

Student Services Procedure and Guidelines

Parent Policy

Student Support Services Policy

Introduction/Purpose

This policy sets out how Victorian Institute of Technology (VIT) supports its students in line with the Parent Policy.

Scope

These procedures/guidelines apply to all students at VIT.

Regulatory and External Context

Please refer to the parent policy.

Procedure/Guidelines

VIT offers support under the following eight broad categories:

1. Specific point of contact (international students)
 - a. International Student Contact Persons
2. Arrival support (international students)
 - a. Airport pickup and temporary accommodation support
 - b. Familiarization with Australian environment
3. Orientation to the institute and course (all students)
 - a. Institution and living in Australia
 - b. Orientation to the course
 - c. Enrolment support
4. Academic skills and English language proficiency support
 - a. Learning and academic skill workshop (all students)
 - b. Learning and academic skill development individual consultation (all students)
 - c. English language proficiency consultation (international students)
5. Library services (all students)
 - a. Availability of physical and electronic learning resources
 - b. Support of library counsellor
6. Student welfare and counselling (all students)
 - a. Counsellor support (one to one counselling)
 - b. Fees support

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- c. Student excursion and student events
- 7. Work rights and conditions (all students)
- 8. Career services (all students)
 - a. Internship support
 - b. Life-skill training
- 9. Emergency and security provisions (all students)
 - a. Student Safety Plan and Framework
- 10. Complaints and Appeals (all students)
 - a. Overarching principle

Each of these services has been identified, through feedback received, as mapping to specific needs of our student cohort. All VIT staff involved in provided above services are trained and made aware of VIT's obligation under ESOS framework and the potential implications for students arising from the exercise of these obligations.

1. Dedicated Point of Contact: International Student Contact Person/s (ISCP/s)
International Students

Informal feedback from students has confirmed the importance of this service.

The ISCP/s will generally be the first person/s students turn to when they have a question or problem. ISCPs will typically be lecturers, Student Support Services Officers or Student Administration. ISCPs have the role of helping students cope with challenges they face when studying away from their home country. They are experienced in dealing with the issues international students face and they provide a range of advice, information and support services for individual students.

VIT also has dedicated Student Support Services Officers who assists students with academic and any other personal problems. Students can obtain assistance by contacting the Student Services Desk. The support provided is typically in relation to:

- a) Physical infrastructure
- b) IT support
- c) General enquiries
- d) Formal letters
- e) Study guidelines
- f) Immigration enquiries
- g) Difficulties with study
- h) Visa assistance
- i) Work permit
- j) Tax file
- k) Health care.

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2. Arrival Support

International Students

VIT provides support to students on their first arrival to Australia at all VIT's campuses. VIT provides the following:

Familiarization with Australian environment

VIT provides students with familiarisation support to understand Australian culture, city life and way of living. This includes the provision of information booklets and websites. VIT also organises city tours and supports students' travel to local places of interest.

Feedback from students, reinforced by the results of the International Student Barometer (ISB) for VIT Melbourne, has confirmed the importance of this service.

Airport pickup and temporary accommodation support

VIT offers airport pick up of students at the time of their arrival.

Arrival Support Delivery

- If a student is relocating to Melbourne, Sydney or Adelaide to study at VIT, they can register for the Arrival Reception Service. This service arranges for students to be met on arrival at the airport and transported to their place of accommodation.
- VIT promotes services it provides through agency arrangements and offer letters to students.
- Services can be booked directly with VIT or through the service provider/s identified.
- Where services involve additional cost, it will be the actual cost incurred. This is made known to students when requesting such a service.
- VIT provides students with public transport information. This information is also available during student orientation.

3. Orientation

All Students

The orientation program conducted by VIT for all students on commencement at the Institute is an important part of our support services. VIT provides detailed orientation and enrolment support to all students at the start of each semester at all locations. Under this service, VIT provides the following:

Institution, living and studying in Australia

At this meeting we provide information on all aspects of the Institute's operation and culture. We invite spokespersons from the Victoria Police (subject to their availability); from the Department of Home Affairs (subject to their availability); and representatives of OSHC providers to ensure that students are aware of their rights and obligations as international students and aware of the supportive role that can be provided to them.

