



# Support and Advocacy Services Policy and Procedure

Policy Code: ACA009

Draft Version 1.2

Effective Date: 23/11/2013

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## Purpose

To outline the services provided by IHM to support students both online students and Australian full fee paying students to adjust to study, achieve their learning goals and make satisfactory progress towards the learning outcomes of the course in which they are enrolled.

## Scope

This policy applies to online students and Australian full fee paying students enrolled in online courses at IHM and all staff who will be in contact with such students.

## Responsibility

The Student Support Advisor is responsible for implementation of student support services. However, some aspects of this policy fall under the responsibility of other staff members whose positions are named in relation to those specific aspects.

The Student Support Advisor is also responsible for ensuring up to date information is available for the following services and the contacts listed are current. This information is distributed to students through the orientation program outlined below.

## Student Support Services

The following support services are to be available and accessible for all students studying with IHM. IHM will provide students with contact details to refer any matters that require further follow up with relevant professionals. Any referrals are conducted by IHM at no cost to the student but fees and charges may apply where an external service



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is used by the student and this should be checked by the student prior to using services outside of IHM.

## Lecturers

Lecturers and course coordinators will work closely with students and will therefore have an important role in student support. They will keep in regular contact with student support staff and with staff involved in other areas such as student services (Student Administration and Registration Services Manager) and library services. Contact academics will receive training from the student support advisor and be familiar with services and resources to help students. Academics will arrange regular consultation times that are convenient for students, during which they will make themselves available for contact in person or by telephone or Skype. They will also proactively contact students as required to assist their progress.

## Research and Learning Support Information Officer

The Research and Learning Support Information Officer provides students and staff with specialised academic support with regard to academic writing, research skills, referencing and other academic matters.

## Student Support Advisor

The student support advisor will be a staff member with expertise and experience in student support services. The student support advisor will maintain web resources, including a discussion forum and will make her/himself available to be contacted by students. Students may make contact by email or by submitting an online enquiry at any time and will identify specific consultation hours during which they will be available on



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Skype or various instant messaging programs, by telephone or in person. Appointments can also be made for telephone and in person support sessions by the use of an appointment request form, which will be made available both online and in print.

The Student Support Advisor will maintain the referral database for external providers of services relevant to personal support and will refer students to those services. They assist with the admission process and provide student consultation in relation to relevant support services. They also liaise with academic staff on behalf of students, especially where advocacy is required, such as during the handling of complaints or appeals.

## Counselling services

When students are at risk or suffering from difficulties such as (though not limited to) anxiety, depression, symptoms that may indicate mental illness or if the student requests specialised help that cannot be provided by IHM staff, they will be referred to a counselling service.

## Referral to other services

Student support advisors will be familiar with a wide variety of services to support students' wellbeing, including community medical and legal services, telephone counselling services (such as WIRE, Men's Referral Service, Lifeline and others) and will maintain a database of their contact details for the purpose of referring students.

## Learning support

Writing and learning support groups will be run online and will be coordinated by student support staff. Lecturers and course coordinators will be kept informed of these services and will encourage students facing difficulties in these areas to participate or to seek specific help.

The Research and Learning Support Information Officer will make available learning resources to support academic writing electronically and will run online training sessions and support groups for students.



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The Librarian and eResource Coordinator supports student learning in literature search skills and accessing resources.

## Research skills and bibliographic support

Library resource staff can be contacted by email or through the online inquiry forms at any time. They will be available during specific consultation hours by telephone, Skype, instant messaging. The Librarian and eResource Coordinator will have expertise in locating and evaluating literature, use of electronic databases and reference management software. Lecturers, course coordinators and other staff may refer students to library resources for assistance in these matters. Library resource staff will run training for staff as well as online training sessions for newly enrolled students. Students may make appointments for electronic consultation with library resource staff.

## Employment services

IHM will focus on providing education to people already employed in a clinical setting and aspects of our course development rely on their participation in such a setting. However, it is still important that we provide employment support services to our students, both to assist them if their employment circumstances change during the course of their studies and to help them to access emerging opportunities for career advancement. Student Support Advisor will maintain a working knowledge of employment services.

