



# **STUDENT SUPPORT FRAMEWORK**

## **1. Overview**

Skyline Higher Education Australia (“SHEA”) is responsible for ensuring that appropriate student support services are provided to assist students in completing their studies and reaching their academic goals.

To ensure that students are made aware of the support available, all staff in SHEA are required to understand their responsibilities in providing students with support and, where necessary, provide a referral to services for appropriate advice.

## **2. Support mechanisms**

### **2.1 Nominated Student Support Officer**

While all staff employed by SHEA are responsible for supporting students, SHEA shall nominate a dedicated Student Support Officer who will be available to all students by in-person appointment, phone or email, during SHEA’s hours of operation.

Students may access the Student Support Officer directly or via Reception and an appointment will be organised as soon as practical.

Details of the current Student Support Officer and how to contact them will be provided at the orientation and will also be posted on Student Noticeboards, on the website, and in the OpenZone (LMS site) Student Hub.

As part of their responsibilities, the Student Support Officer ensures up-to-date information is available for student support services and that any referral contacts provided are current. This information is given to students in the orientation programme outlined below.

### **2.2 Student support services**

The following support services are available and accessible for all students studying with SHEA. SHEA will provide students with contact details to refer any matters that require further follow-up with relevant services. Any referrals are made by SHEA at no cost to the student, but fees and charges may apply where an external service is used by the student, and this will be clarified with the student before using such services outside of SHEA.

#### **2.2.1 Academic issues**

Students may have concerns with their attendance, academic performance, English language or other related issues that are placing them at risk of not achieving the requirements of their course. Students can receive advice and support to ensure they maintain appropriate academic levels, attendance levels and commitment to achieve satisfactory results in their studies.

English language support for academic writing is available via library resources. The Improving your English website (<https://insiderguides.com.au/improving-your-english/>) has five tips that students may find helpful for building confidence in writing and speaking English. Students can join English Conversation Groups that are specifically for International Students, for example, Let’s Talk in English <https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/sydneyenglishexchange/>.

All students’ progress is monitored, and guidance and support are provided where unsatisfactory results or issues related to academic literacy and English language proficiency are identified<sup>1</sup>. In

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<sup>1</sup> As per section 3 & 4 of the *Student Progression and Exclusion Policy and Procedure [POL025]*

the first year of the course, each subject has an early assessment task as an early indicator of possible students at risk. The Educator will monitor student engagement (such as submitting assessments on time, getting satisfactory marks and attending classes) and alert the Student Support Officer and Course Coordinator to take follow-up action.

A student is able to access the Student Support Officer (as noted above) to discuss any academic, attendance, or other related issues. The Student Support Officer can provide advice and guidance, or referral to appropriate services, where required.

### **2.2.2 Counselling and Study Assistance**

The Student Support Officer is able to assist in times of stress or pressure during the course. Student Services are available Monday to Friday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Australian Eastern Standard/Daylight Time (AEST/AEDT). Staff are not available on weekends and public holidays. Students may contact the Student Support Officer for advice relating to study, such as:

- time management issues;
- setting and achieving learning goals;
- motivation;
- ways of learning;
- managing assessment tasks;
- self-care.

If the need arises to seek additional counselling services, the Student Support Officer will maintain a list of the contact details of appropriate external support services.

There are useful websites for international students that have up-to-date information from the Australian Government:

- [Study Australia https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/](https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/)
- [Support for international students - Department of Education, Australian Government https://www.education.gov.au/international-education/support-international-students.](https://www.education.gov.au/international-education/support-international-students)

The NSW Government has specific information for international students, including Study NSW, Language and Interpreter Services, Living in NSW, Identity cards and documents, Safety and emergency help, Health and wellbeing, Working while you study and transport and travel:

- Support for international students: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/guide/support-international-students>, Health and wellbeing has up-to-date information for counselling and support services, information about NSW hospitals and access to online resources.

### **2.2.3 Wellbeing and Mental Health<sup>2</sup>**

There are many issues that may affect a student's wellbeing and mental health. Students have access to the Student Support Officer during SHEA's normal hours of operation to gain advice and guidance on personal, accommodation or family/friend issues that may be adversely impacting their academic performance. Where the Student Support Officer feels further support may be required, a referral to an appropriate support service will be organised. Students can access

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<sup>2</sup> See also *Student and Staff Wellbeing, Safety and Security Policy [POL019]*

information on support services via [Support for international students | Service NSW](https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/guide/support-international-students) <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/guide/support-international-students>, Health and wellbeing.

