POLICY

Title
International Students: Attendance and Course Progress

Contact Officer at version effective date
Position: Manager: International Operations
Phone: (08) 8463 5386

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TAFE SA Policies are issued under the TAFE SA Policy Management Framework. They are binding on all TAFE SA employees

Policy Owner: Executive Director, Business Development

Version 4.0 Version effective date: 15/5/2019
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1 Policy

This policy governs the attendance and academic course progress requirements of international students in TAFE SA’s English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), VET and higher education courses.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all registered TAFE SA International students studying onshore at a TAFE SA campus. An international student is a student studying in a CRICOS registered course at TAFE SA on a student visa. It does not apply to temporary residents on other types of entry visas.

The attendance component of this policy (items 6.2 through to 6.6) only applies to ELICOS courses and does not apply to vocational education and training (VET) courses or higher education courses of study. TAFE SA, at the date of this policy, does not have a condition on its registration to monitor the attendance of international students in VET courses.

Detailed procedure steps are outlined in the associated Standard Operating Procedure: Student Attendance and Course Progress.

3 Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Counselling</td>
<td>Advice provided by a lecturing member of a program area about academic progress and any remedial action required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Progress</td>
<td>Achievement towards successful completion of a course is monitored and provides opportunity to assist the student achieve better results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Fees &amp; Charges</td>
<td>The fee/s payable: 1. To cover administration costs involved when a student seeks a particular service 2. To act as a disincentive for students to perform an action 3. To minimise the TAFE SA immigration risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘At Risk’</td>
<td>Students identified as being at risk of not progressing due to low academic performance and/or attendance which may affect them being able to complete their course within the expected duration as outlined in their COE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Day</td>
<td>Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, except for public holidays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Scheduled teaching period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Enrolment (COE)</td>
<td>Confirmation of Enrolment is a document provided electronically and issued by TAFE SA (the registered provider) to intending overseas students. The COE must accompany the application for a student visa and confirms the student’s eligibility to enrol in the particular course of the registered provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>A process to discuss concerns and obligations and to devise strategies to meet them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Commencement Date</td>
<td>The date that the TAFE SA course commences for an international student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>‘Credit’ is a benefit provided to a student by waiving one or more of the normal requirements for completion of a course of study, such as not having to complete a particular subject. Credit is obtained on the basis of evidence that the student has already undertaken learning that is deemed to be equivalent to the parts of the course for which credit has been granted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRICOS</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) is a web-based portal of Australian institutions and their courses that are approved to be offered to international students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRICOS Registered Course</td>
<td>A course that have been CRICOS Registered and is approved to be offered and delivered to international students. Courses without a CRICOS Registration cannot be offered to international students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default Date/s</td>
<td>Dates (determined by the International Unit) that international students are deemed to be in ‘student default’ for Tuition Protection Service (TPS) reporting requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELICOS</td>
<td>English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOS Act</td>
<td>Education Services for Overseas Students Act (2000) and its amendments. The ESOS Act protects the interests of both the international student and the provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees &amp; Charges Schedule</td>
<td>A listing of administration fees and charges applicable to international students with the exception of International Student Tuition Fees and those included in the International Student Tuition Refund Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTE/GS</td>
<td>Genuine Temporary Entrant and Genuine Student as deemed by HA under the Simplified Student Visa Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs previously the Department of Immigration and Border Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental/additional fee</td>
<td>Incidental fees are generally costs to purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Goods or a service that is not essential for the student to complete the course of study;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A fee for goods or a service that is essential to complete the course but is also made readily available at no additional charge by the TAFE SA;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A fee for essential goods or services that becomes the physical property of the student or for food, transport and accommodation cost associated with, for example, field trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to report</td>
<td>Documented advice provided to an international student that they are to be reported to HA for a breach of a student visa condition or cancellation of the TAFE SA enrolment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International student</td>
<td>A student who is enrolled, or prospective student planning to enrol, at TAFE SA who is an ‘overseas student’ by virtue of being a holder on an International Student Visa and studying in a CRICOS registered course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Strategy</td>
<td>An individual plan to provide academic support and/or assistance to a student identified as being ‘at risk’ of not achieving satisfactory course progress in the any study period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter of Offer</strong></td>
<td>An agreement between TAFE SA (and the partner institution of a packaged course) and the prospective international student. The Letter of Offer outlines the course details, fees, refund processes and other relevant information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Medical Certificate** | A signed statement from a registered medical practitioner, health practitioner or approved health specialist certifying a period of time during which a student is/has been affected by a medical condition impacting on their participation and/or attendance. A medical certificate may be issued by the following medical and health practitioners registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law:  
  - medical practitioner  
  - psychologist  
  - chiropractor  
  - dentist  
  - optometrist  
  - osteopath  
  - physiotherapist  
  - podiatrist  
| **National Code 2018** | The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code 2018) provides nationally consistent standards for the conduct of registered providers and the registration of their courses. The standards set out specifications and procedures to ensure that registered providers of education and training courses can clearly understand and comply with their obligations under the National Code 2018 and ESOS Act 2000. |
| **Official Start Date for Term/Semester** | The start dates of terms/semesters as per the SA Government school term system |
| **Packaged Program/Course** | A combination of two or more qualifications providing clear progression from one qualification to another. The package may include TAFE SA and external partner qualifications (university or ELICOS). International students will receive an offer for all courses in the package and, upon acceptance and meeting conditions, will receive COEs for the entire duration of both the TAFE SA and partner course. |
| **Principal course of study** | If the student has a package of courses, the principal course is the final course in the package. It will usually be the course which the student visa is connected to. In a package of courses (a packaged offer) these students would have more than one COE. |
| **PRISMS** | The Provider Registration & International Student Management System is the system used to process information given to the Commonwealth Government by registered providers. |
| **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** | RPL is an assessment process that assesses the individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes or competency standards. Recognition of Prior Learning is referred to as 'course credit' and/or 'academic credit' under the National Code. |
International students studying TAFE SA higher education courses are only eligible to apply for credit through recognition of prior formal learning. See 'Credit' above.

