

Student Welfare Policy and Procedure HEPP49

PURPOSE

This policy describes the principles and practices at Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of each student. This policy adopts a holistic approach to student wellbeing, recognising the diverse academic, personal, cultural, and social needs of students in compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and staff of Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education).

DEFINITIONS

SCEI-HE	Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)
Welfare	Refers to all matters pertaining to the physical, mental and general well-being of students.
Student Welfare Officer	The designated staff member responsible for providing support, referral, and advocacy services to students regarding their welfare.
Critical Incident	An event that causes or threatens to cause serious harm to a student's physical or psychological wellbeing.

POLICY

- SCEI-HE is committed to providing students with appropriate academic and welfare support services, information, advice, and assistance to help them attain academic success and improve their personal well-being whilst undertaking a course at SCEI-HE. In accordance with HESF 2.3.3, support for students is informed by the needs of diverse student cohorts to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- All welfare services are provided equitably and are accessible to all students, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, and students with disabilities.
- The objectives of student welfare support are to:
 - Meet the needs of those students who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable to enable them to achieve success in their studies and personal wellbeing;
 - Provide individualised support to those who require it;
 - Respond to all incidents involving students and staff;
 - Develop partnerships between student support services and community services to provide broader support options for students; and
 - Defend and protect all students against discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, and racial vilification.
 - Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and standards, including the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005.
- The Student Welfare Officer plays a vital role in responding to the needs of students. The Welfare Officer assists students with issues relating to many varying topics that may include areas relating to:
 - Disability;
 - Mental Health;
 - Critical Incidents and emergencies including suicide and self-harm;
 - Drug/Alcohol abuse;
 - Emotional and physical wellbeing;
 - Prevention and health promotion;
 - Referral to professional legal services; and
 - Referral to professional financial advisers
 - Advocacy
 - Accommodation

4.11 Liaising with academic staff and external agencies to coordinate comprehensive support for students.

5. Student support involves all staff as well as external support professionals including but not limited to psychologists, mentors, social workers, disability support services, mental health services, legal and financial advisors, and medical support professionals such as nurses and General Practitioners.

PROCEDURE

SCEI-HE provides the following student welfare support services:

1. Counselling Services

- 1.1 Student Welfare Officers are available to discuss personal, physical, mental, or emotional issues that may arise for students during the course of their studies.
- 1.2 Where the Student Welfare Officer is unable to provide the student with the support necessary, that student will be referred to an external counselling service as appropriate to their needs.
- 1.3 All counselling and referral processes respect student confidentiality and require informed consent in accordance with privacy legislation.
- 1.4 Provide students with advice and referrals regarding suitable accommodation options, ensuring support for safe, affordable, and accessible housing that meets diverse student needs.
- 1.5 Any costs associated with the use of external professional will be borne by the student.
- 1.6 SCEI-HE partners with local mental health organizations to provide access to free or low-cost mental health support services where possible, including workshops and awareness campaigns to promote mental health proactively.

2. Financial Advice

- 2.1 Students should initially contact the Student Welfare Officer for any financial matters.
- 2.2 Where students have financial concerns during the course of their studies, they will be referred to the Finance Manager.

3. Legal Advice

- 3.1 Students should initially contact the Student Welfare Officer for any support on legal matters.
- 3.2 The Student Welfare Officer will refer students to further sources of legal aid if required.
- 3.3 The Student Welfare Officer ensures that students understand their rights and responsibilities when seeking legal advice or advocacy.

4. Academic and Progress Support

- 4.1 The Academic Director, Course Coordinators and Student Administration Manager are available to assist students with information and advice in regard to enrolment issues, academic progress or educational outcomes or pathways.
- 4.2 Students seeking academic study skills support should first contact their lecturer or Course Coordinator. If further support is required, academic staff or the Student Welfare Officer will refer them to an internal or external Academic Skills Support Officer.

5. Support for Students with Disability

- 5.1 Students should advise SCEI-HE in advance and provide documentation of any disability that may affect the student's progress prior to commencement of the course.
- 5.2 Where staff are aware of disability affecting a student, reasonable adjustments can be made to teaching arrangements, assessment and/or materials and access to assist these students with their learning.
- 5.3 Reasonable adjustments will be documented in a formal Disability Support Plan, developed in consultation with the student, to ensure clarity and consistency in support provision. Disability Support Plans will be reviewed regularly in consultation with the student to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.
- 5.4 SCEI-HE campuses are equipped with accessible facilities, including ramps, lifts, and accessible restrooms, to support students with mobility impairments.

