



SYDNEY
Metropolitan
Institute of Technology

Education for Change 

Sydney Metropolitan Institute of Technology Pty Ltd
Trading as **Sydney Met**

432 – 434 Kent Street | Sydney
NSW 2000 | AUSTRALIA

+61 1300 186 729 | info@sydneymet.edu.au

www.sydneymet.edu.au

Provider ID **PRV14280** | CRICOS Provider Code **03906M** | ABN 60 607 943 500

STUDENT SUPPORT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Sydney Met is committed to providing an innovative and supportive teaching and learning environment, where students benefit from a culturally engaged educational experience. This commitment is embedded in the *Strategic Plan 2023-2027* and underpins this Policy and related services.

This Policy is in place to ensure that Sydney Met has a robust and structured system to provide students with extensive academic guidance, mentoring, academic and personal support that meets individual needs. This Policy provides information on the student support services available at Sydney Met; and strategies that Sydney Met employs to ensure that students have access to appropriate support mechanisms throughout their studies at Sydney Met.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support student success and student engagement with Sydney Met. The policy identifies the expectations and responsibilities of all stakeholders in ensuring appropriate support services are available and accessible.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Sydney Met students, and to Sydney Met staff in their commitment to supporting students throughout their studies.

4. POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

Sydney Met is committed to students' achievement of learning outcomes and the attainment of graduate qualities, including through the provision of, or access to, appropriate academic and personal support services and resources. The Policy is driven by the following principles:

- Sydney Met assesses the preparedness for study and the learning needs of students at both admission and enrolment.
- At the beginning of each study period, all new undergraduate and postgraduate students are provided with a culturally appropriate orientation to ensure they have a seamless transition to studying at Sydney Met and for international students to life in Australia.
- The academic progress of all undergraduate and postgraduate students is monitored to ensure that individual needs are identified and met. Each trimester, student attendance and

assessment performance are reviewed for the purpose of identifying those who may be experiencing difficulty for individual contact from the student support team. Where gaps in support are identified these are bridged as soon as practical to assist the learner to achieve their educational goals.

- Sydney Met’s approach to student support operates within the context of a mutual responsibility framework. Students take responsibility overall for their own learning, with active support from Sydney Met in a range of important support areas. The Departments within Sydney Met aim to foster an environment which encourages student independence in learning, while taking steps to identify and respond to personal and academic issues that may negatively impact students’ educational outcomes.
- Sydney Met recognizes that in addition to students with individual needs, and those who have difficulties due to English being their second language, there are particular support requirements for cohorts of students who have faced systemic barriers to their preparation for higher education, including those from priority access and equity groups. Strategies are based on identifying and responding to potential barriers to learning as early as possible.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Sydney Met is responsible for:

- Promoting and fostering safe on site and online work and learning environments.
- Providing fit for purpose services and resources, or ensuring access to services and resources, that support academic and personal wellbeing, including mental health.
- Proactively monitoring the progress of students to ensure they are provided timely support where they experience difficulties in transitioning into and progressing through a Sydney Met Course.
- Identifying students who are ‘at risk’ of unsatisfactory academic progression and providing these students with appropriate support services.
- Monitoring and reviewing the quality of Sydney Met and contracted support services and resources.
- Prevention and provision of support for students who may be subject to bullying, sexual harassment and predatory behaviours associated with their studies.
- Monitoring risks to identify and address any impediments to student success.
- Providing sufficient technical information and academic advice to enable successful participation in the Course.

Students are responsible for:

- Reading Sydney Met policies and handbooks; familiarizing themselves with expectations and academic standards; and undertaking training provided.
- Their own study and learning practices and for seeking advice and support for their studies.
- Requesting any specific services associated with individual or special needs at the earliest opportunity.
- Maintaining satisfactory academic progress as per the Sydney Met Course Progress Policy.
- Advising Sydney Met when disruptions occur to study which may impact the achievement of satisfactory academic progress.
- Responding in a timely manner to Sydney Met where concerns are communicated regarding academic progress and/or engagement, welfare, or any other general support matter.
- Completing any intervention strategies as applied by Sydney Met in response to concerns as outlined in the *Course Progress, Attendance, and Interventions Policy and Procedure*.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Advice to students on enrolment and related issues

Students and prospective students are provided with timely, consistent, and accurate advice on all matters associated with enrolment including:

- descriptions and availability of courses;
- application, registration, and enrolment procedures;
- cancellation, deferral and leave of absence;
- transfer of enrolment to other programs;
- availability (or lack) of Commonwealth Support e.g. HECS-HELP and FEE-help;
- exemption and course transfer procedures;
- financial support available to students;
- services available from Sydney Met Student Services;
- fees for full-fee students, both Australian and international;
- facilities and services for disabled persons;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support;
- student Society membership;
- any matters as asked by students.

