

# RMIT University Pathways (RMIT UP) Student Attendance Instruction

## Section 1 – Purpose

- (1) Students are expected to attend all scheduled course contact hours to be able to participate and progress satisfactorily. This instruction details the attendance requirements for students studying Foundation Studies and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) with RMIT UP including recording, monitoring, breaches and appeal steps. This instruction is in accordance with the requirements of Standard 8 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas students.

## Section 2 – Authority

- (2) Authority for this document is established by the RMIT Enrolment Policy.

## Section 3 – Scope

- (3) This instruction is for students, and staff who teach and support students, studying Foundation Studies and ELICOS at RMIT UP.

## Section 4 – Instruction

### Attendance conditions and calculations

- (4) All students who have a valid Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) (i.e. student visa holders, those applying for a student visa, or those intending to apply for a student visa) are required to maintain a minimum projected attendance rate of 80% of the scheduled course contact hours (calculated in minutes) as a condition of their visa and enrolment.

- a. Projected attendance is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(Total\ scheduled\ course\ contact\ minutes\ for\ the\ study\ period) - (Total\ minutes\ of\ absence)}{Total\ scheduled\ course\ contact\ minutes\ for\ the\ study\ period}$$

- (5) Total scheduled course contact minutes are:
  - a. for Foundation Studies, the scheduled class contact hours plus home group sessions and examinations.
  - b. for ELICOS, the scheduled class contact hours.
- (6) The specified study periods for attendance monitoring are:
  - a. Foundation Studies – one semester
  - b. ELICOS – the duration of the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).
- (7) Attendance monitoring commences on the first day of an enrolled student's scheduled classes.
- (8) Periods of approved leave of absence and periods of suspension for misconduct are excluded from the calculation of attendance.

### **Communicating attendance requirements to students**

- (9) Information about attendance requirements is communicated to all students:
  - a. via the [Policies and Procedures webpage](#) on the [RMIT UP website](#), and
  - b. during the compulsory Orientation session following enrolment, and/or
  - c. for ELICOS students, the student enrolment declaration contains information about attendance requirements,
  - d. for Foundation Studies students, the Foundation Studies Handbook provides information about attendance requirements and attendance monitoring.

### **Recording attendance**

- (10) Attendance is recorded according to the official timetable of contact hours for each accredited program or course.
- (11) The class teacher maintains the formal attendance roll for each class.
- (12) The class roll is marked online by the class teacher in each class session.
- (13) Class teachers are required to ensure the attendance roll is completed accurately for each class session as specified in the official timetable.

### **Absence**

- (14) For the purpose of this instruction, absence is defined as non-attendance in class, including, but not limited to lateness, leaving early and taking unscheduled breaks.
- (15) A student studying remotely will be considered absent if they do not respond to their teacher, or the online support person at any point during the scheduled class session.
- (16) Lateness, leaving early and taking unscheduled breaks may be deducted from a student's attendance.
  - a. Lateness, leaving early or taking unscheduled absences of 15, 30, 45 or 60 minutes can be recorded on the class roll.
    - i. If a student is absent for less than 15 minutes, this can be noted in the comments on the attendance register, but it is not deducted from the student's attendance.
    - ii. If a student is absent for more than 15 minutes, the time of absence should be rounded up or down to the closest option available for recording.
  - b. A student may be considered and recorded as "absent" for an entire session if the student is late, leaves early or takes an unscheduled break and the absence is more than 60 minutes of the duration of that session.
    - i. Teaching staff have discretion to consider and record a student as "present" on these occasions, provided that the reason for the student's absence was outside the student's control and the student can provide documented evidence (e.g. public transport disruption announced on Public Transport Victoria website/media).
    - ii. Teaching staff must note the time of late arrival, early departure or unscheduled absence from class in the notes section on the attendance register.
  - c. Students arriving late or taking an unscheduled break will not be refused entry to class unless doing so causes disruption to an assessment.
- (17) It is primarily the teacher's responsibility to counsel students who are consistently arriving late, leaving early or taking unscheduled breaks on:
  - a. the importance of attendance for academic success

- b. the student's attendance obligations
  - c. strategies for full engagement.
- (18) Students who are absent should make every reasonable effort to ensure any missed component of study is covered.

