

Attendance Policy English Language Teaching

| APPROVALS AND REVIEW | |
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| Policy Title | Attendance Policy English Language Teaching |
| Policy Owner: | Dean of Studies |
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POLICY INTENT

INSEARCH policy is students should attend all classes (100%) of their course to gain optimum learning. However, if students have valid reasons for absence a minimum of 80% of their course contact hours must be maintained to avoid being reported to DOE/DIBP. INSEARCH will report the student to DIBP, observing the conditions of The National Code 2007: Standard 11.

SCOPE

The policy applies to all ELT students on current student visas and all staff involved in the management and reporting of ELT students' attendance.

This policy does not apply to INSEARCH domestic students, or students on other types of visa (i.e. tourist or working holiday visas).

DEFINITIONS

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| Approved leave | ELT students are eligible for Approved leave/Deferral only after completion of 20 weeks of continuous study. Approved leave for ELT students comprises of 5 weeks leave. |
| Attendance software solution | System by which tutors monitor attendance |
| Compassionate or compelling circumstances | 'Compassionate or compelling circumstances' are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to: |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents 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 which could include: involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; and witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime. and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports) Any other circumstance would require evidence to be considered as compassionate or compelling. |
| Class session | ELT classes are made up of 2x2 hour class sessions |
| Course | <p>The sequence of ELT levels.</p> <p>The term "course" is used throughout this document to refer to <u>ELT levels</u>.</p> |
| DIBP | Department of Immigration and Border Protection |
| DoE | Australian Government Department of Education |
| ELT | English Language Teaching program |
| Excluded/ Exclusion | Students who are excluded are not permitted to re-enrol in a course at INSEARCH |
| Intention to Report (ITR) | In the context of this policy the notice of INSEARCH's Intention to Report an international student to DIBP (Department of Immigration & Border Protection) for not achieving satisfactory attendance, which is in breach of student visa conditions. |
| Level | A course of study in ELT offered at particular language levels. |
| Medical certificate | A certificate issued by a registered medical provider such as hospitals, doctors, dentists (Emergency appointments only), psychiatrists and psychologists. INSEARCH does not accept certificates from alternative medical practitioners such as herbal practitioners, acupuncturists, Chinese therapists, massage therapists, iridologists, psychics etc. The medical certificate must be original and must state the provider number. |
| Non genuine / non bona fide student | A student with erratic (irregular/ inconsistent) course progress or does not progress in their course and does not attend/does not participate in regular classes. |

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| Prisms | Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS) |
| Satisfactory course attendance | Attendance of at least 80% of scheduled course contact hours for the study period. |
| Study period | 5 weeks – 1 term |
| Support person | Friend or relative |
| Teaching period | ELT level |
| Teacher | Includes any ELT class teacher or level leader |
| Term | 5 weeks |

POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 1, All students are treated fairly and openly
2. INSEARCH aims to maintain student confidentiality and privacy except as required by law
3. Appropriate information will be made available to students identified as at risk of not achieving satisfactory attendance requirements
4. Learning and other support will be made available to students at risk of not achieving satisfactory attendance requirements.
5. Equity, consistency, transparency and natural justice principles are observed.
6. Privacy laws will be respected.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. ATTENDANCE

- 1.1 INSEARCH believes good attendance is important in order to achieve the desired educational outcomes.
- 1.2 For international students, maintaining satisfactory attendance is a student visa requirement.
- 1.3 Students must contact their teacher every time they will be absent *prior to the regular class time*, via email, phone or SMS.

1.4 Students who do not advise INSEARCH of absences will be contacted/counselled by the Academic Adviser. Regular class attendance is essential in order for students to progress satisfactorily in their course and to be deemed as a genuine / bona fide student.

1.5 INSEARCH will report students to DIBP for non-attendance via PRISMS as per the conditions outlined in this policy. An outcome of reporting a student for non-attendance via PRISMS is the student visa may be cancelled.

2. CONTACTING STUDENTS

2.1 Student attendance is monitored daily by ELT class teachers. Student absences are tracked and monitored each week by the Academic Advisers.

2.2 INSEARCH will *at the minimum* contact and counsel students who:

- have been absent for more than five consecutive days without approval; or are at risk of not attending for at least 80 per cent of the scheduled course contact hours.

2.3 Details of all phone conversations, copies of letters, emails and notices relating to attendance will be kept on the student file.

