student needs for non-academic challenges.

6. Procedures

6.1 Identifying needs and services

It is crucial for GBC to identify the requisite services for its international student body, as well as their effectiveness. The identification and appraisal of these requisite services is integral to GBC's ability to respond effectively and provide individuals with the adequate amount of support.

GBC will implement the following processes to ensure the identification and adequacy of its international student needs and corresponding services:

- GBC will implement open channels of communication between students and relevant members of staff
- GBC is to conduct focus groups with students, led by the Student Administration Manager, and submit recommendations for additional student support for international students in annual reports to senior management and the Corporate Governance Board
- In these discussions, relevant members of international student support staff must identify:
 - International student issues and needs related to their studies
 - The adequacy of current international student services
 - Any broader issues relevant to international student services that are new or emergent compared to the previous year.

6.2 Orientation services

Orientation programs are crucial to the effective welcoming and integration of international students into life at GBC. Ultimately, effective orientation programs will facilitate the successful commencement of all international students at GBC.

Orientation programs for international students will include:

- What will be covered in the course and within each subject
- An introduction from the relevant Course Coordinator
- An introduction from a member of the student services department, including a brief outline of the structure of GBC
- An outline of the student services available to international students at GBC, including, but not limited to:

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- Academic support services, including English language skills support
- Wellbeing support services for non-academic issues affecting students' ability to learn
- Referral to external essential services such as emergency, health, welfare, legal, and accommodation services
- Student grievances procedures: how to lodge a complaint and the appeals process, including sources for external review
- Student obligations under the *ESOS Act 2000*
- Provision of the relevant contact information of all relevant academic and administrative staff members
- A tour of the grounds and facilities of GBC
- Campus safety and security information, including critical incident response procedures
- Online safety and security information
- Information on how to access emergency and health services
- An allotted time to give students the opportunity to ask question in relation to any aspect of student life at GBC.

For more information regarding orientation programs refer to the *Orientation Policy*. This information will also be reflected in the Student Handbook.

6.3 Academic language and English learning support services

Academic support services must be available to all students free of additional charge.

Academic language support services and English learning support services are integral to GBC's support of international students. As there are often issues surrounding international students' effective use of English, both conversationally and academically, these services and their effective implementation are crucial to international students' ability to meet their course learning outcomes and academic goals at GBC.

For specific information regarding the academic language and English language support services, refer *Academic Language and Learning Support Services Policy*. All academic skills and academic language support services are to be evaluated after each service offering.

The Academic Skills Advisor sits on the Teaching and Learning Committee, and must report regularly to the committee under the *Academic Language and Learning Support Services Policy* as to the adequacy of academic support services at GBC. Under the *Academic Governance Policy*, the Teaching and Learning Committee provides Academic Board advice about the adequacy of academic support at GBC, and makes recommendations for improvements, including recommendations for additional academic support services for international students specifically.

6.4 Student welfare services

All student welfare services will be available for international students free of charge.

Student welfare services will be developed and implemented to effectively cater for the needs of international students. The student welfare services available at GBC will include, but are not limited to:

- Student health services
- Disability support services

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- Student Administration staff and Student Support Staff available to refer international students to local essential services, such as banking, accommodation, emergency, health, legal advocacy, and employment agencies
- Counselling services.

For more information, please refer the *Student Welfare Policy*.

7. Records

Records associated with this policy will be maintained according to the Records Management Policy.

8. Related legislation

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
- TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
- The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code 2018)

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board every three years, or more frequently should the Board deem it necessary.

Version Control

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