#### **Student absence due to illness**

- (19) A student who is absent from class due to illness is recorded as "absent".
- (20) Medical certificates:
- a. It is the student's responsibility to obtain a medical certificate from a registered health provider to cover the period of illness.
    - i. RMIT UP accepts medical certificates, or carer's certificates from health providers who are registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), or an overseas equivalent if the student is not in Australia.
  - b. Where the medical certificate is in a language other than English, it is the student's responsibility to provide an English translation from an accredited translator e.g. [NAATI](#).
  - c. A medical or carer's certificate explains an absence but does not cancel it. The absence will still be deducted from the student's attendance.
  - d. Statutory declarations are not acceptable evidence of illness.
  - e. Backdated medical certificates will not be accepted.
    - i. A medical certificate is backdated if the period of illness stated on the medical certificate concludes prior to the date the medical certificate was created.
  - f. Teachers must not accept medical certificates from a student.
  - g. The student must submit the medical certificate to RMIT UP Student Services either in person, or via email to [pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au](mailto:pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au).
    - i. Original medical certificates are scanned and returned to the student.
    - ii. The digital copy of the medical certificate is saved electronically and uploaded to the IQ diary in the student record on the database.
  - h. Original medical certificates must be provided to RMIT UP Student Services upon request.
  - i. Students must retain all original medical certificates to explain their unsatisfactory attendance.

#### **Monitoring Attendance**

- (21) RMIT UP monitors student attendance daily using the online student database system.
- (22) Where a student is absent for 5 consecutive days, without prior approval or notice:
- a. The Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance or delegate will investigate the student's circumstances to confirm that the student has not cancelled their enrolment, applied for a leave of absence or transferred to another provider.
  - b. The Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance or delegate will contact the student within one working day of the student's 5-day absence.
    - i. If the student is under 18 and has an RMIT Confirmed Approval of Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW), contact will also be made with the assigned caregiver and RMIT Student Wellbeing Services via email to [isunder18@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isunder18@rmit.edu.au).

- ii. If the student is a sponsored student, contact will also be made with the RMIT International Sponsored Student Coordinator via email to [isscholarships@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isscholarships@rmit.edu.au).
  - c. Contact with the student may be initially undertaken via phone call, SMS and/or email to advise them that there are concerns about their attendance and to investigate why they have not been attending. The communication may include:
    - i. a request that the student contact the sender
    - ii. advice to the student to correct their enrolment records if they are no longer studying the program
    - iii. advice that RMIT UP initiate the RMIT Missing Student Instruction if the student does not respond within five working days
    - iv. advice that RMIT UP may contact the student's emergency contact, the police and relevant government departments.
  - d. If the student is not contactable, the Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance or delegate will attempt to contact the student's local emergency contact and/or their home country emergency contact.
  - e. If deemed necessary in investigating the student's situation, the Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance or delegate may also ask the student's classmates or associates (including agents) if they have had recent contact with the student, and if they could prompt the student to contact RMIT UP.
  - f. Details of attempted contact or any information and notes of the action taken are recorded electronically in the IQ diary.
- (23) If the RMIT UP Student Services staff cannot contact the student after 5 working days of attempted contact, or sooner if there is reason to believe that the student is missing, or their safety, health, well-being or welfare may be at risk, the Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance or delegate will inform the Associate Director, Quality Assurance and Standards or another member of the RMIT UP senior leadership team and RMIT Student Support via [student.support@rmit.edu.au](mailto:student.support@rmit.edu.au) which will initiate the formal section of the RMIT Missing Student Instruction.

#### **Attendance counselling and warnings**

- (24) Students who are identified as not maintaining projected attendance above 90% will receive formal warning letters from RMIT UP via their RMIT student email address:
- a. Warning Letter 1 is issued when the student's projected attendance is between 86% and 90%.
  - Warning Letter 2 is issued when the student's projected attendance is between 80% and 85%.
- (25) Warning letters:
- a. inform the student of their declining attendance
  - b. ask the student to provide evidence of the reason(s) for their absence
  - c. remind the student of the possible consequences that unsatisfactory attendance may have on their student visa, if applicable
  - d. instruct the student to make an appointment, either online or in person, to discuss their attendance situation with the Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance or delegate.
- (26) During the meeting with the Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance or delegate, the student is:
- a. reminded of their student visa requirement, where applicable, and are advised of the procedure if their projected attendance falls below 80% at or before the completion of the reporting period
  - b. invited to discuss the causes of their declining attendance