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At the orientation program students are addressed by the student counsellors who explain their role in providing information and support in relation to adjusting to living in a new culture, coping with relationship and family issues, dealing with homesickness, stress or depression, managing time, or maintaining motivation.

At the orientation program students are informed of the student support services that they can avail themselves of, the climate conditions that prevail in Victoria and New South Wales, VIT policies and procedures and other information that is useful for their safe and enjoyable experience in Australia. Students are also provided with information on their rights and responsibilities, the Visa conditions and the VIT emergency telephone number (Student Services Officer). If students need help in an emergency, call 24x7 emergency services number 000 (Australia wide).

Course structure

VIT organizes an orientation day each semester for all new students to familiarize them with the institute set-up, to facilitate the introduction of teaching and non-teaching staff, the understanding of course structure requirements, and to provide students with the opportunity to interact with fellow students.

Enrolment support

VIT organizes enrolment process support by providing individualized support to enable students to enroll into requisite units for the semester. VIT provides guidelines and support for unit selection to ensure student enrolment aligns with their study plan.

Orientation Delivery

- VIT provides students with all relevant program schedules and itineraries. These are communicated to students by email and through the VIT agents' network.
- Students are informed regarding the processes to enroll online via student services officers and selection of units for enrolment.
- Students are informed regarding satisfactory course progress and attendance requirements.
- VIT Academic Coordinators and faculty members support the process by presenting key details about the course and its structure.
- Student attendance is compulsory.

Benchmarking indicates orientation is a useful service. It is also required by the key regulatory frameworks.

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4. Academic Skills and English Language Support

All students (English language: International students only)

VIT's learning support assists students to improve their learning skills. To support learning skills, VIT has put in place:

Learning and academic skills workshops

VIT provides learning and academic skills support covering various learning and academic skill development topics. Learning Advisors provide support on a range of assessments, referencing, and content related academic skills including:

- Professional communication
- Critical thinking
- Presentation skills
- Informational literacy and numeracy
- Digital literacy
- Web software tools and accessing learning management system (LMS) and other software
- Academic writing and referencing
- Vocabulary range and grammar
- Understanding plagiarism and how to deal with it
- Writing essays, reports and developing presentations
- Understanding specific course related assessment tools such as how to prepare assignments, reports etc. as required in assessment.

Workshops are provided to students during each teaching period. These workshops are designed to facilitate students with their understanding of academic requirements at VIT and their pathways to other VIT courses or courses offered by other providers and universities. Most workshops are scheduled in the first four weeks of each semester. Remaining workshops may be offered later in the semester to provide students with further support on assignments, workloads, etc. The schedule and topics of these workshops are communicated to students.

Workshop booking is achieved via VIT Student Services at any VIT Student Services desk/reception, using a dedicated email address and telephone contact.

We are currently analysing how to also provide this service online.

English language proficiency consultation

VIT assists students with the agreed levels of English language proficiency including writing skills. VIT locations provide individual English Language Proficiency (ELP) support, available by booking with VIT Student Services at any VIT Student Services desk/reception, via a dedicated email address or by telephone. Student ELP support is provided by a qualified VIT English language teacher.

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Weekly 2-hour language skills development support workshops

Advice by a designated English language teacher on a broad range of ELP matters including:

- Academic writing for VIT requirements
- Vocabulary range and grammar improvements
- Writing essays, reports and developing presentations
- Writing layout convention including guidelines for fonts, spacing, etc
- Accessing reliable resources and their interpretation
- Periodically assessing proficiency level of students set against the minimum ELP standard required by VIT.

Learning and academic skill development individual consultation

In addition to workshops, VIT students have access to individual academic skill consultations with a qualified learning advisor:

- Individual Academic Skills support is available by booking with VIT Student Services at any VIT Student Services desk/reception, via a dedicated email address or by telephone. Students' appointments are with a qualified learning advisor or instructor at VIT.
- The academic teaching model includes a one-hour study session prior to each two-hour class workshop. The study session is resourced by a qualified learning advisor or an appropriate instructor who is available to support students in engaging with the class content or to support academic skill development.

