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Attendance Policy and Procedure

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Version Control

Date	Version	Changes made	Author
30 Aug 2019	V1.0_SV	Updated policy and procedures in line with the National Code 2018	Shashank Vuppala
15 Sep 2019	V1.1_SV	Revision made for procedure	Shashank Vuppala
09 Jan 2020	V1.2_SV	Revision made for definitions	Shashank Vuppala
02/2022	V1.3	Policy reviewed and refreshed	Compliance Officer
02/2023	V2.0	Revision made to sections 4	Kishor Adhikari

1. Scope

This policy sets out the requirements of international students for achieving satisfactory attendance, the way in which attendance is monitored, how attendance requirements are communicated to students and the consequences of failing to maintain satisfactory attendance at Axis Institute.

2. Policy

In line with legislation from the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) and Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (Standards for RTOs), Axis Institute is required to have and to follow a documented policy and procedure for monitoring student attendance.

To meet the requirements of the National Code 2018 Standard 8 and other requirements for CRICOS registration, which requires that registered providers monitor student's compliance with visa conditions relating to attendance and are proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements. Registered providers report students who have breached the attendance requirements under Section 19 of the ESOS Act.

This document outlines processes for monitoring international student attendance, the administration systems in place to ensure attendance monitoring and compliance and Axis Institute's responsibility.

3. Definitions

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA): The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met.

Classes: is defined as to be delivered face-to-face and online.

Course Progress: as defined by the National Code as *'the measure of advancement within a course towards the completion of that course irrespective of whether course completion is identified through academic merit or skill based competencies'*.

Department of Home Affairs (DHA): The Department is responsible for immigration and customs border policy.

Non- Genuine Student: Being a student who does not attend regular classes and does not progress in their course or failure to respond to any contact made by the Institute regarding current circumstances. Student may also be in breach of Code of Behaviour, refer to Axis Institute Academic and General Code of Conduct Policy, if they are deemed as a non-genuine student.

PRISMS: is the Provider Registration and International Students Management System

Student Visa Condition: the following condition is attached to the student visa, where by international students must adhere to, as defined by the Department of Home Affairs

8202 – Meet course requirements

You must:

- remain enrolled in a registered course (if you are a Foreign Affairs or Defence sponsored student or a secondary exchange student you must maintain full-time enrolment in your course of study or training)
- maintain enrolment in a registered course that is the same Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level or higher for which we granted your student visa, unless changing from AQF level 10 to level 9. See: Change in study situation.
- maintain satisfactory attendance in your course and course progress for each study period as required by your education provider.

Satisfactory attendance: is defined as a student who achieves an attendance rate of 80% or above, in each study period.

Study Period: a discrete period of study within a course as defined as 18 contact weeks. Where the remaining duration of the course is less than 18 weeks, the study period will be equal to the remaining duration of the course.

Unsatisfactory attendance: is defined by the failure of a student to achieve an 80% attendance rate for each study period.

4. Attendance Requirements policy

1. Axis Institute is not required to monitor overseas student attendance, but it has chosen to implement this policy in conjunction with course progression monitoring policy and procedure.
2. This policy may not be solely used to report and cancel the student enrolment but will be used to support the decision under student course progression monitoring policy and procedure.
3. Students will be invited for an intervention meeting if they are absent for 5 or more consecutive classes. They will be sent a reminder on each absence.
4. If the student reaches the 5 consecutive absences limit their course progression monitoring will be activated even if it's not the end of the term (that is when the course progression is calculated) and the student will be invited for an intervention meeting.
5. The training and assessment offered by Axis Institute focuses on providing international students with knowledge and skills required to the standard of performance required in the workplace. This is known as competency-based training and assessment.
6. Each of the components of the course is a "unit of competency". Students may either be studying one or a few units of competency or a set of units that make up a total qualification. Each unit of competency is linked to specific skills and knowledge required in the workplace.
7. As well as meeting course progress requirements, international students must also meet attendance requirements as part of their visa conditions. International students are required to be enrolled in a full-time registered course to undertake study. For VET courses, a full-time course is a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week, unless otherwise specified by Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).
8. It is expected that students will attend all classes (face-to-face and online); however, we understand that in some extenuating cases students may not be able to get to a class because of their personal circumstances, such as illness or family matters. To achieve and maintain satisfactory attendance, students must attend at least 80% of their classes in every study period.