- c. offered support and advice if there are problems preventing the student from attending
  - d. referred to support services to assist in resolving the problems causing a decline in their attendance
  - e. asked to provide any relevant documentation.
- (27) Any relevant documentation submitted within 2 working days will be considered and a determination made by the Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance as to whether the student would benefit from taking a leave of absence from their course at this stage.
- (28) A record of meetings and a summary of what was discussed is entered in the diary in the student record on IQ.
- (29) ELICOS students with 4 or 5-week attendance monitoring periods (i.e. 5-week CoEs):
- a. are required to sign an agreement before their 4 or 5-week course commences which serves as an attendance warning and counselling session
  - b. may be issued only one other attendance warning letter in addition to the agreement during the 5-week monitoring period when projected attendance falls between 80% and 90%.

#### **Reporting to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for unsatisfactory attendance**

- (30) If the projected attendance of a student with a CoE studying at RMIT UP falls below 80%, RMIT UP will begin the process of reporting the student's unsatisfactory attendance to the DHA.
- (31) RMIT or RMIT UP may choose not to report the student for attending less than 80% if both of the following conditions are met:
- a. the student produces documentary evidence demonstrating that sufficient compassionate or compelling circumstances apply and
  - b. the student's projected attendance is at least 70%.
- (32) For Foundation Studies students:
- a. If a student's projected attendance falls below 80%, the Senior Student Services Advisor – Compliance will issue the student with a Notice of Intention to Report (NITR) via their RMIT student email address, and where available, their personal email address. This letter notifies the student in writing of RMIT's intention to report the student to the DHA through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS), for unsatisfactory attendance.
  - b. The RMIT Compliance Coordinator, Enrolment Services in the Academic Registrars Group, Enrolment and Student Records is notified of the issuance of an NITR via [isvisa@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isvisa@rmit.edu.au).
  - c. The student is advised in the NITR of the process for accessing the internal appeals process.
- (33) For ELICOS students:
- a. If a student's projected attendance falls below 80%, and
    - i. insufficient evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances has been provided, and/or
    - ii. a leave of absence is not approved or warranted
 the Senior Senior Student Services Advisor - Compliance will issue the student with a Notice of Intention to Report (NITR) via their RMIT student email address, and where available, their personal email address. This letter notifies the student in writing of RMIT UP's intention to report the student to the DHA through PRISMS for unsatisfactory attendance.
  - b. The student is advised in the NITR of the process for accessing the internal appeal process.
- (34) A student who successfully appeals a NITR will not be reported to the DHA and will continue to have their attendance monitored. If the student's attendance subsequently falls below 70%, the Senior

Student Services Advisor – Compliance will issue the student with a Final Notice of Intention to Report (Final NITR) via their RMIT student email address, and where available, their personal email address. This letter notifies the student in writing of RMIT UP's or RMIT's intention to report the student to the DHA for unsatisfactory attendance.

- a. The student will be advised in their Final NITR of the criteria and process for accessing the internal appeal process.

## Appeals

- (35) Students are entitled to appeal a decision to report them to the DHA for unsatisfactory attendance, where the student's projected attendance is above 70%, and they provide:
  - a. evidence that there has been an error in the process that has been a significant factor in the decision, and/or
  - b. evidence that significant circumstances have not been considered, and/or
  - c. new, relevant evidence that was not available at the time the unsatisfactory attendance was identified, that would have been a significant factor in the decision.
- (36) Students with a projected attendance of below 70% are entitled to appeal a decision to report them to the DHA for unsatisfactory attendance only where they provide evidence that there has been an error in the attendance monitoring process that has been a significant factor in the decision.
- (37) Internal and/or external appeal handling processes can be accessed at no cost to the student.
- (38) The student is expected to continue to attend classes as scheduled during the internal and external appeals, during which time attendance will continue to be monitored.
- (39) The student must submit the appeal in writing within 20 working days of the date the NITR email was sent advising them of the intention to report them to the Department of Home Affairs.
- (40) Students submit appeals to:
  - a. the RMIT UP Associate Director, Quality Assurance and Standards via this [online form](#), for ELICOS students.
  - b. the RMIT Associate Director, Enrolment and Student Records via this [online form](#), for Foundation Studies students.
- (41) Upon submission of a written appeal, the reviewing officer, or delegate will assess the submission against the requirements at **8.2** and the appeal criteria at **9.1**.
- (42) The reviewing officer, or delegate, will commence assessment of the appeal within 10 business days and notify the student as soon as practicable of the outcome of the internal appeal via their RMIT student email account. Written advice of the appeal outcome will be held on the student's administration file Additional detail (if required)
- (43) If the appeal submission is deemed to have adequately addressed the appeal grounds, the student will be notified in writing that the appeal will be upheld.
  - a. The notification will also inform students that their attendance will continue to be monitored, and if their projected attendance falls below 70%, they will be issued a Final NITR and may be reported to DHA for unsatisfactory attendance.
- (44) If the appeal is dismissed, the written notification will include the reason for the dismissal of the appeal and advice to the student that they may seek a review of the decision externally within 10 working days:
  - a. ELICOS students appeal to the Commonwealth Ombudsman at <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students> and must notify RMIT UP Student Services by emailing their lodgement reference number to [pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au](mailto:pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au) to avoid being reported to the Department of Home Affairs.

