



# Support and Advocacy Services for Overseas Students Policy and Procedure

Draft Version: 1.1

Effective Date: 23/11/2013

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## Purpose

To outline the services provided by IHM to support overseas 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 overseas students enrolled in IHM and staff involved in the provision of student services.

## 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. Monitoring and evaluation of student support services is conducted by the Teaching and Learning Committee, which reports any relevant risk and quality data to the Quality Assurance and Risk Management Committee. The Internationalisation Committee provides advice, reviews this policy and provides the Student Support Advisor with advice regarding the needs of overseas students.

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.



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## Student Support Services

The following support services are available and accessible for all overseas students. IHM will provide overseas students with contact details to refer any matters that may require further follow up with relevant professionals. Any internal referrals conducted by IHM are at no cost to the student but fees and charges may apply where an external service 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 work closely with overseas students and therefore have an important role in student support. They 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. Lecturers receive training from the Student Support Advisor and are familiar with services and resources to help students. Lecturers 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 with their progress. Lecturers will share their office location, staff email address and work telephone number with students.

### 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. They research new developments in education, eLearning, policy and resources and use this to provide advice and



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information to both staff and students. The Research and Learning Support Information Officer will also have specific expertise and will research new ways to help students for whom English is a second language.

## Student Support Advisor

The Student Support Advisor has 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 specific consultation hours will be identified, during which the Student Support Advisor will be available on Skype or various instant messaging programs, by telephone or in person. Appointments can also be made for telephone and face to face 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.

Specifically for the benefit of overseas students, the Student Support Advisor will include in the referral database migration services and agents and information and services relevant to life in Australia.

## Referral to external services



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Student Support Advisors will be familiar with a wide variety of services to support students' wellbeing, including services for accommodation, counselling, crisis management, disabilities and equity issues, financial matters, legal issues, medical issues, mental health, peer mentoring, programmes promoting social interaction, religious and spiritual matters, and stress-management. The Student Support Advisor 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.

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 at any time or in person at the library during library hours. 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 staff for assistance in these matters. Library resource staff will conduct training sessions for staff and students.



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## Employment services

The Student Support Advisor will provide employment support services to overseas students, both to assist them in obtaining short term employment during the course of their studies as allowed under the terms of their visa and to help them to access emerging opportunities for career advancement. The Student Support Advisor will maintain a working knowledge of employment services. They will also be familiar with up to date work requirements for each class and subclass of visa and be able to direct students to where these requirements are published by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

## Internally provided services

### Library/Electronic Library

A library service is provided for enrolled students. Books can be borrowed from the Library. Students will also have access to an Electronic library online 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 literature relevant 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)



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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 where students face difficulties. Support staff will target webinars and develop support materials with which to help students overcome these difficulties.

Where students require specific support and assistance, they may book an appointment with a library resource staff member.

## **Study groups**

Informal group meetings will be facilitated to enable students to share ideas and engage in peer mentoring. These meetings will be supported with electronic resources including access to the online learning support resource and discussion spaces, schedules published on the LMS and in print on campus noticeboards and via email. Study groups will focus on peer to peer mentoring with oversight and support from the Research and Learning Support Information Officer.

## **English language support**

The entry requirements for each course of study require specific English language levels; however, the Research and Learning Support Information Officer will offer assistance to students to improve their English language skills in the following areas:

- Understanding the requirements of 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.



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Overseas students will be taught skills for making use of their time in Australia to seek language practice and learning opportunities in their daily lives. They will have the opportunity to participate in organised excursions accompanied by a support staff member.

## **Information about life in Australia**

Prior to applying for a course of study in Australia with IHM, prospective international students will be provided with an information pack regarding the cost of living, availability of work and housing, transport, culture and opportunities to access unique experiences in Australia. In addition to this information, the Student Support Advisor and other support staff will maintain, collect and share information about life in Australia with overseas students and will advise them on matters such as the availability of concession public transport, local laws and practices and any other matter pertaining to their daily living.

## **Advocacy in external matters**

Should an overseas student require advocacy in external matters such as legal proceedings, insurance claims, debts, disputes with local residents or any other such matter, they will be advocated by the Student Support Advisor or another support staff member of their choice. If specialised expertise is required, the Student Support Advisor will refer the student to an appropriately qualified external advocate such as a lawyer and help them to obtain information about the costs and benefits involved.

## **Overseas Student Orientation Program**

An online orientation will be provided to overseas 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.

Students will also receive a detailed face to face orientation in which:

- The Student Support Advisor will provide an overview of the study experience;



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- The Research and Learning Support Information Officer will show them how to access resources and assistance to support their study;
- They will be introduced to key staff, including their course coordinator and;
- They will be taken for a guided tour of their campus.

All matters listed in the Orientation for Overseas Students Checklist will be addressed.

## **Informing students about support services**

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

- The website
- The handbook
- The International Student Prospectus
- Orientation
- By referral from staff as the need arises
- This policy

## **Housing and Greeting Service**

Prior to arrival in Australia, overseas students may arrange to have their immediate accommodation booked for them and an IHM staff member meet them at the airport and take them there by car. A fee may apply for this service. They will be provided with information about a variety of short and long term accommodation options.

The Student Support Advisor will maintain housing noticeboards, both on campus and online where students and the community can post accommodation and rental opportunities, invitations to participate in shared rental arrangements and share house vacancies.





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## Response Times

All email and online inquiries from students will receive a response within three business days. More urgent enquiries will be given priority and addressed sooner wherever possible or can be made in person.

## Student Advocacy

### Advocacy in internal matters

The Student Support Advisor will liaise with academic staff on behalf of overseas 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.

Overseas students involved in the complaints and appeals process may choose to have the Student Support Advisor or another support staff member act as either their advocate or their advisor. Alternatively, they may choose to appoint their own advocate.

### Advocacy in external matters

Should an overseas student require advocacy in external matters such as:

- Legal proceedings;
- Insurance claims;
- Debts;
- Disputes with local residents;

Or any other such matter, they will be advocated by the Student Support Advisor or another support staff member of their choice. If specialised expertise are required, the Student Support Advisor will refer the student to an appropriately qualified external advocate such as a lawyer and help them to obtain information about the costs and benefits involved.



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## 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, during which the Teaching and Learning Committee will make recommendations to the academic board and the Quality Assurance and Risk Management Committee will deliberate upon data from key staff members and committees to determine areas of risk and opportunities for quality improvement.

## Supplementary Information

<b>Related policies/procedures:</b>	Disability Policy Equity and Access Policy Library Policy Teaching and Learning Policy
<b>Benchmarking:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Supporting research and analysis:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Related documents:</b>	Student Handbook Orientation Checklist Appointment Request Form
<b>Related legislation:</b>	Freedom of Information Act 1986
<b>Guidelines:</b>	Not applicable



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<b>Name of Document</b>	<b>Support and Advocacy Services for Overseas Students Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>Approval Committee</b>	Board of Governors
<b>Endorsement Committee</b>	Academic Board Teaching and Learning Committee Library Committee Internationalisation Committee
<b>Policy Status</b>	New
<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 Student Support Advisor Research and Learning Support Information Officer Librarian and eResource Coordinator Lecturers Course Coordinators
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	23/11/2016
<b>Policies Superseded by this Policy</b>	None

## Table of Amendments

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details (short description)
0.1	06/11/2013		Creation of Draft Policy
1.1	23/11/2013		Approval by the 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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Victoria University  
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Gold Coast Learning Centre