Students are informed of the availability of this support service through the Learning Management System and emails. Academic staff also promote the availability of this service during their academic sessions. Additionally, details of this service are posted on various notice boards and on VIT's website.

5. Library Services

All students

Library services are available to students at all VIT campuses. A VIT librarian assists students with usage of and access to this service. VIT provides a detailed introduction of this service to students at the start of each semester.

Physical and electronic learning resources

A physical and electronic library is available to all students. Students can access physical resources, borrow books and access online library support.

Librarian support

VIT libraries are staffed by qualified librarians in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. The librarians provide all necessary support to students who want to understand, to clarify or learn how to use learning resources and to make use of these resources.

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VIT operate a library in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. Designated spaces are provided in 123 Queen Street, Melbourne, 235 Queen Street Melbourne, Level 5, 333 Kent Street, Sydney and Level 1, Rundle Mall, Adelaide. Librarians conduct literacy information sessions as required, including referencing.

Hours of operation – (Librarian available):

- Monday to Friday - 9:00am to 5:30pm
- Saturday – 9:00am to 2:00pm

Physical Spaces:

- Library desk space for at least 32 students in each campus.

Physical Resources:

- Free Wi-Fi
- Free use of laptop computers
- Printing, scanning and photocopying services
- Hard copy resources
- Quiet and group study spaces
- Referencing, research and librarian support sessions are available as requested by the HE department. The librarian is available during operating hours for private library related consultation.

	Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide
Librarians	Contact person: Librarian on Duty Email: library@vit.edu.au

6. Student Welfare and Counselling

All students

Counselling Service

The Counselling Service at VIT helps students to address academic and personal issues. This is a professional and confidential service that is available to all students free of charge.

Support of counsellor for one on one counselling:

VIT provide qualified counsellor support. This service facilitates students to work through a wide range of personal, psychological and study-related challenges.

A student may access a counsellor on matters including:

- balancing of study, life and work;
- time management;
- cultural adjustments and living away from home;

- anxiety and depression;
- difficulty studying, worrying about achievement outcomes, ability and capacity to prepare presentations and prepare for examinations; and
- relationship issues with family, friends, partners, etc.

This service can be booked by email, or with VIT Student Services.

Counselling service contact person: counselling@vit.edu.au

Analysis of the utilisation of this service indicates the current provision matches student requirements.

Fees support

VIT supports students experiencing hardship with payment of fees. After assessing their financial circumstances, VIT's payment plan is available to enable students to pay fees in instalments.

Student excursions and student events

Informal feedback from students has suggested this service. VIT offers a range of student excursions and events where students can participate in a group outing, explore the environment and learn in a group setting. Students are informed of the various celebration details organized by International Students' Councils, Cities of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide and other organizers who invite students to participate.

7. Work Rights and Conditions

All students

International students can work up to 40 hours per fortnight during their study and can work full time during their semester breaks. Students are encouraged to visit Fair Work Ombudsman website www.fairwork.gov.au for complete information about employment rights and conditions. Student can also contact Fair Work Ombudsman to resolve any workplace issues.

8. Career Services

All students

VIT provide career counselling services to students to help students become job ready.

For career counselling support, students are encouraged to make an appointment for at least one face to face session at any of VIT's campuses. A session is provided to review the student's resume and their LinkedIn profile and to introduce them to online job search websites.

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Graduate opportunities are shared regularly with students who are encouraged to apply for relevant vacancies. Other job opportunities when available are shared with students on VIT's online jobs notice board.

VIT Student Service Officers provide the following services:

- Direction to career resources, available workshops, and events to learn more about career development.
- Connection with potential employers and organisations that support students' job searches.
- Guidance on resume preparations, how to job search, how to prepare for an interview, etiquette and decorum for an interview, and required competencies.
- Details on a broad range of volunteer work opportunities in the community.
- Information on networking events.

These services are integrated into English Language Support and Learning and Academic Skills Support as appropriate.

Services can be booked at Student Services Desk/Reception or by email to student services.