2.4 All absences due to illness should be supported by a medical certificate.

2.5 Any absences **longer than 5 consecutive days** without approval will be investigated as a matter of urgency.

- Academic Adviser will attempt to contact the student via phone, sms or email
- If student is not able to be contacted their agent will be contacted.
- Academic Adviser will counsel student on the importance of notifying Insearch when absent.
- If contact cannot be made, INSEARCH will raise as a critical incident and the relevant authorities will be notified (eg police, DIBP, next of kin)

3. WARNINGS

3.1 WARNING 1

90% Attendance or less

Students whose attendance falls to **90%** or less after week 2 will be contacted by letter/email and/or SMS to alert them that their attendance is at risk. Students will be advised to discuss the matter with the Academic Adviser

3.2 WARNING 2

80% Attendance or less

Students whose attendance falls to **80%** or less will be contacted in week 3 by letter/email and/or SMS warning them that they are now at risk of being reported to DIBP and they must make an appointment with the Academic Adviser ASAP for assistance/advice. Students may take along a support person.

4. INTENTION TO REPORT TO DIBP

4.1 At the end of the study period, if a student has not achieved 80% attendance, INSEARCH will send students an 'Intention to Report letter' (ITR letter) which shall inform the student that they have 20 working days in which to access INSEARCH's appeals process. The student will be given information regarding how to appeal in the ITR letter.

NOTE: INSEARCH will only await the outcome of our internal and one external appeal process before reporting a student for unsatisfactory attendance (if found in favour of INSEARCH).

4.2 If a student chooses NOT to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20 working day period, withdraws from the process or the process is completed and the decision is in support of INSEARCH, INSEARCH will notify DIBP and the Secretary of DoE via PRISMS that the student is not achieving satisfactory attendance **as soon as practicable (within 5 working days)**.

- 4.3 INSEARCH *may* decide not to report a student for 80% attendance where INSEARCH feels the student is a genuine / bona fide student and can confirm the student is attending AT LEAST 70% of the scheduled course contact hours *and is* maintaining satisfactory academic performance and where they provide documentary evidence demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances for their absences e.g., medical illness supported by a medical certificate

In all circumstances if the student's attendance drops to below 70%, students will be sent an ITR letter

5. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

5.1 Where a student with low attendance is able to demonstrate (and provide evidence of) compassionate or compelling circumstances, the Academic Adviser will assess whether a temporary suspension of studies (Approved leave) is in the best interest of the student. Refer to *INSEARCH Deferring or Cancelling Student Enrolment Policy*.

6. REPORTING TO DIBP

6.1 If a student ceases attending a course or does not return from leave, and/or is unable to be contacted, under Section 19(1) of the ESOS Act, INSEARCH will notify DoE and DIBP via PRISMS of termination of the students studies within 14 days of the event via a Student Course Variation. INSEARCH in this instance does not have to give students access to the appeals process. Students would not be entitled to a refund unless approved by the Chief Operating Officer.

National Code Standard 11 must be adhered to at all times.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Dean of Studies – responsible for overall management and approval of reports prepared for DIBP, assessing appeals, and excluding non-attending students

Director of Studies ELT – ensures ELT handbook and INSEARCH internet has current policy and procedure. Ensures students are made aware of attendance policy at orientation. Responsible for working with Academic Advisers to identify ELT students failing to progress and determining appropriate actions

Student Admissions – ensures DIBP guidelines are followed for students withdrawing from INSEARCH. Ensures offer letters contain links to course progress and attendance policies. Responsible for reporting non-progressing students to DIBP on PRISMS and for issuing e-CoEs and cancelling e-CoEs.

Academic Advisers – responsible for identifying students at risk, monitoring student attendance, sending warning letters, offering support and assistance to students to assist them in meeting attendance policy requirements

Executive Assistant, Education – responsible for processing student appeals.


Level Leaders – responsible for working with Academic Adviser to identify students failing to attend. Ensure students are reminded of attendance rules at orientation

Teaching Staff – responsible for recording non-attendance/attendance by using the attendance software solution, and liaising with Academic Advisers regarding student attendance.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Attendance Procedure ELT
- ELT Handbook
- National Code 2007 (Standard 11)
- Warning Letter 1
- Warning Letter 2
- Notice of Intention to Report

VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

| Date | Version | Approved by and resolution no. | Amendment |
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| 28.8.14 | | Academic Board | In line with the national code |
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| Signature: | | | |
| Name: | Dr Rosie Wickert, Chair of Academic Board | Date: | 28/8/2014 |