Appropriately identified academic and administrative staff are given adequate training to ensure their knowledge is current in relation to matters listed above to enable them to advise students correctly.

Students are advised of the names/positions of staff in the Student Handbook from whom advice on enrolment and related issues may be obtained.

6.2 Orientation program

The orientation programme held one week prior to the commencement of each study period is compulsory for all the new Sydney Met students. The Sydney Met orientation is a structured program organized by Student Services with input from staff across the College. At orientation, new students are introduced to: Sydney Met support services and more general support services and information; Campus facilities and resources; the key academic and administrative staff including designated staff member/s as the official contact point for international students; Sydney Met policies relating to students and their studies; and the guidance to access the Student Management System and the Learning Management System.

Each student receives an orientation program and student handbook at the commencement of their studies. Staff are responsible for providing orientation and student handbooks for students. The Marketing Division is responsible for providing handbooks for external stakeholders and students, prior to enrolment. Each orientation includes information at minimum on the following topics::

- enrolment procedures;
- submission of assignments;
- examinations;
- student advisers;
- Student Services;
- Library;
- Information Technology Services;
- study methods;
- timetables for internal students;
- residential schools for external students;

- important regulations and policies directly affecting students;
- safety and security;
- sexual harassment policies;
- Student Handbook;
- campus map
- Key contact details

6.3 Available services to current student at Sydney Met

Sydney Met provides a range of services to its students at no additional charge, such as:

- Academic Support Officers who can facilitate assistance with general study or personal issues affecting students;
- Academic Mentors to provide support on discipline specific content;
- Advice and information regarding employment rights and conditions in Australia and how to resolve workplace issues e.g. information about the Fair Work Ombudsman;
- The Student Handbook which provides lists of useful contacts and services for international students available in each city;
- Academic Workshops to enhance student academic performance;
- Study skills/ Learning support resources, including English Language support;
- Pastoral care for student welfare needs including the provision of health and safety advice;
- Insurance information detailing the Overseas Health Cover options; and
- Other appropriate third-party information and flyers detailing useful information and contacts such as student placements, employment opportunities, local attractions, and services, such as banks, public transport.

6.4 Student access to teaching staff

Academic staff are available for consultation at specified times during the Study Period and recess for both internal and external students. In determining consultation times, staff take into account the timetable commitments of students and:

- offer consultation times on a number of days each week; and
- offer consultation times during different time periods of a day.

Students are encouraged to make appointments for consultation within the times advertised by staff.

Students are encouraged to indicate the nature of their inquiry or concern at the point of making an appointment to make effective use of consultation times.

Sydney Met Departments are notified of consultation times available for external students.

Where appropriate, external students are notified of the electronic mail and phone numbers of academic staff responsible for teaching courses in which they are enrolled so that communication may be made directly with those staff.

6.5 Academic support, guidance, and career

Sydney Met is committed to engaging with its students and supporting them in achieving their study goals. The Office of Academic Support, Integrity, Placement and Career is a designated team to facilitate students in receiving relevant study support. The Office is coordinated by the Student Support Manager, with the Academic Support Officer (ASO) to be the student contact

in the Sydney Met Campus.

Each Department within Sydney Met establishes an appropriate student advisory system, as determined by the Head of Department. Students are informed of the system, its operation and those staff involved in providing advice.

Enrolled and prospective students are provided with accurate and appropriate advice, information, and counselling from specifically designated persons in Sydney Met who have received appropriate training.

Training provided to staff in academic guidance and career planning procedures includes:

- principles and techniques of career planning and academic guidance;
- programs offered by Sydney Met, their admission requirements, structures, and related career opportunities;
- academic support services available to students;
- relevant accountability and liability issues;
- boundaries of expertise and appropriate referrals.

6.6 Personal counselling and referral of students to student services

Sydney Met provides access to personal counselling through student services. Experienced support staff deal with all aspects of students' lives in Australia. Dedicated staff members deal with issues such as accommodation, banking, student visa requirements, medical issues, and cultural acclimatisation. For any welfare and general support, students are encouraged to talk firstly with the Registrar/Academic Manager, CEO or General Manager. Sydney Met teaching staff are accessible to students seeking individual assistance about their studies generally.