9. Students are also expected to progress through their course so that they complete the course within the nominated course duration, as specified in their written agreement/offer letter.
10. Where students are at risk of not meeting attendance requirements when the attendance rate falls below 90%, Axis Institute will contact the student in the first instance along with a meeting request for the student to meet with Student Support.
11. When the student attendance falls below 85%, a Warning Letter – Non-genuine student will be issued to the student via email communication. The email will remind students that enrolment in a full-time registered course, which is a course with a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours, is a visa condition for international students and to remind them of their scheduled class times.
12. The meeting with Student Support is intended to establish why the student was absent and to see if Axis Institute is able to provide support to the student's circumstances. At this point Student Support will remind the student about Axis Institute's *Student Academic and General Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure* and *Attendance Policy and Procedure*.
13. The student will be informed that maintaining satisfactory attendance is a student visa requirement and if their attendance falls below the deemed level, the student will be reported, and the student's visa may be cancelled. Should the student have questions pertaining to the student visa condition and possible outcome of breaching the condition, Axis Institute will refer the student to the Department of Home Affairs.
14. If the student's attendance continues to fall even after the intervention meeting and falls under 80%, the Institute may issue a *Notice of Intention to Report – Non- genuine student* to the student.
15. Axis Institute will be required to report them to Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for disciplinary reasons on PRISMS and to cancel the student's enrolment, only after the appeal process has been completed if they are found to be a non-genuine student.

4.1. Exempt Circumstances

Axis Institute may choose not to report a student whose attendance is less than 80% if:

- the student is maintaining satisfactory course progress of more than 50% in each study period; and
- the student is attending at least 70% of the scheduled course contact hours in the study period; and
- the student can demonstrate compassionate or compelling reasons.
 - 'Compassionate or compelling' circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the overseas student and which have an impact upon the overseas student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:
 - serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the overseas student was unable to attend classes.
 - bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
 - major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies; or
 - a traumatic experience, which could include:
 - involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
 - witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports) the decision is consistent with its documented policies and procedures; and the student is attending at least 70 per cent of the scheduled course contact hours.

4.2. Attendance Circumstances

1. All students are subject to attendance requirements that may include (but not limited to) classroom, vocational placement, practical classes, and clinical lab classes. 100% attendance is expected of international students at Axis Institute. It is made known to the students prior to enrolment, after enrolment and throughout their course by their trainer and Institute staff.
2. All student absences are marked daily on the attendance roll by the class trainer. Absence may be because of illness, lateness, non-attendance or leaving class early. Students must notify their trainer or the campus/student support and produce a medical certificate if they are sick over a number of days, please refer to *Leave of Absence Policy and Procedure*. Any approved leave of absence by Axis Institute will not count towards the total number of hours within a study period.
3. The student must contact the Campus or their trainer to explain any reasons for their lateness or leaving early during a scheduled/supervised class. A record will be made on the student management system.
4. It is the trainer's responsibility to maintain Class Attendance Rolls so that they accurately reflect attendance. Trainers are the first line of enquiry, and it is their responsibility to discover and document why a student is absent, late or leaves early.
5. Any issues that cannot be dealt with by a trainer are to be passed on to the Student Services Officer or the RTO Manager, who are available at any time to trainers/students who wish to discuss their attendance.

5. Appeals

If Axis Institute's decision is to report to DHA through PRISMS to cancel their enrolment, then the student may appeal through the Institute's appeals process with 20 working days from the time of issue of the NOITR as per the *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*. This Policy is available in the Student Handbook and on Axis Institute's website: www.axisinstitute.edu.au.

6. Evidence of Record Keeping

Axis Institute will maintain records of all appeal requests from students, including evidence of the attendance and decision regarding the request, on the student's file for two years from the date that the student completes their enrolment with Axis Institute, or from the date on which any internal or external appeals process is finalised.

7. Monitoring Attendance Procedure

The following is the process of how Axis Institute monitors an international student's attendance and implements consequences for those students who are failing to achieve satisfactory attendance.