6. Student Safety

- 6.1 SCEI-HE will implement strategies to raise student awareness of personal safety risks and issues, including online safety, and provide guidance on what to do in the event of a personal crisis.
- 6.2 Information will be provided to students on the types of behaviours which are considered unacceptable—

both on campus and online—including harassment, bullying, discrimination, and misconduct. Students will be informed of their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (HEPP07), as well as the processes for reporting and responding to such events in accordance with relevant policies such as the Student Misconduct Policy (HEPP47) and Student Complaint and Grievance Policy (HEPP03).

- 6.3 SCEI-HE has monitored video security cameras throughout the campus. The video footage can be accessed upon request to the IT Manager in the event of theft, damage, destruction, unacceptable behaviour, emergencies.
- 6.4 Where incidents are reportable to law enforcement, a copy of video footage of the relevant incident will be provided to relevant law enforcement agencies e.g., police.
- 6.5 SCEI-HE has policies and procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of students including to monitor and address any reported or identified hazards, manage critical incidents and emergency situations.
- 6.6 SCEI-HE implements specific policies and training to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and assault, ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all students. SCEI-HE promotes a safe campus environment through prevention strategies addressing harassment, bullying, and discrimination in accordance with legal and ethical standards.

7. Student Misconduct

Students reported of academic or general misconduct will be addressed with according to the *Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP02*, *Student Code of Conduct HEPP07*, and *Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP47*, among others.

8. Cultural Awareness

- 8.1 All staff have access to information and/or training on cultural awareness to build a sensitivity for the issues related to a multicultural environment. Staff receive ongoing training to develop cultural competence and provide inclusive support to all students.
- 8.2 International students will also receive some information to help assist them to deal with the cultural challenges associated with living and studying in a new country.
- 8.3 SCEI-HE provides targeted support for diverse equity groups, including Indigenous students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and first-in-family students, through initiatives such as mentoring programs and scholarships.

9. Emergencies, Emergency Services and Critical Incidents

- 9.1 SCEI-HE maintains an emergency contact line specifically for critical incidents, accessible to all students, including international students. Details of this service are provided to students during orientation and are regularly communicated throughout their studies. Communication plans are in place to ensure timely, clear, and coordinated information dissemination to students and staff during emergencies or critical incidents, including follow-up support.
- 9.2 In the event of an emergency or critical incident, SCEI-HE follows established procedures for response and recovery as outlined in the Emergency Response Procedures Manual (HEMIS10) and the Critical Incident Policy and Procedure. These procedures include immediate safety measures, notification of relevant authorities, provision of medical assistance, and support services for affected individuals.
- 9.3 Contact details for emergency services and key welfare contacts include:
- 9.4 Student Welfare Officer: counsellor@scei-he.edu.au
- 9.5 Emergency Ambulance/Fire/Police: 000 (or local equivalent)
- 9.6 Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with campus emergency evacuation plans, first aid locations, and procedures for reporting incidents.

10. Information to Students

Information to students on welfare and support services provided by SCEI-HE will be communicated via the:

- 10.1 SCEI-HE Website;
- 10.2 Student Handbook;
- 10.3 Orientation Program; or
- 10.4 Business Development Managers.
- 10.5 Students are informed about the *Student Complaint and Grievance Policy and Procedure HEPP03* during welfare consultations and orientation to ensure awareness of processes for addressing concerns.



RELATED DOCUMENTS

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP02
Critical Incident Policy and Procedure HEPP56
Emergency Response Procedures Manual HEMIS10
First Aid Policy and Procedure HEPP55
Incident and Injury Register
Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure HEPP26
Privacy Policy HEPP34
Student Code of Conduct HEPP07
Student Complaint and Grievance Policy and Procedure HEPP03
Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP47
Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy and Procedure HEPP60

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 6 (Specifically 6.5)
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Welfare Officer: Responsible for providing welfare support services to students self-referring or referred.

DOCUMENT AND RECORD CONTROL

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