### **Free online and phone support services**

These services are free of charge and will not affect your enrolment or your visa. If you need to talk to someone about your situation and your overseas student healthcare provider or institution are unable to help, you can seek help from the following places:

- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636
- MensLine - 1300 789 978

You can access free online resources to help you look after your mental wellbeing:

- ReachOut: Tools that help under 25s with everyday questions through to tough times.
- Head to Health: Brings together 500+ resources and services from Australia's trusted mental health service providers.
- Orygen chatsafe: Tools and tips to help young people communicate safely online about suicide
- Beyond Blue: Provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.
- Lifeline Australia: Phone 13 11 14 - Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.
- MensLine: Offers free professional 24/7 online counselling support for men with concerns about mental health, anger management and family violence.
- Befrienders Worldwide provides information about suicide and emotional support services worldwide in multiple languages.

### **2.2.4 Accommodation (international students)**

While SHEA does not offer accommodation services or take any responsibility for accommodation arrangements, SHEA is able to refer students to appropriate accommodation services and the staff at SHEA are always available to discuss any issues or concerns a student may have with their accommodation arrangements. All international students are encouraged to have accommodation organised prior to arrival in Australia but, if not, the Student Support Officer can refer students to appropriate accommodation services. Students can access further information on living in NSW (including accommodation) via Support for international students | Service NSW <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/guide/support-international-students>, Living in NSW.

### **2.2.5 Special needs assistance**

Students have a right to privacy and are not obligated to disclose a disability. However, if a student requires specialist services and support, they must advise SHEA. This is usually through the Student Support Officer but can also be through the Course Coordinator or Educator. SHEA can then arrange any special provisions that is within reasonable and practical with Educators, including adjustments to assessment requirements. .

### 2.2.6 Hardship

The academic requirements of study may present some students with hardship due to economic, social or other difficulties. Where genuine hardship exists, a student may apply to the Course Coordinator seeking permission to review their academic workload or other related matters.

To make an application, a student must provide, in writing the reason for their hardship to the Student Support Officer. It is essential to include evidence supporting a claim of hardship, for example:

- Financial hardship: government benefit statements, pay slips or bank statements that show financial status;
- Medical grounds must be supported by a medical certificate. The medical certificate must include the practitioner's name, contact details, provider or registration number and signature, the date of consultation, an evaluation by the practitioner, psychologist etc., of the duration and degree of impact on the student's ability to attend classes, study or complete assessment requirements and the date the certificate was written and signed (it cannot be backdated)<sup>3</sup>.
- Carer responsibilities: evidence by way of a statutory declaration and supporting government documentation.

An international student who is an applicant under this category must still meet the requirements of the relevant regulations affecting student visas in these circumstances.

### 2.2.7 Legal and Safety Issues

New South Wales is generally a safe place with low crime levels, but taking care of and looking after yourself is still important. In an emergency, dial 000 to contact the police, fire brigade or ambulance. The call is free of charge from any phone or mobile. Important details on how to stay safe are available on the website: [Safety - Study NSW https://www.study.nsw.gov.au/live/safety](https://www.study.nsw.gov.au/live/safety).

An Emergency App is available for students to download – see <https://emergencyapp.triplezero.gov.au/>. Having this app on your phone will ensure you call the right number if you are in an unsafe situation.

Legal and Police services in NSW including police contacts, support contacts, legal information and resources, as well as other useful resources are available on the website: [Legal and Police services | Service NSW https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/services/legal-and-police-services](https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/services/legal-and-police-services).

### 2.2.8 Employment Rights and Conditions

International students have the same workplace rights and protections as anyone else working in Australia. Employers must pay you at least the minimum wage, you may need to pay tax depending on how much you earn, you must get a payslip within one working day of getting paid. Normally, workers get paid weekly, fortnightly (every two weeks) or monthly. You must pay tax on your income.

As an international student you can currently work up to 48 hours every two weeks during term time, and unlimited hours during your holiday breaks. It is important you keep to this limit because it is what you agreed to when you were given your student visa.