7.1. Recording and Monitoring Attendance

- 7.1.1. Trainers generate the attendance roll from the system to be printed to take to class. Trainers instruct each student to sign in the time they arrive to class, as well as the sign out time when they leave the class. Students and trainers are required to sign the attendance roll. If the student arrives 30 minutes late or leaves early anytime, the student must note down the reason.
- 7.1.2. At the end of the day, trainers update the class attendance on the system.

- 7.1.3. Every fortnight, the Student Support Officer generates a report to check the attendance in the system to identify which students have been absent.
- 7.1.4. If a student's projected attendance drops below 90%, the student support officer will contact the student by phone or email communication reminding them of the same.
- 7.1.5. If a student is absent for 5 consecutive days, the student will be contacted via phone/email to provide reasons and advised to attend an intervention meeting.
- 7.1.6. During the meeting, the student will be advised on strategies to improve attendance and be presented with their scheduled class times. They will be informed that it is still possible to meet attendance requirements if they continue to attend all classes for the rest of their enrolment, which will be sufficient to maintain their visa condition requirements.
- 7.1.7. All records of all contact and meeting discussions made with the student will be updated on the student management system. Students will be closely monitored by the Student Support Officers from here on.
- 7.1.8. If the student fails to attend the meeting or does not respond to any communication made by Axis Institute within 10 working days, may result in the Institute issuing you a Notice of Intention to Report letter.
- 7.1.9. When a student's attendance rate has fallen below 80% and student course progression is below 50% (even if the term is continuing), an *Intention to Report - Non- genuine student* letter will be issued via email communication.
- 7.1.10. Axis Institute may decide not to cancel a student's enrolment and report a student for breaching the 80% attendance requirement if the student has submitted documentary evidence substantiating their compassionate and compelling circumstances.
- 7.1.11. The student will need to respond to the final Notice of Intention to Report Letter within 20 working days for an appeal using Axis Institute's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure to appeal against the Institute's decision to report them under disciplinary reasons on PRISMS.
- 7.1.12. Axis Institute will not finalise the student's status in PRISMS until the appeal finds in favor of Axis Institute decision, or the student withdraws from the process. The student must continue to attend scheduled classes until an outcome of the not satisfactory attendance request has been made.
- 7.1.13. If the student does not contact Axis Institute to initiate the complaints and appeals policy after 20 working days, the Institute will report the student for disciplinary reasons via PRISMS and the student's enrolment will be cancelled within 5 working days.

7.2. Monitoring Attendance Calculations

Axis Institute records the number of hours the student spends in the class or online, to be used in determining the total number of hours the student has attended the class for that week.

For example: A normal study period of 18 weeks consists of 360 contact hours.

When a student is identified to have missed 72 contact hours in the same study period then the student is falling below 80% attendance, Section 7 of Monitoring Attendance Procedure 7.1.9 will be implemented.

Attendance Falls Under % in a Study Period and/or misses classes		Required Action
First Reminder	90% OR 3 consecutive absences	Students will be contacted by phone or email communication to identify reasons for not attending and remind the student of their enrolment and their responsibility to maintain attendance as per their visa requirement.
Second Reminder – <i>Non-genuine student</i>	85% or 4 consecutive absences	Students will receive a <i>Reminder Letter</i> by email communication.
<i>Intervention Meeting</i>	80% or 5 consecutive absences	Students will receive a <i>Warning Letter</i> by email communication. Students will be notified that a further fall in attendance may lead to the student being reported to the Department of Home Affairs for breach of their student visa. OR 3 consecutive absences
Notice of Intention to Report <i>Notice of Intention to Report - Non-genuine student</i>	5 Consecutive absences and course progression below 50%	A <i>Notice of Intention to Report - Non-genuine student</i> to Department of Home Affairs is sent to student. Students have 20 working days to appeal in writing their absences. Medical certificates must be produced during this time. Students are advised that they may initiate Axis Institute's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. Axis Institute will not finalise the student's attendance status in PRISMS until the appeal finds in favour of Axis Institute decision, or the student has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20-working day period, or the student withdraws from the process. The student must continue to attend scheduled classes until an outcome of the not satisfactory attendance request has been made.