While it is recognised that Departments have the expertise to provide advice and information about academic and course matters, any other matter/s requiring professional and specialised assistance in the areas listed below are referred to Student Services:

- accommodation;
- health;
- financial counselling;
- personal counselling;
- learning enhancement (study skills);
- careers and employment advice, counselling and information;
- specific support services for international students.

Decisions to make appropriate referrals to/from Student Services will take into account:

- the needs and best interests of the student/s;
- the boundaries of the referring staff member's expertise to deal with specialised matters;
- relevant accountability and liability issues (e.g. awareness of possible legal consequences which may arise from the information, advice and counselling that is, or is not, provided).

6.7 Further support for international students

Sydney Met strives to provide further support to international students such as:

- necessary knowledge of Sydney Met facilities, services, policies and procedures;
- the opportunity to gain familiarity and understanding of Australian culture;
- a campus environment conducive to successful study;

- the opportunity to have an individual study environment conducive to successful study.

Sydney Met achieves these outcomes through the provision of appropriate specialist support services to international students in areas such as:

- recruitment of international students;
- development of promotional materials, in conjunction with Departments;
- administration of application and enrolment processes;
- welcome of students to Sydney Met campus;
- information on accommodation;
- involvement in orientation program;
- immigration, visa, and passport requirements;
- Medibank enrolment;
- student referral to appropriate Sydney Met facilities and support services;
- student placement programs;
- cultural and open day activities

6.8 Services to students with disabilities

Sydney Met provides a supportive environment for students with a disability through its commitment to enhancing opportunities for access, optimal participation, and subsequent employment.

Relevant sections of Sydney Met will contribute to the services and overall support offered to students with disability, e.g. Student Services, Library, Information Technology Services, Student Management, and all Department.

The *Disability Policy* guides the provision of support to students with a disability.

6.9 Services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and global Indigenous students

There is an Office of the Indigenous Knowledges within the Office of the Registrar to ensure that:

- the academic and welfare needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and global indigenous students are catered for;
- optimum participation and graduation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and global indigenous students are achieved.

The Office of the Indigenous Knowledges aims to achieve these outcomes through the provision of appropriate specialist support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and global Indigenous students, for instance by:

- providing a supportive physical, cultural, emotional, and intellectual environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, through access, progression, graduation, and subsequent employment opportunities;
- identifying and responding to needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- developing programs particular to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- developing programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives for Faculty use;
- cooperating with the various welfare and advisory services available on campus to provide effective services appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;

- providing an interface between the Sydney Met and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Australia and indigenous peoples globally;
- provision of specialist support services to all Sydney Met units, in relation to issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and global indigenous students.

6.10 Support for course progress

Sydney Met has a structured process to monitor student course progress and provide corresponding engagement support and apply intervention strategies where required. Sydney Met has policy to identify students who are ‘at risk’ of making unsatisfactory course progress. Those students are communicated with by the ASOs in each campus for academic intervention (Refer to Sydney Met’s Course Progress Policy).

6.11 Personal and financial support

A student may be identified as requiring personal support and assistance where their psychological or medical welfare is reasonably considered to warrant this action. All staff and students are encouraged to be alert to the possibility of students in personal difficulty, and the Sydney Met provides training in this area for staff, as well as maintaining current awareness through mechanisms such as notices, posters, and screen reminders. Students identified as requiring additional personal support care can be referred to the Sydney Met Student Support Team who will provide advice and assistance for students in accessing the following support areas: counselling and psychological services, medical services, disability support and international student support.

Sydney met provides financial support through fee scholarships for merit-based and priority equity group students. All students are also able to access financial assistance through scholarships associated with achieving and sustaining academic achievement benchmarks. Students experiencing financial difficulties associated with the loss of income due to a crisis are to referred to the Academic Manager/ Registrar. The CEO approves the provision of financial support within this framework based on advice from the Academic Manager / Registrar.

6.12 Support for resolution of complaints, appeals and grievances

Sydney Met provides students with access to a comprehensive internal and external review facility, which they can access in relation to any decision, action or matter which affects them as students. These provisions are set out in detail in the *Complaints Policy and Procedures*.