- Melbourne – Meeting rooms at 123 and 235 Queen Street
- Sydney – Consultation Room, Level 5, 333 Kent Street
- Adelaide – Meeting room, Level 1, 112 Rundle Mall

Student Services regularly inform students on the availability of this service. Details of this service are available on VIT notice boards and on the website.

Feedback from benchmarking confirms the value of this service to our students.

9. Emergency and Security Provisions

All students

VIT has a comprehensive safety plan for students. Readers are referred to the Student Safety Plan and Framework.

Safety Contact Person

If a student feels unsafe:

Melbourne: Duty Officer - 0410 462 201
 Sydney: Building Security - 0412 888 614
 Adelaide: Duty Officer – 0450 031 235

First Aid incident

- Check for any threatening situation and remove or control it (if it is safe to do so)
- Remain with the casualty and provide appropriate support
- Direct someone to call the first aid officer
- Call 000 if ambulance assistance is required

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- Designate someone to meet the ambulance and direct it to the location of the casualty
- Call the first aid officers and security

Security Alarm

- 123, 235 and 118 Queen Street, Melbourne VIC (Woop- woop)
- 333 Kent Street, NSW (Woop – Woop)
- Level 1 & 2, 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA (Woop – woop)

Evacuation Process

If in the event of an emergency, it becomes necessary to evacuate personnel from the building:

- Floor wardens will direct the students to the designated assembly areas
- Assembly areas for different buildings are
 - 123 Queen St - Corner Little Collins Street and Bank Place
 - 118 Queen St - Corner of Queen Street and Bourke Street
 - 235 Queen St – Corner of Barry Lane and Little Bourke Street
 - 333 Kent Sydney – Corner of Erskine Street and Sussex Street
 - 112 Rundle Mall, Adelaide – Corner Gawler Pl and Rundle Mall

10. Complaints and Appeals Process

All students

VIT recognizes the importance of fair and transparent handling of complains and appeals.

VIT will ensure that:

- All disputes, complaints and appeals will be handled professionally, equitably, confidentially and in a timely manner, with a view to achieving a satisfactory resolution.
- All parties will have a clear understanding of the steps involved in the procedure, prior to and during the carrying out of the procedure.
- Prospective students are provided with a copy of the Complaints and Appeals Policy before entering into a contract to enrol and again at course commencement.
- All relevant staff members are familiar with the policy.

Complaints processes will be at no cost to students.

This policy is published/referenced on VIT's website, in the Student Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct.

Overarching Principles

The Institute encourages all complainants to try to resolve the issue informally if possible. This has several advantages in terms of immediacy, and usually results in the line of communications being effectively opened. However, it is recognized that this is not always appropriate, e.g. in cases of sexual harassment. If the complaint is not able to be resolved at this stage, the individual with the complaint has the right to consult, in confidence, any one of the persons or bodies listed below at any time:

- Coordinator, where the complaint involves a member of staff
- Student Administration

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- VET Coordinator/Director of Studies/Higher Education Dean
- CEO
- A person designated by the CEO on behalf of the Institute as a complaints' adviser

In the event a student (or staff member) is unhappy about a situation and wants to lodge a complaint, the Institute undertakes to take the complaint seriously and process it as quickly as possible with the intention of providing a clear answer in a maximum of 10 working days.

The Institute also recognizes that there are decisions (either as a result of a complaint or as a result of an assessment decision) that students may be unhappy about. In which case a student can lodge an appeal which will result in a review of the decision.

If the complainant or appellant is not happy with the outcome of the internal appeals process, then they may request to have that reviewed externally. The Institute will support them in this process.

Whilst the sources of a complaint or an appeal will be varied, the process undertaken is essentially the same, therefore this policy and the process below will apply to both complaints and appeals.

For full details of the policy, please see the Student Handbook available with the Agent or which can be downloaded from the website or alternatively a copy can be requested by sending an e-mail to info@vit.edu.au

Review Process

This procedure/guideline will be reviewed every five years after that, with annual non-substantive revisions.

Related Documents

Student Support Services Policy

Analysis of Student Support Requirements

Student Safety Plan and Framework

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