- b. Foundation Studies students appeal to the National Student Ombudsman at <https://www.nso.gov.au/> and must notify RMIT by emailing the case number to [esoscomplianceappeals@rmit.edu.au](mailto:esoscomplianceappeals@rmit.edu.au) to avoid being reported to the Department of Home Affairs.
- (45) If the ELICOS student's program finishes during the appeal time, RMIT UP reserves the right not to make a further offer of ELICOS (i.e. the student may not be permitted to extend their program until the appeal process is finalised and the result is in favour of the student).
- (46) Students will not be reported to the Department of Home Affairs until the internal and external appeals processes have been finalised and the decision to report the student stands.
- (47) If the student
  - a. chooses not to access the internal appeal process within the 20 working-day period, or
  - b. chooses not to access the external appeal process within the 10 working-day period, or
  - c. withdraws from the appeal process by notifying RMIT UP or RMIT in writing, or
  - d. if the internal and external appeals processes have been completed and the decision supports the registered provider, RMIT UP or RMIT will, as soon as practicable, notify the Department of Home Affairs that the student has unsatisfactory attendance via PRISMS. The student's CoE is cancelled as a result.
- (48) Notifications of unsatisfactory attendance to the Department of Home Affairs via PRISMS for Foundation Studies students will be undertaken by the Academic Registrars Group, Enrolment and Student Records at RMIT. The Senior Student Services Advisor – Compliance, RMIT UP, will undertake any notifications for unsatisfactory attendance via PRISMS for ELICOS students.
- (49) A reported student whose program is not finished will be provided with a new CoE for the remaining duration of the original enrolment.
  - a. For ELICOS students, a new attendance monitoring period will also commence, coinciding with the dates of the new CoE.
- (50) RMIT UP reserves the right not to make any further offers of study to ELICOS students who have had unsatisfactory attendance.

#### **Students under 18 years of age**

- (51) All emailed communication regarding attendance sent to students with an RMIT Confirmation of Approved Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) is copied to RMIT Student Wellbeing Services via [isunder18@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isunder18@rmit.edu.au) as well as the student's caregiver contact email.

#### **Sponsored students**

- (52) All emailed communication to the student regarding attendance is copied to the RMIT International Sponsored Student Coordinator via [isscholarships@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isscholarships@rmit.edu.au) to forward on to the sponsor.

## **Section 5 – Compliance**

- (53) Provide details of how compliance is monitored and whether there is a specific role or team dedicated to monitoring compliance.
- (54) Provide details of how breaches are managed e.g. '*Breaches of this instruction can be reported through the [Organisational Breach Reporting Portal](#) and are managed in accordance with the Compliance Breach Reporting Procedure*'.



## Section 7 - Document Details

<b>Approval date</b>	2 December 2020
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Version history	
<b>Current version</b>	V4.0 17 November 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role Title changes.</li> <li>• Include definition of absence in online classes.</li> <li>• Allow students to book appointments for in person or online meetings.</li> <li>• Appeals reviewed by new roles.</li> <li>• Reporting applies to onshore and offshore students with CoEs. Additional processes for capturing and reporting attendance below 70% for FS and ELICOS.</li> </ul>
<b>Previous versions</b>	V3.0 1 August 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update to email address for FS NITR and review of appeals</li> </ul> V2.0 14 December 2020