

Submission on proposed changes to the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007

Overview

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parts A, B and C of the 2007 National Code have been streamlined to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ provide an overview of the ESOS framework○ summarise the role of the National Code and its purpose○ outline the quality assurance arrangements and roles of other relevant Commonwealth agencies	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some part C and D requirements in the 2007 National Code have been moved to Standard 11 as requirements for providers.• The standards are now in part B.	Support	

Standard 1 – Marketing information and practices

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies that providers must not engage in false or misleading marketing practices, consistent with Australian Consumer Law. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing material must accurately identify the provider's association with any other providers, work-based or work-integrated learning opportunities, and prerequisites including English language. 	Support	<p>Standard 1.3.2 <i>The registered provider must ... accurately identify in the information that it provides:</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>1.3.2 any work integrated or work-based learning opportunities, either required or optional, as part of the course</i></p> <p>It would be difficult to detail specific WIL in advance, especially where this is not part of professional accreditation. We suggest that the Code should require a general statement that the course includes compulsory practicum experience, or may provide opportunity for optional WIL etc.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific provisions prevent a provider from undertaking to or guaranteeing that it can secure a migration or successful education assessment outcome. 	Support	

Standard 2 – Enrolment of an overseas student

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies that a provider must inform a student before they enrol about: course content, modes of study (including online and/or work related learning placements) and assessment requirements. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires providers to give information about the policy and process for approving welfare and accommodation arrangements for students under 18 where relevant. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires registered providers to have and implement a documented policy and process for assessing English language proficiency, educational qualifications and work experience are sufficient to undertake the course. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporates the requirements relating to course credit, previously in standard 12. Adds that course credit or recognition of 	Support	Standard 2.4 <i>If the registered provider grants RPL or course credit to a student, the provider must give a record of the decision to the student to sign, and require the student to return the signed record for the provider to retain the record on the student's file for two</i>

<p>prior learning (RPL) must preserve the integrity of the award to which it applies.</p>		<p><i>years after the student ceases to be an accepted student.</i></p> <p>It is not clear if this requires a paper copy, in an age where many records and acknowledgements are electronic.</p> <p>Suggest substitute <i>acknowledge</i> for <i>sign</i> and <i>record</i> for <i>file</i>.</p>
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Standard 3 – Formalisation of enrolment and written agreements

<p>PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p>SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p>COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written agreements must include more detailed information about students' enrolment. 	<p>Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers must require students must keep their personal and contact information up to date. 	<p>Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider must retain records of the written agreement and receipts of payments by the student for at least 2 years after the person ceases to be an accepted student. 	<p>Support</p>	

Standard 4 – Education agents

<p>PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p>SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p>COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies that providers must ensure the agent has up to date and accurate information, does not engage in false or misleading conduct, declares in writing and takes reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest, observes appropriate levels of confidentiality and transparency in dealing with students, 	<p>Support</p>	

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and acts honestly and in good faith.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies the provider must ensure the agent has appropriate knowledge and understanding of the international education system in Australia, including the code of ethics. 	Support	

Standard 5 – Younger students

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers enrolling students under 18 must meet any Australian, state or territory legislation or other regulatory requirements relating to child welfare and protection. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires providers to give information to students under 18 about who to contact in emergency situations. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires providers to give information on how a student under 18 can seek assistance and report any incident or allegation involving abuse. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers with responsibility for a student’s welfare must check initially and least every six months thereafter that the student’s accommodation is appropriate to the student’s age and needs. 	Support	

<p style="text-align: center;">PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults involved in or providing accommodation must have any Working with Children clearances (or equivalent) as required in a state or territory. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a policy and process for managing critical incidents, including in emergency situations and when welfare arrangements are disrupted. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a provider is no longer able to approve welfare arrangements, all reasonable steps must be taken to notify the student’s parent or legal guardian immediately. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers must have documented processes for selecting, screening and monitoring any third parties engaged by the provider to organise and assess welfare and accommodation arrangements. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a provider enrolls a student under 18 who has welfare arrangements approved by another provider, the receiving provider must negotiate the transfer date for welfare arrangements to ensure there is no gap. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must advise the student of their visa obligation to maintain their current welfare arrangements until the transfer date or have alternative welfare arrangements approved or return to their home country until the new arrangements take effect. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	

