

## **COURSE DURATION, STUDY LOAD AND TRANSFER POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **1. CONTEXT**

Students enrolled in a course are required to complete the course in the allotted duration or earlier. International students have further obligations that relate to course duration, study load and transfer between providers. These factors are impacted by any Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or credit granted to the student. The college is required to ensure that students adhere to their course duration and study load requirements and that a systematic approach to RPL is adopted when assessing RPL applications by students.

### **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to describe the requirements of study load and course duration on students to allow nominated college staff to appropriately discharge their duties in this regard.

This policy ensures that the Sydney Met does not enrol any transferring international student prior to 6 months of their principal course being completed, unless that student has a valid letter of release agreeing to such a transfer, or if other specific conditions are met.

### **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students.

### **4. COURSE DURATION**

4.1 The following staff members are responsible for ensuring students are informed of their course duration and study load responsibilities:

- a. Admissions Officer/Manager
  - b. General Manager
  - c. Dean
- 4.2 Students shall be informed of the following program details pertaining to course duration through written means and verbally in cases where the student presents themselves to the college for matters that may affect the criteria of course duration and full study load (for international students). This information shall also be relayed to students via:
- a. Student Handbook
  - b. Information for Intending Students
  - c. College Website
  - d. All Published Materials by the College
  - e. At Induction on Joining the College
  - f. In Seminars Managed by the College from Time to Time
- 4.3 The bachelor program requires the completion of twenty-four (24) Units of study (also sometimes referred to as “subjects”). Each Unit is valued at six (6) credit points.
- 4.4 The college runs three (3) trimesters: T1, T2 and T3, except for some programs such as Social Work.
- 4.5 The normal student load per trimester is four (4) units, so students undertaking two trimester a year (compulsory for full time students) will be attempting eight (8) units of study per academic year. Students undertaking three (3) trimester a year in an accelerated mode attempt twelve (12) Units a year.
- 4.6 In case a student wishes to consider taking a trimester free of teaching, that student must first successfully complete 48 credit points (8 Units) equivalent to a fulltime study load for a year in two consecutive trimesters in each study year. For instance, if a student commences study in July of a particular year and wishes to take a trimester free of teaching of a degree program, that student must study 4 Units of Study (24 credit points) in trimester 2 (that is, in July trimester), and 4 Units of Study (24 Credit points) in Trimester 3 (that is, Oct/Nov trimester). No consideration is given for a teaching free trimester until student completes the 48 credit points of study load for that year. Request for a teaching free trimester in any particular trimester must be made in writing before or by the last teaching day of the current trimester, that is, by 5pm of Friday in Week 12 of the current trimester. Late application will not be considered.
- 4.7 The course duration varies according to the individual Program and is clearly stated in the program overview. For example, for the BBUS and BIT programs, the course duration in normal fulltime mode takes three (3) years

to complete if four (4) Units of study are undertaken per term. Accelerated study students may complete the course in two (2) years. The course duration can take between two (2) and four (4) years depending on the number of units taken per term and the number of terms taken per year.

## **5. FULL STUDY LOAD FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- 5.1 International students must undertake a full study load per term. A full term of study is four (4) Units.
- 5.2 Only in exceptional circumstances may international students be enrolled in less than or more than a one hundred (100%) percent study load.
- 5.3 Changes to the study load must be approved by the college in advance.
- 5.4 Exceptional circumstances include:
  - Where a student is in the final teaching period of a qualification and completing the remaining Units.
  - The college approves a reduction in the number of Units the student is taking due to ill health as recommended by a professional health practitioner.
  - In situations where Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Academic Credit Transfer prevent the student from enrolling in a fulltime study load.
  - Where the college has devised an Intervention Strategy due to a student's lack of course progress that prevents the student from undertaking a full study load.
- 5.5 In all cases approval must be sought from Dean, or a responsible officer who has this authority, who is responsible for approving changes to study load or course duration.

## **6. TRANSFER BETWEEN PROVIDERS**

- 6.1 Students can only make a request for a transfer to another education provider, if they have completed at least six (6) months of study at the college. To transfer after this period, the student must complete a Transfer to Other Provider Request Form, together with evidence that fully justifies the request.
- 6.2 Sydney Met will not enrol a student wishing to transfer from another registered provider prior to the student completing six months of their principal course of study, except in the following circumstances:

- the student provides a written letter of release from the original registered provider,
- the original registered provider has ceased to be registered, or the course in which the student is enrolled has ceased to be registered,
- a government sponsor of the student has provided a written support for change to be in the student's best interest, and
- international student seeking to transfer to Sydney Met meet Sydney Met's course entry requirements.