**Registered Provider**
As defined in section 5 of the ESOS Act, a registered provider for a course at a location means a provider that is registered to provide the course at that location.

**Satisfactory progress**
Higher education students must pass at least 50% of the subjects undertaken during each study period and maintain a full time study load. ELICOS or VET students must demonstrate competency in at least 70% of the enrolled units undertaking during a study period.

**SSVF**
The Simplified Student Visa Framework, effective from 1/7/2016, is designed to make the process of applying for a student visa simpler to navigate, ensuring immigration integrity.

**Student File/Student Record**
Records will be held in accordance with TAFE SA’s Records Management Policy and may be held in one or more locations e.g. Program Area, the International Unit or in Archives.

**Student Visa**
The form of permission issued by the Department of Home Affairs enabling international applicants to undertake studies in Australia.

**Study Period**
Study or teaching periods usually a term or semester.

**Subject**
Unit of study within a higher education course.

**Tuition Fees**
The fees for enrolment in a course at TAFE SA and advised in the Letter of Offer and Student Agreement.

**Tuition Protection Service (TPS)**
A placement and refund service for international students. There are reporting requirements and timelines for every education provider.

**Unit of Competency**
Unit of study or topic within a VET course or qualification.

### 4 Related policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Code</th>
<th>Policy Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Customer Resolution and Feedback Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Customer Resolution and Feedback Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred Schedule of Fees</td>
<td>Fees &amp; Charges Schedule (available on international website)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Fees by Instalment Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Higher Education Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>International Students: Admission and Enrolment Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>International Students Tuition, Fees and Charges Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>International Students: Tuition Fee Refund Policy and appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Resulting Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Parchment Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Assessment and Academic Grievance Policy and Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Assessment Policy and Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPMF</td>
<td>Student Conduct Policy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5 References eg legislation, standards or government circulars

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Description</th>
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6 Procedures

6.1 Rules for monitoring attendance and course progress

6.1.1 This policy, and the attendance and course progress requirements of international students, is available on the international section of the TAFE SA website.

6.1.2 Prior to commencement, prospective international students are directed to the website through the following communication methods:
- the international student course guide
- email communication with their Letter of Offer attached
- through TAFE SA staff and/or our representatives
- as required, via email, when the TAFE SA policy/s are amended

6.1.3 After commencement international students are directed to the website through the following communication methods:
- at orientation
- the international student newsletter
- through TAFE SA staff and/or our representatives
- as required, via email and/or student meeting, when the TAFE SA policy/s are amended.

6.1.4 ELICOS students are required, under the National Code, to have their attendance monitored. The attendance monitoring procedure for ELICOS students is detailed in items 6.2 to 6.6 of this policy.

