

# Course Progress and Completion Within Expected Duration of Study Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy establishes principles and processes to ensure compliance for international onshore students with the requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (as amended) and Standards 9 and 10 of the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (the National Code). It seeks to ensure that international onshore students complete their studies within the expected duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (COE), and that timely intervention strategies are implemented for students identified as being at risk of not making satisfactory course progress.

(2) Scope

- a. This Policy applies to international onshore students.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(3) For the purposes of this policy:

a. Compassionate or Compelling

i. Compassionate or Compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These can include but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend class;
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents;
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel when this has impacted on the student's studies;
- a traumatic experience which could include involvement in, or witnessing a serious accident; or witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime when this has impacted on the student;
- where a registered provider is unable to offer a pre-requisite unit; or
- the student has failed occasional units throughout a course without warranting activation of an intervention strategy.

b. Compulsory Study Period

i. A compulsory study period is one in which the student must enrol unless granted a deferment or suspension from enrolment or leave of absence under Standard 13 of the National Code 2007. Examples include:

- Sessions 1 & 2 in a year; or
- Trimesters 1, 2 & 3.

c. Confirmation of Enrolment (COE)

- i. A paper copy, sent by an education provider, Southern Cross University (SCU), to an applicant for a student visa, of an electronic confirmation of enrolment relating to the applicant.
- d. Distance Learning
  - i. Study in which the teacher and the student are separated in time or space throughout the duration of the unit of study (including Online Learning), but does not include study where the student is resident in his or her home country or another country offshore.
- e. Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCOE)
  - i. In relation to an application for a student visa, means a document, provided electronically, which is issued by the registered provider to intending overseas students and which must accompany their application for a student visa. It confirms the overseas student's eligibility to enrol in the particular course of the registered provider.
- f. National Code 2007
  - i. The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007.
- g. Online Learning
  - i. Study in which the teacher and student communicate through electronic technologies for the unit. For the purpose of the National Code 2007, permissible Online Learning does not include study where the student is resident in his or her home country or another country and undertaking a unit of study with a registered provider which is located in Australia.
- h. Registered Course
  - i. A course of education or training provided by an institution (SCU) body or person that is a registered provider of the course in that State or Territory, for the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and is registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).
- i. Unit
  - i. A discrete component of study within a course, the term includes 'subject' and 'module'.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) This policy aims to ensure that the University's framework for monitoring course progress and the procedures used to ensure that international onshore students complete their studies within the expected duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) are compliant with the requirements of Standard 9 and 10 of The National Code. This policy recognises that the University must only grant an extension to the duration of a student's study in the limited circumstances listed in Standard 9.2 of The National Code.

### Part A - Completing Studies within the Expected Duration

#### Maintaining a Full Time Enrolment Load

(5) International onshore students must enrol in sufficient units in each study period to ensure that the total number of units required to complete the course will be completed within the expected duration.

(6) The expected duration for a course is determined using an enrolment load of four (4) units in each compulsory study period or eight (8) units in an academic year for undergraduate students. For postgraduate students the enrolment load is three (3) units in each of two trimesters and two (2) units in one trimester making up eight (8) units in an academic year.

(7) International onshore students may vary their enrolment load to below a full time load in a study period provided

that:

- a. they are on an intervention strategy; or
- b. they have negotiated an arrangement to spread load over three (3) teaching sessions (including non-compulsory teaching periods) in an academic year (undergraduate students); or
- c. they undertake additional units in future study periods to ensure course completion within the expected duration.

(8) International onshore students who are not on an intervention strategy and wish to vary their enrolment load below a full time load in a study period must:

- a. attend a meeting with a campus International Student Adviser (ISA) to outline their enrolment plans; and
- b. complete a 'Study Load Variation Request'; and
- c. seek the written permission of the Director, SCU International.

### **Failure to Enrol in a Full Time Load**

(9) If the Director, SCU International determines that a student has not enrolled in sufficient units to complete their course within the expected duration, they will notify the student in writing in Week 1 that they must:

- a. increase their unit enrolment in the current study period, by:
  - i. the end of week two; or
  - ii. in a future study period.

(10) Failure to enrol in increased load as directed under clause (9) will be grounds for refusal by the University to extend course duration through the issuing of a new COE and the reporting of the student under the University's Rules - Student Misconduct Rules for failing to comply with an order lawfully given by University staff. The latter may result in cancellation of enrolment.

### **Increased Load to Account for Failed Units**

(11) Students must make up for failed units by proportionally increasing their enrolment load in future study periods, including by enrolment in non-compulsory study periods e.g. Session 3 at this University or by cross-institutional study.

### **Extensions of Course Duration**

(12) Subject to clause (13), international onshore students must complete their studies within the expected duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (COE).

(13) Extensions to a student's course duration through the issuing of a new COE are only permitted in the following limited circumstances:

- a. as the result of:
  - i. Compassionate or Compelling circumstances; or
  - ii. a student complying with the University's intervention strategy for students identified as at risk of not making satisfactory course progress in accordance with Part C - of this Policy.

(14) A Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) Extension Request must be received by the Director, SCU International twenty (20) working days prior to the end date of the current COE.

(15) The University is under no obligation to issue a student a new COE unless the student has clearly requested such

an extension in writing.