Standard 6 – Student support services

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires providers to give information to students regarding a range of support services, including relating to English language, health, legal services, complaints and appeals avenues, and employment assistance (including resolving workplace issues). 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires the provider to facilitate access to learning support services, including for different modes of study such as online or distance. 	Largely support	<p>Standard 6.3</p> <p><i>The registered provider must support students to enable them to achieve expected learning outcomes regardless of the student's place of study or the mode of delivery of the course.</i></p> <p>This may imply that the provider has a responsibility to ensure each student passes, and opens the prospect of litigation; suggest wording: <i>...provider must offer reasonable support to students to achieve ...</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies that providers must have in place a documented policy and process to manage critical incidents that could affect a student undertaking or completing the course. (Note: standard 5 requires a critical incident policy and process more specific to the needs of students under 18.) 	Support	<p>Standard 6.8</p> <p><i>The provider must make a record of any critical incident and remedial action taken, and keep this record on the student's file.</i></p> <p>Suggest delete: <i>and keep this record on the student's file.</i> Refer comment on Standard 2.4.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers must take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment on campus and give overseas students information about how to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on their wellbeing. 	<p>Support</p>	

Standard 7 – Student transfers

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers must not knowingly enrol a student wishing to transfer from another provider’s course prior to the student completing six months of their principal course, or for the school sector, until after the first six months of the first registered school sector course. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer requests from the student must be in writing. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider must have and implement a documented policy and process for assessing student transfer requests, which must outline circumstances in which the provider will grant a transfer because it is in the student’s best interests; and reasonable grounds for refusal of the request. 	Partially Support	<p>Standard 7.2.2 Feedback indicates some uncertainty over the intent and possible interpretation by ESOS Agencies, especially 7.2.2.2 and 6:</p> <p><i>7.2.2.2 the student has grounds to seek to change course to gain access to broader support through services not offered by their current provider</i></p> <p>....</p> <p><i>7.2.2.6 an appeal (internal or external) on another matter reasonably results in the student seeking a transfer</i></p> <p>Part A3 Standard 8 states: Registered providers must safeguard the integrity of Australia’s migration laws ...</p> <p>We suggest the provider policy should state: <i>A release will not be granted if it conflicts with the requirement on the provider to safeguard the integrity of the student visa framework, or similar. This is intended to discourage pre-meditated “course hopping.”</i></p>

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standard contains additional guidance for providers about circumstances in which they should grant a transfer because it is in the student's best interests. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a student requesting a transfer is under 18, written confirmation of agreement of a parent or legal guardian is required. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a provider agrees to a student's release the date of effect and reason for release must be recorded in PRISMS and the provider must advise the student Immigration to seek advice on whether a new student visa is required. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If release is not to be granted, the provider must give to the student the reasons for refusal in writing. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider must maintain records of all requests for transfer, assessment and decision on the student's file for two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student. 	Support	Standard 7.6 See previous comments on meaning of <i>student's file</i> ; this needs to include electronic records where used.

Standard 8 – Monitoring course progress and attendance

Providers must monitor student progress

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All providers must monitor students' progress, as satisfactory course progress is a student visa requirement. Some sectors require providers to also monitor attendance.	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Providers must clearly outline and inform the student before they commence their course of the requirement to achieve satisfactory course progress in each study period.	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Providers must have documented policies and processes to identify, notify and assist a student at risk of not meeting course progress (or attendance requirements if applicable) where evidence from the student's assessment tasks, participation or other indicators of academic progress indicate the student is at risk of not meeting requirements.	Support	

Schools, ELICOS and foundation programs

<p style="text-align: center;">PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, ELICOS and foundation programmes require both course progress and attendance monitoring. The requirement for attendance is 80% of the scheduled contact hours for the course, or higher if specified under state registration or approval frameworks. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, ELICOS and foundation program providers must have a documented policy and process for monitoring and recording students' attendance. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education providers must have and implement a documented policy and process for monitoring and recording course progress, specifying requirements for achieving satisfactory progress, the provider's processes and policies to uphold academic integrity, assessment of progress, identification of students at risk of not meeting requirements and details of the provider's intervention strategy. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	