6.1.5 Although not currently required by ASQA as a condition of registration, attendance tracking of VET students is one of many key indicators in determining the successful course progression of an international student. Therefore attendance of VET students should still be monitored and recorded as per usual TAFE SA practice (outside of 6.2-6.6).
6.2 Attendance Requirements

6.2.1 International Students attendance is monitored and reported according to the ESOS Act.

6.2.2 Any issues with attendance are taken very seriously as these may have a direct impact on a student’s visa in the future.

6.2.3 In order to achieve satisfactory attendance students must attend at least 80% of scheduled contact hours of their study period.

6.2.4 All students who have an attendance percentage less than 85% will be contacted and required to attend counselling, unless deemed not required by relevant staff.

6.2.5 Students whose attendance falls below 80% may have their Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) cancelled, after receiving an Intention to Report Letter.

6.2.6 If a student is issued with a new or has several Confirmation of Enrolments (COE), attendance is monitored over each of the COE’s separately.

6.2.7 It is the students’ responsibility to ensure they attend all classes. It is also their responsibility to discuss any absences with teaching staff.

6.3 Monitoring and recording of attendance

6.3.1 Teaching staff will note student absences during class.

6.3.2 Student attendance will be entered into the SIS system within 5 working days from the date of the tracked class.

6.3.3 Students on practicum will be monitored and absence recorded accordingly.

6.4 Absences - medical grounds and other reasons

6.4.1 A Medical Certificate is required for all absences that require medical attention. These absences will still be counted when calculating an attendance percentage.

6.4.2 TAFE SA will only accept medical certificates signed by a registered medical practitioner, health practitioner or approved health specialist.

6.4.3 Medical certificates will not be accepted for absences of more than a week prior except at the discretion of the International Student Support Consultant or Principal Lecturer.

6.4.4 Written notification is required for all absences where it is known by the student in advance that they will not be attending class. These absences will still be counted when calculating an attendance percentage.

6.4.5 Students who have been absent for more than five consecutive days or are at risk of falling below 80% will be contacted, counselled and reminded of the attendance policy.

6.5 Absence from class

6.5.1 Students who are absent for 20 minutes or more from any session will be marked in the SIS system only for the hours they attended. This includes late arrival or early departure from class.

6.5.2 Students referred to in 6.5.1 may be monitored and counselled for regular attendance behaviour.
### 6.6 Attendance review

**6.6.1** The Program Area, or if required, the International Student Support Consultant, will review the SIS data to identify individual student's attendance rates.

**6.6.2** If a student's attendance falls below 85 per cent (but above 70 per cent), they will be sent Warning Letter #1 by the Program Area. This letter will ask the student to provide TAFE SA with information and evidence explaining their absences. Sharing of this information should occur through a counselling session.

**6.6.3** The Program Area, and if required, the International Student Support Consultant, will then decide if it is necessary to implement an intervention strategy (see 6.10) and/or report the student to HA, or determine that circumstances warrant flexibility.

**6.6.4** If a student is continually absent from class without significant cause (attendance below 80 per cent and the above interventions have previously been implemented) they will be issued with an Intention to Report Letter.

**6.6.5** If a student's attendance falls below 70 per cent they will immediately be issued with an Intention to Report Letter.

**6.6.6** Students will be sent the appropriate attendance notification based on the attendance level at the time when the monitoring report is reviewed fortnightly. For example, if a student’s attendance level drops from above 90% to 84% or lower between monitoring reports, the student will receive Attendance Warning Letter #2 without the prior Attendance Warning Letter #1.

### 6.7 Academic Course Progress Requirements

**6.7.1** In order to progress satisfactorily and maintain a full time study load, VET and ELICOS international students must demonstrate competency in seventy percent (70%) or more of enrolled units of competency within each study period.

**6.7.2** In order to progress satisfactorily and maintain a full time study load, higher education international students must successfully complete fifty percent (50%) or more of enrolled subjects within each study period.

**6.7.3** The relevant program area will ensure that academic progress is monitored by all lecturing staff at all times and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented as soon as progress issues emerge for individual students who are identified as ‘at risk’.

**6.7.4** Should an international student fail the same unit or subject twice, they will be deemed as not making satisfactory course progression. This includes previous versions of the unit or subject.

**6.7.5** Should an international student fail a practice-based learning activity where the failure constitutes failure in the unit or subject, they will be deemed ‘at risk’ of not making satisfactory course progression.