(16) The SCU International will investigate the request for a COE extension and may request a further meeting with the student.

(17) Where the University approves a COE Extension Request, the Director, SCU International will notify the student, create the new COE in Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) and provide a copy to the student.

(18) Where the University refuses a COE Extension Request, the Director, SCU International will provide written advice to the student of the grounds for the refusal, and notify the student of the right to appeal and how to activate the appeals process.

### **Online or Distance Learning Enrolment**

(19) An international onshore student cannot study more than 25 percent of their total course by Online Learning or Distance Learning, and in every compulsory study period there must be at least one unit that is not delivered by Online Learning or Distance Learning.

(20) The 25 percent limit to Online Learning or Distance Learning applies only to onshore student visa holders. If a student returns to their home country and their COE is cancelled then they can enrol in Online Learning or Distance Learning units.

(21) Units studied Online or by Distance Learning in non-compulsory study periods (e.g. Session 3) are counted for the purposes of the 25% limit.

(22) If a student is in the final study period of a course, with only one subject to complete the course, the student must not study this unit Online Learning or by Distance Learning in Australia unless the period in which the student will complete the course is a non-compulsory study period.

(23) If a student has only one unit to complete in a compulsory study period, and the unit is available by Distance Learning or Online Learning, the student must meet with the Director SCU International who may require the student return to his or her home country to study the final unit of the course by Distance Learning or Online Learning study.

### **Accelerated Progress**

(24) Students who complete their studies early as a result of overload enrolment or units studied in non-compulsory study periods will be reported to Department of Immigration and Border Protection through PRISMS as having completed their studies, within fourteen (14) days after the release of final grades.

## **Part B - Monitoring Course Progress**

(25) As per Standard 10 of the National Code 2007, the University will systematically monitor student's course progress, and proactively notify and counsel international onshore students who are at risk of failing to meet their course progress requirements.

(26) Subject to Part D - of this Policy, the University will report international onshore students, under section 19 of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, who have breached their course progress requirements. Students will be made aware, by the SCU International, of the consequences they face if they do not maintain satisfactory course progress and what effect this may have on their student visa.

## Part C - Managing Unsatisfactory Course Progress

(27) Rule 2 and Rule 3 of the University's Rules Relating to Awards shall apply to the determination of unsatisfactory course progress of international onshore students.

(28) Any student with unsatisfactory course progress must be advised:

- a. that unsatisfactory course progress in a course for two consecutive compulsory study periods could lead to the student:
  - i. being excluded from the course;
  - ii. being reported to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection;
  - iii. having their student visa cancelled, depending on the outcome of the appeals process; and
- b. where appropriate, whether the course in which they are enrolled remains suitable;
- c. of any opportunities to be reassessed in assessment tasks failed;
- d. of resources available to assist the student to improve performance; and
- e. that they may lodge an appeal, as outlined in Rules Relating to Awards Rule 2 Section 10, against any determination made by the University relating to their unsatisfactory course progress, and that such appeals must be received by the University within 20 working days from the date of the University's official notification of unsatisfactory performance to the student.

(29) An intervention strategy must be designed, documented and activated for each student assessed as at risk of unsatisfactory course progress in accordance with clause (30) - (33).

### Intervention Strategies

(30) A student who has failed one (1) unit or has a Seek Help (SH) Academic Standing in any study period will be:

- a. requested to seek additional assistance in order to improve academic performance. This request will be in the form of an email notification and a warning letter; and
- b. required to make up for failed units in accordance with clause (11).

(31) The University must implement an intervention strategy for any international onshore student who in any study period has:

- a. obtained a Must Get Help (MGH) Academic Standing; or
- b. failed (or deemed not yet competent in) 50% or more of the units attempted in any study period; or
- c. failed the same unit twice (or deemed not yet competent in that unit); or
- d. obtained an Absent Fail grade in one (1) or more units.

(32) The Intervention Strategy must:

- a. be activated within the first four weeks of the following study period; and
- b. documented in writing with evidence of the intervention measures implemented recorded in each student's file.

(33) For the purposes of clause (32)a, an intervention strategy will be deemed 'activated' when:

- a. a written notification is sent to the student; and
  - i. personal contact with the student has been undertaken by a suitably authorised staff member; or
  - ii. where personal contact is not reasonably possible, the student is notified by other reasonable means.

## **Part D - Reporting**

### **Reporting in Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) for Unsatisfactory Course Progress.**

(34) Subject to clause (35), an international onshore student may only be reported for Unsatisfactory Course Progress on PRISMS after:

- a. 20 working days has elapsed since the student was informed in writing of the intention to report and the grounds that form the basis for reporting; and
- b. the student was informed in writing of the right to appeal and given details of how to activate the appeals process.

(35) Where the allegation of Unsatisfactory Course Progress is the subject of an appeal, an international onshore student may only be reported for Unsatisfactory Course Progress on PRISMS after:

- a. the appeals process, including any external appeal, has been finalised or foregone by the student; and
- b. the student remained enrolled during the appeals process.

(36) When reporting a student on PRISMS, all SCU staff must follow the procedures contained in the PRISMS User Guide.

## **Section 4 - Procedures**

(37) See the Course Progress and Completion Within Expected Duration of Study Procedures

## **Section 5 - Guidelines**

(38) Nil

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
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