VET programs

<p>PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p>SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p>COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET providers must have and implement a documented policy and process for assessing course progress, specifying requirements for achieving satisfactory process and policies to uphold academic integrity, assessment of progress, identification of students at risk of not meeting requirements and details of the provider’s intervention strategy. 	<p>Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A VET provider must have and implement a documented policy and process for monitoring students’ attendance if the ESOS agency requires that provider to monitor attendance as well as course progress. This requirement in the National Code replaces previous arrangements split between the National Code and Course Progress Guidelines that applied to VET. • If the ESOS agency imposes attendance monitoring as a requirement for a VET provider, the minimum requirement for attendance is 80% of the scheduled contact hours for the course. • If the VET provider is required to monitor attendance of students, the provider must have an intervention strategy for students at risk of not meeting attendance requirements. 	<p>Support</p>	

Course duration and allowable extensions

<p style="text-align: center;">PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers must continue to not extend the duration of a student’s enrolment if the student is unable to complete the course within the expected duration, unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ compassionate and compelling circumstances apply ○ the provider has implemented, or is implementing, an intervention strategy to assist the student to meet course progress (or attendance, if applicable) requirements ○ there is an approved deferral or suspension of the student’s enrolment under standard 9. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a student’s enrolment is extended, the provider must advise the student of any potential impacts on their visa. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Support</p>	

Reporting breaches of visa requirements

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers must continue to report students who do not meet course progress (attendance requirements if applicable) and notify the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ that the provider intends to report them ○ inform the student of the reasons ○ advise the student they can appeal ○ report the breach in PRISMS in accordance with s19(2) of the ESOS Act 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A provider may decide not to report a student for breaching attendance requirements if the student provides genuine evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances, is still attending at least 70 per cent of course contact hours and appeals the decision successfully 	Support	

Online learning

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and distance learning are defined in the standard. 	Support with clarification	<p>Definitions of Online and Distance Learning <i>Online learning uses digital media, technology-based tools and IT networks to deliver a course to a student and does not require the student to attend regular classes or maintain contact hours.</i></p> <p>There is some uncertainty over what constitutes <i>regular</i> attendance. This should include substantial and scheduled attendance, but not necessarily weekly, eg some courses may be delivered in intensive block mode.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2007 National Code requirement that providers must not enrol a student exclusively in distance or online learning in any compulsory study period has been removed. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education and VET providers must not deliver more than one-third of a student's course online. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers must take all reasonable steps to prevent students being disadvantaged by additional costs or requirements associated with online learning or by an inability to access the resources and community of the education institution, or opportunities to engage with other students. 	Support	

Standard 9 – Deferring, suspending or cancelling the student's enrolment

<p align="center">PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p align="center">SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p align="center">COMMENTS</p> <p align="center"><i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard 9 now relates to deferring, suspending or cancelling the student's enrolment (previously standard 13). It clarifies the current requirements but makes no significant changes to policy from the 2007 version. 	<p align="center">Support</p>	<p>Standard 9.1 <i>including maintaining a record on the student's file.</i> Refer previous comments on electronic records.</p>

Standard 10 – Complaints and appeals

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of an internal complaint or appeal must be finalised within 20 working days. 	Support	

Standard 11 – Additional requirements

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT	COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard 11 creates new provisions for additional registration requirements, many of which were previously in Part C of the 2007 version of the National Code relating to ‘registration authorities’. Registration authorities are replaced by ESOS agencies by amendments to the ESOS Act passed in December 2015. 	Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers must seek approval from the ESOS agency, including through the relevant designated State authority if the provider is a school, for proposed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> course content and duration number of overseas students enrolled within the limit approved by the ESOS agency arrangements with other education providers (partnerships). Providers must also seek approval from their ESOS agency for any proposed changes to the above during their period of registration under the ESOS Act. 	Support	

<p align="center">PROPOSED AMENDMENTS</p>	<p align="center">SUPPORT / DO NOT SUPPORT</p>	<p align="center">COMMENTS <i>Please provide a comment if you do not support a proposed amendment, and suggest alternative wording if appropriate.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers must advise their ESOS agency, including through the relevant designated State authority if the provider is a school, in writing of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ any other affiliated organisations registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) ○ any changes to high managerial agents or ownership of their organisation. 	<p align="center">Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-accrediting providers must undertake an independent external audit during their period of registration, at least within 18 months prior to renewal of registration, allowing the outcomes to be used for registration renewal. 	<p align="center">Support</p>	

Other comments

Please list any other comments here:

Some of the Standards will require significant amendments to existing contracts, including with education agents and third party providers. These take time to negotiate and implement. We understand there will be reasonable transition arrangements.

Overall we believe the draft Code will strengthen the ESOS framework, and acknowledge the exhaustive consultation process. However we urge consideration of some clarifications and wording enhancements in this submission.