**6.7.6** A student who has not demonstrated satisfactory course progress for two consecutive study periods, is not meeting the TAFE SA course progression requirement and will be unable to complete their course within the duration specified in the student’s COE. This will be a breach of their student visa conditions.
6.8 Monitoring and Identifying Course Progress

6.8.1 Student course progression is regularly monitored and assessed throughout the study period by lecturing staff to identify students ‘at risk’ of not completing their course within the expected duration specified on the student’s COE.

6.8.2 Early identification of students ‘at risk’ is critical to ensure that early intervention strategies can be provided to support and assist the student’s academic success.

6.8.3 Lecturing staff will use a variety of indicators or assessments to identify any students who are ‘at risk’ of making unsatisfactory progress. These may include, but are not limited to, the review of:
- The student’s attendance record
- Class participation
- Late submissions of assignments
- Number of resubmissions
- Requests for extension of class work or assignments
- Requests for additional help with assignments or class work
- Feedback from other lecturers
- Not yet competent or fail grades on assignments
- English ability or ability to articulate their message
- Log in records of TAFE SA systems
- Results of assignments and units/subjects

6.8.4 Principal Lecturers (or lecturing staff) have responsibility for identifying individual students who are ‘at risk’ of or are not meeting satisfactory course progress.

6.8.5 A final review of student academic performance will occur following the grade release at the completion of each study period.

6.8.6 Once a student has been identified as making unsatisfactory course progress, the Program Area will issue the student with a Course Progress Warning Letter.

6.8.7 The Course Progress Warning Letter will require the student to meet with the Principal Lecturer (or nominee) to discuss their course progress, and if necessary, activate an intervention strategy.

6.9 Course Progress Review

6.9.1 The Principal Lecturer (or lecturing staff) will continue to monitor the course progress of a student with an intervention strategy for the reminder of the current study period and if required, into the next study period.

6.9.2 A VET student who demonstrates competency in more than seventy percent (70%) of the units of competency undertaken in the semester in which they were earlier identified as ‘at risk’, or in the next study period, will no longer be considered ‘at risk’ and the intervention strategy may be cancelled.

6.9.3 A higher education student who successfully completes more than fifty percent (50%) of the subjects undertaken in the study period in which they were earlier identified as ‘at risk, or in the next study period, will no longer be considered ‘at risk’ and the intervention strategy may be cancelled.
6.9.4 Any student provided with an intervention strategy during the study period (therefore identified as ‘at risk’), who then achieves less than 70% competency in enrolled units of competency (VET/ELICOS) or pass rates in less than 50% of enrolled subjects (higher education), will receive an Intention to Report Letter unless the Principal Lecturer or lecturing staff deems otherwise.

6.10 Intervention Strategies (for course progress and attendance)

6.10.1 Where necessary, the Principal Lecturer or lecturing staff will develop an intervention strategy in consultation with the student and, if required, the International Student Support Consultant. The intervention strategy will outline the strategies to be adopted and the support services that the student can access to assist with improving their academic performance and/or attendance.

6.10.2 If the student is identified as ‘at risk’ of making unsatisfactory progress or is making unsatisfactory progress before the end of the semester/term, an intervention strategy will be implemented as early as practicable. If the student is deemed as making unsatisfactory progress at the end of the semester the intervention strategy is required to be commenced within the first two weeks of the following semester/term.

6.10.3 Appropriate intervention strategies may vary according to whether the student is enrolled in ELICOS, VET or a higher education course and may include the following:

- advising the student of available study skills workshops, time management skills, academic counselling, English language support or other support TAFE SA offers
- requiring the student to meet regularly with a lecturer to review their progress before the end of the current study period or during the next study period
- reducing the student’s study load temporarily or changing their enrolment to another subject area if this is agreed between the student and principal lecturer or international student support consultant
- requiring the student to submit assignments or complete assessments within a certain timeframe
- requiring the student to attend a minimum percentage of classes, which may include make-up classes
- referring the student to other support services that may be relevant, e.g. counselling for personal issues, appropriate medical services, housing services, financial counselling services
- considering a period of deferment or temporary suspension of studies
- providing a mentor or study buddy
- requiring the student to undertake additional training or to re-enrol in English language training. This may require the award course to be suspended to attend the required number of English classes.

6.10.4 Intervention strategies must be signed by both the Principal Lecturer (or lecturing staff) and the student.

6.10.5 It is the student’s responsibility to follow through on any assistance offered and to maintain contact with the nominated staff member/s identified to provide assistance.