6.3 Student seeking to transfer to Sydney Met needs to follow the following procedures:

- Sydney Met receives an application for transfer from a student.
- Sydney Met determines if the student has completed 6 months of their principal course of study with the original registered provider.
- If the student has completed 6 months study in their principal course of study, the application process proceeds.
- If the student has not completed 6 months study in their principal course of study, Sydney Met requires the student to provide a letter of release from the registered provider (or a letter of support for transfer, if the student is sponsored by a government).
- Once a release from the original provider is received, the application proceeds. If the student is not released from the original provider, the application process stops at this time.
- In the circumstances where the original institution or course has ceased to be registered, no release is required.

6.4 Sydney Met does not provide a release to international students wishing to transfer to another registered provider prior to completing 6 months of their principal course with Sydney Met. However, Sydney Met may consider approving a release, in the following circumstances:

- There is robust evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances.
- There is clear evidence that the student has been misled by the College regarding the College or the Course, which constitutes a breach of the ESOS Act 2000.
- There is an appeal on a matter that may reasonably result in a decision or recommendation to release the student.

6.5 Sydney Met may **refuse** the student's request for release if:

- The student has not demonstrated reasonable grounds and/ or provided satisfactory evidence for release stated above. It is the responsibility of the student to provide evidence within the stated period of time and to cooperate with the college fully.
- The student is suspected to avoid being reported in PRISMS for failure to meet academic progress requirements.
- The student has not genuinely engaged with College's intervention strategy with the intention of failing and being released.

- The student intends to study at a lower Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level and will need to apply for a new student visa, and,
  - The College considers that the student is engaged in activities or shows behaviours of a non-genuine student.
- 6.6 Student wishing to transfer to another provider after the initial six months period at the college must submit a completed Application Form for Release with evidence to the College. The college will assess the request and will provide a written response to the student within fourteen (14) working days from the date of receiving the form.
- 6.7 If the student submits an application to transfer to another provider within the first six (6) months of study at the college, the student's application will not be conspired, unless there are compelling and compassionate circumstances established by sufficient and concrete evidence.
- 6.8 The College will assess the request and will either provide a letter to the student within fourteen (14) working days from the date of receiving the request for a Release Letter or refuse the request within 14 days.
- 6.9 Applications for transfer between providers are made, via Student Services, to the General Manager who makes a recommendation regarding the application to the Dean. Decisions regarding transfer of students are made by the Dean.
- 6.10 If the release is granted, there will be no cost to the student.
- 6.11 If the College intends to refuse the transfer, Sydney Met will inform the student in writing of
- the reasons for the refusal.
  - the student's right to access the College's complaints and appeals process within 20 working days.
- 6.12 The College will not finalise the student's refusal status in PRISMS until
- the appeal finds in favour of Sydney Met, or
  - the student has not accessed the Appeals process within 20 working days, or
  - the student withdraws from the process.
- 6.13 The Academic Board may randomly audit student transfer requests and decisions.
- 6.14 The College will maintain a record of all requests for a release, including details of the assessment of the request and the decision made regarding the request, for two years after the international student has left Sydney Met.

## **7. EARLY COMPLETION OF COURSE**

- 7.1 If the student completes the course earlier than the expected course completion date on their Conformation of Enrolment (CoE), the college will report this early completion to the Department of Home Affairs, as required by law.
- 7.2 Early completion is defined as one (1) or more trimester earlier than the expected completion (end) date on the CoE.
- 7.3 When an international student has completed their course, and before the student visa expires, the student must:
  - a. Enrol in another CRICOS registered course, or
  - b. Enrol with another education provider, or
  - c. Depart Australia immediately, unless they have been granted permission to stay by the Department of Home Affairs.
- 7.4 In the event that the student wishes to attend their Graduation Ceremony, they are required to request a Course Completion Letter from the college and to contact the Department of Home Affairs for further advice regarding their ability to attend the Graduation Ceremony.