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.mcnsw.org.au/new-medical-certificate-guidelines>

In Australia, you can either work part-time, or on a “casual basis”. In part-time work you have a set number of hours. In casual work your hours may vary week to week. Casual work means you don’t have a fixed number of hours every week.

A factsheet can be downloaded here: <https://www.education.gov.au/enabling-growth-and-innovation-program/resources/workready-fact-sheet>. The factsheet includes a useful checklist.

### 2.2.9 Student Orientation

All students are encouraged to attend an orientation session at the beginning of their studies with SHEA. For international students, attendance at orientation is mandatory. Orientation is managed by the Registrar and the Dean and will include:

- Information about the course of study, academic calendars, and learning resources, library resources including details of expectations and commitments.
- A tour of SHEA, identifying classrooms, student areas, student administration area, and any other relevant areas, such as toilets, fire exits, and restricted areas.
- What to do and who to contact in the case of emergency or a critical incident<sup>4</sup>
- Information about relevant policies and procedures, academic integrity, and specific grievance procedures.
- Information about technologies, including the student management system, OpenZone and Office365
- How to access the student support services in SHEA and via reputable websites such as Support for international students | Service NSW  
<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/guide/support-international-students>

Refer to *Student Orientation Policy and Procedure [POL031]* for more detail. The Student Orientation program will be available in the OpenZone Student Hub.

## 3. Review and improvement

To ensure that SHEA has support services for students that are appropriate in scope and quality for the capacity of SHEA and the mode of delivery of its courses, the Executive Management Committee will review the support processes using feedback from various stakeholders to monitor the availability, accessibility and value of the support services. Improvements will be made to this policy based on the feedback.

### 3.1 Stakeholder feedback

Regular stakeholder feedback using surveys will guide SHEA when reviewing the adequacy of its support services through the following process<sup>5</sup>:

- 3.1.1 A survey of students is conducted for selected subjects of study during each study period that will include a section on the quality of SHEA’s support services soliciting suggestions on any improvements that might be made to improve the student experience.
- 3.1.2 The Dean will review the surveys, analyse the feedback, and summarise any issues raised in regard to support services.

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to *Critical Incident Management Policy [POL008]*

<sup>5</sup> Refer also section 6.1 of the *Quality Assurance Framework [POL001]* – Stakeholder feedback

- 3.1.3 The Dean will meet with the Student Support Officer to discuss any issues raised and to formulate possible strategies for improvement.
- 3.1.4 The Student Support Officer will recommend any improvements to support services to the Executive Management Committee for action.
- 3.1.5 All improvements that have been recommended by the Student Support Officer to the Executive Management Committee for action will be allocated to a responsible person for completion within an agreed timeframe.
- 3.1.6 Outstanding actions will be monitored by the Executive Management Committee until evidence of completion.
- 3.1.7 Where amounts not allocated in the budget are required for the improvement of student support services, SHEA's Chief Executive Officer will include it in their report to the Board of Directors in conjunction with a request for additional funding.

### **3.2 Ongoing Review**

The Executive Management Committee will review the support processes using feedback from various stakeholders to monitor the availability, accessibility and value of the support services through the following process:

- 3.2.1 Each Member of the Executive Management Committee will be required to report at each meeting on any issues related to support services that have arisen since the previous meeting. This will be a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the Executive Management Committee.
- 3.2.2 Where improvements to SHEA's support services need to be addressed, any actions required will be decided upon by the Executive Management Committee and will be allocated to a responsible person for completion within the agreed timeframe.
- 3.2.3 Outstanding actions will be monitored by the Executive Management Committee until evidence of completion.

## **4. Related Policies and Other Documents**

- POL001 Quality Assurance Framework
- POL031 Student Orientation Policy & Procedure
- POL019 Student and Staff Wellbeing, Safety and Security Policy
- POL008 Critical Incident Management Policy
- SHEA Orientation Session

## 5. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Sections modified
1.0	Executive Management Committee	31 August 2022	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Dean	18 November 2022	Clarification of monitoring of 'at risk' students throughout a Trimester
2.0	Executive Management Committee	5 August 2023	Addition of resources for students to support Wellbeing and Mental Health, Legal and Safety, Employment Rights and reference to related SHEA policies and documents. Inclusion of Related Policies and Other Documents section.

Document owner: Dean