Sydney Met does NOT offer a provision to pay for student legal services in respect of any matters, including independent legal advice in relation to complaint, appeal, or grievance matters. While Sydney Met will assist students to identify providers who may best meet their personal legal service needs, and may facilitate initial introductions, Sydney Met takes no responsibility for the choice of legal service provider made by the student, or for the process and outcome of that service.

Other services available to students include assistance with accommodation and with career development services (e.g. for part time/ casual work in a relevant professional area), as well as career advisory services. This information is included in the Sydney Met website as well as advertised through emails and in class.

7. SUPPORT TO STUDENTS ‘AT-RISK’

Sydney Met's approach to identifying and addressing the needs of students 'at risk' academically involves strategies which apply at both pre-commencement and during the course of study.

7.1 Pre-commencement

The following suite of activities applies in the pre-commencement of study phase.

- In operationalising this support, emphasis is placed on identifying the academic and support needs of individual students before commencement of studies, and ensuring appropriate resources and infrastructure are in place to meet these needs. The full suite of support provisions is set out in the *Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Policy*.
- Students are required to meet minimum IELTS or equivalent requirements for entry to the Sydney Met courses. However, to facilitate their learning and academic success the College also offers some English language support for students at no additional cost.
- Students with special needs are supported by mechanisms for considering the flexibilities required in a range of existing (as well as emergent) student situations which justify formal consideration.
- Sydney Met ensures that for every unit of study, each teaching staff member (lecturer and tutor) makes time available per week for student consultation about academic, assessment and study matters. The process for arranging consultation is advised to students at the beginning of each teaching period.

7.2 During the course of study:

A student may be identified as requiring additional academic support if they are not progressing satisfactorily in their studies (or are at significant risk of not progressing satisfactorily), or where their welfare is reasonably considered to warrant some form of staff intervention. The *Course Progress, Attendance, and Interventions Policy* sets out the mechanisms for handling unsatisfactory progress. A student may require additional academic support due to a number of factors, such as:

- medical illness, injury, psychological condition or disability;
- changes in family or carer responsibilities;
- factors in their private lives which disrupt their ability to study and/or attend teaching sessions;
- behaviour of fellow students which is consistently disruptive, volatile or otherwise in breach of Sydney Met's values and code of conduct;
- English language proficiency;
- concerns regarding academic capacity or achievement which might be reflected by:
- conditional enrolment or pattern of deferral;
- change to a new field of study that may challenge previously successful approaches to learning;
- failure to access on-line teaching site;
- failure of 50% or more of credit points attempted in the trimester;
- failure to attend compulsory teaching and assessment components;
- failure to complete a mandated assessment element or practicum;
- unsatisfactory attendance record; or
- minimal class participation/engagement.
- difficulties associated with the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic (or similar) including, but not limited to, financial problems, housing stress or adherence to Government requirements.

The requirement for intervention is identified, categorised and referred through a framework which includes:

- student reports throughout the trimester which support identification, including:
 - academic action lists /students placed on warning
 - academic progress reports collated, reported and reviewed every trimester;
- advice from the Academic Manager or teaching staff about concerns in the pattern of student contact/study/attendance;
- surveys or diagnostic tools, including first year diagnostic tasks and English language assessment for both undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- informal mechanisms such as advice from teaching staff based on multiple requests for extensions, absences, and low levels of class engagement;
- student self-reporting whereby students who are aware that they are finding it difficult and need additional academic support and bring this to the attention of staff;
- where financial difficulties are occurring to the student and this is brought to the attention of the Registrar.

Sydney Met provides a range of academic support services to assist students who are struggling with their study demands. These include:

- academic advisory support (an Academic Support Officer);
- additional computing support (IT services);
- additional library support (Library services);
- academic integrity or misconduct advisory support (through Academic Support Officer position and/or Student Support Officer position).

Students may be referred to these additional services by a staff member or be a self-referral. Students who are identified as potentially benefiting from additional support based on academic performance are not compelled to access a particular support service.

8. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Students are encouraged to provide feedback on the delivery of Sydney Met's support services. The College has several platforms such as the Student Experience Committee (SEC), Student Representative Committee (SRC) and student feedback survey to provide structured feedback on the operation of support services to help inform the future development of these services, Should a student have concerns about these services they should access Sydney Met's complaint policy and procedures for timely resolution. Refer to Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures for further information about making a complaint.

9. RESPONSIBILITY

This Policy is the responsibility of the CEO, with assistance from Academic Manager/ Registrar, and in collaboration with the Executive Dean and General Manager.