## Medical Issues

The Student Support Advisor is available to help students locate an appropriate medical professional to fulfil their specific needs wherever they may be located. Staff will be made aware of this resource so that they can direct students accordingly.

The emergency phone number for an ambulance in Australia is '000'. This number should only be dialled in an emergency and when an ambulance, police, or fire attendance is required, students will be advised that there is a fee for ambulance usage if not covered by a person's health insurance or ambulance membership.



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## Internally provided services

- **Library/Electronic Library**

A library service is provided free for enrolled students. Books can be borrowed from the Library. Students will also have access to an Electronic library through personal computer including access to eBooks and the ability to search the library catalogue.

Lib guides will be used as a means of collecting and providing easy access to the most relevant literature to specific subjects.

Students will also be encouraged to read beyond the required and recommended reading materials for their subjects so as to enhance the breadth and depth of their understanding of complex and interrelated issues in their field of study.

- **Study Skills Workshops (webinars)**

Regular study skills workshops are held to assist students to learn how to succeed in their studies.

In order to gain the greatest benefit from the resources available, all new students will be invited to participate in an online skills workshop covering library services, electronic resources and research skills. Lecturers will liaise with support staff and identify skills and activities with which students face difficulties. Support staff will target webinars and develop support materials to help students overcome these difficulties.

Where students require specific support and assistance with locating the resources they require and conducting literature based research, they may book an electronic appointment with a library resource staff member.

- **Study groups**



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Online informal group meetings will be facilitated to enable students to share ideas and engage in peer mentoring.

- **English language support**

The entry requirements for the course of study require specific English language levels; however, Student Support will offer assistance to students to improve academic levels of English language skills in the following areas:

- Understanding the requirements of an assignment and assistance with the structure of an assignment or assessment task.
- English expression, grammar, spelling, editing their work;
- Improving confidence in understanding the principles of writing for higher education;
- Encouraging a student's independence in improving their English language skills and effective ways of studying.

## **Student Orientation Program**

An online orientation will be provided to students via the LMS. It will include videos, instructions, screen shots, introductions to key academic and support staff and instructions to assist students in participating in study online.

## **Informing students about support services**

Students will be informed about the services available to them through:

- The website
- The handbook
- Orientation
- By referral from staff as the need arises.



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## Response Times

All student enquiries will receive a response within three business days. More urgent enquiries will be given priority and addressed sooner wherever possible.

## Student Advocacy

The Student Support Advisor will liaise with academic staff on behalf of students, especially where advocacy is required, such as during the handling of complaints or appeals. They will provide students with advice and guidance regarding their rights and any applicable policies and procedures.

## Review of Student Support and Advocacy Services

Recommendations for change, addition or replacement of Student Support and Advocacy Services can be put forward by staff to the relevant committee at any time. All staff will be invited to participate in a major review which will be held triennially.

## Supplementary Information

### Related policies/procedures:

Disability Policy

Equity and Access Policy

Library Training Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy



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**Benchmarking:** Not applicable

**Supporting research and analysis:** Not applicable

**Related documents:** Student Handbook

Orientation Checklist

**Related legislation:** Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act

**Guidelines:** Not applicable

<b>Name of Document</b>	<b>Support and Advocacy Services Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>Approval Committee</b>	Board of Governors
<b>Endorsement Committee</b>	Academic Board
<b>Policy Status</b>	Amended
<b>Date of Approval</b>	23/11/2013
<b>Responsibilities for Implementation</b>	Senior Academic Team
<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	CEO Director of Studies Chair of the Academic Board
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	22/02/2016
<b>Policies Superseded by this Policy</b>	Student Support Services Policy and Procedure 1.1

## Table of Amendments

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details (short description)
1.0	10/09/2012		Creation of Draft Policy
1.1	22/02/2013		Approved by Board of





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			Governors
1.2	12/11/2013		Title of document amended
1.2	23/11/2013		Approved by Board of Governors



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## Acknowledgement

Relevant documents and policies were also sourced and examined from the following education organisations:

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RMIT University  
Edith Cowan University  
Victoria University  
Sydney College of Business and Information Technology  
Australian Institute of Technology  
Gold Coast Learning Centre