6.10.6 A student may receive an Intention to Report Letter if they fail to comply with the intervention strategy or is deliberately disengaging with the process.
7 Student appeals

7.1 Internal appeal process

7.1.1 Students who wish to appeal their attendance rate/academic progression determination or the Intention to Report Letter may lodge an appeal within 20 days by utilising the TAFE SA Customer Resolution and Feedback Policy. In addition to the TAFE SA internal processes, an international student may also wish to approach an external agent, see 7.2.

7.1.2 International students who wish to lodge an appeal against TAFE SA's Intention to Report letter or any other matter are advised to refer to the international student appeal flowchart on the international website for further explanation.

7.2 External Agency process

7.2.1 International students may approach an external agent such as the Office of the Training Advocate, Ombudsman SA, or the Equal Opportunity Commission. Such approach may be made at any time during the resolution process.

Office of the Training Advocate
Level 5
131 Grenfell Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Office hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Country callers: (toll free) 1800 006 488
Email: trainingadvocate@sa.gov.au
Web: http://www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/home/international-students
Post: GPO Box 320 Adelaide SA 5001

Ombudsman SA
Level 9
55 Currie Street (entrance doors at Bus Stop W1 on Currie Street)
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: 8226 8699
Country callers (toll free) 1800 182 150 (outside Adelaide only)
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.sa.gov.au
Web: www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au
Postal: PO Box 3651, Rundle Mall SA 5000

Equal Opportunity Commission
Level 17
45 Pirie Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: 8207 1977
Country callers (toll free): 1800 188 163
TTY – for hearing impaired: 8207 1911
Email: eoc@.sa.gov.au
Web: www.eoc.sa.gov.au
Postal: GPO Box 464 Adelaide SA 5001

7.2.2 Once a formal complaint has been lodged with an external agent, the TAFE SA process will be suspended.
8 Reporting to Department of Home Affairs (HA)

8.1 All students identified as maintaining an unsatisfactory attendance level and/or academic progress will be notified in writing via an Intention to Report letter.

8.2 The Intention to Report letter provides formal notification to the student that TAFE SA intends to report their poor attendance or unsatisfactory academic progress to HA.

8.3 Students who maintain unsatisfactory progress in two (2) consecutive study periods will receive an Intention to Report Letter.

8.4 Students who maintain unsatisfactory progress in two (2) study periods that aren’t consecutive will not be reported, unless they did not comply with the agreed intervention strategy.

8.5 TAFE SA will only report international students for unsatisfactory course progress or unsatisfactory course attendance if:

- The international student has chosen not to access the internal and/or external appeals process within the allowed timeframe
- If an international student chooses to access the internal and/or external complaints process, and the completed process decision or recommendation supports TAFE SA
- The international student withdraws from the appeals process by formally notifying TAFE SA.

8.6 Circumstances where an Intention to Report letter (for attendance) may not be filed with HA (particularly if student falls between 70-80% attendance) include but are not limited to:

- Compassionate* or compelling circumstances that have affected a student’s ability to study
- An intervention strategy was not implemented
- The student’s academic progress has not been affected (does not apply to ELICOS courses)
- The student has filed an appeal as per the Student Complaint Resolution Policy for Non-Academic Matters
- Where TAFE SA is unable to offer a pre-requisite unit.

*compassionate or compelling circumstances could include but are not limited to:

- Serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
- Bereavement of close family member such as parent or grandparent
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student’s studies or
- A traumatic experience such as involvement in or witnessing a serious accident; witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime (should be supported by police or psychologist report).

9 Responsibilities

9.1 Specific responsibility of TAFE SA staff

In consultation with program areas, the International Unit has responsibility for determining the reasonable procedures for monitoring and reporting on the attendance and academic progress of each international student. Program areas have the direct responsibility for reviewing and identifying the attendance and course progress of international students enrolled in their courses, including any follow up required based on that review.
9.2 Specific responsibility of TAFE SA students

All international students must familiarise themselves with the content of this policy to ensure they are aware of the TAFE SA policy and procedure on attendance and course progress. In addition, all international students must ensure they comply with all legislative and student visa requirements.

9.3 Review of TAFE SA Policy

This policy will be formally reviewed every two years, but may be revised earlier following legislative changes, and according to strategic priorities, reforms or feedback received.