

Attendance Monitoring Policy and Procedure (ELICOS Students)



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PURPOSE

To ensure that Shafston's recording and reporting procedure relating to student's non-attendance is compliant with the requirements of the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2017 ("The National Code") Standard 11 as outlined below. Additionally the student reporting procedures fulfill Shafston's duty of care obligations.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to international students of Shafston International College on a Student Visa studying ELICOS courses. Student studying VET (Vocational Education and Training) are advised to refer to the VET Attendance Policy and Procedure.

PROCEDURE

Student Residential Address:

- Students will be told by the Australian Embassy in their home country that as part of their Visa conditions they are required to notify the College of any change of address.
- Students are reminded on arrival (orientation process) that they **MUST** always immediately update Shafston with their new address if they move.
- The student handbook also notifies all students that they must inform the College of any change of address.
- Also during orientation students on a Student Visa are spoken to about the importance of maintaining a minimum of 80% and notifying the College of any change of address.

Recording Attendance:

- Absences are entered in Shafston's Student Management System ("SEMS") by a Shafston Administration staff member on a weekly basis. This data is provided by class rolls completed by the relevant academic staff member. This in turn ensures a staff member can vouch for a student's attendance from the class rolls as required in Standard 11 of the National Code. Based on these records, SEMS calculates the attendance percentage of the student automatically from the start date to the end of the study period.
- Attendance of all students is recorded systematically. Absences due to illness as evidenced by a medical certificate or other exceptional circumstances such as bereavement are noted in SEMS. Students are advised in the Student Handbook to provide Shafston Administration with their medical certificate. Shafston will take a copy for inclusion on their student file in accordance with the National Code. Students are advised to keep all original medical certificates in case requested by Department of Home Affairs (DHA) in the future.
- Medical certificates and supporting documentation do not have an effect on a student's attendance % but are used to explain the recorded absence.
- If a student is absent for more than 5 consecutive days without approval, the Administration staff member is responsible for contacting the student to confirm his/her safety and advise the student to return to the course immediately.
- An enrolled study period is defined as study completed under a single confirmation of enrolment (CoE)
- Students who extend their course and receive a new (CoE) their attendance record will be separate for each study period.
- Students who finish their course (CoE) early and transfer to another course (CoE) will have their attendance recorded separately for each study period. Students who have recorded attendance below 70% on either or any study period may be reported to DHA for that study period.

Warning and Intention to Report Letters:

- Each week the Administration Staff will draw a report from SEMS on all students' overall attendance until the end of the enrolled study period. Students between 85% and 80% attendance are posted and/or emailed an Attendance Warning Letter outlining the student's current overall attendance and reminding the student of the laws in regards to maintaining an attendance over 80% and updating the College of their current address.
- Students with attendance under 80% are posted and emailed an Intention to Report Letter. This letter notifies the students of their current overall attendance and of Shafston's intention to report them to immigration for low attendance. This letter also explains the appeals process both internal and external. It also very clearly states that the students have the right to an appeal as per Standard 8 of the National Code.
- This letter also states that students "MUST come to Reception as soon as possible to see an Attendance Counsellor". If students do not see an Attendance Counsellor to access their right of appeal in that time, they may be reported to immigration.
- Shafston will only issue Attendance Warning Letters and Intention to Report Letter to students whose study period is 6 weeks and longer.

Appeals Processes:

- Students who receive an Intention to Report letter must make an appointment to meet with the Attendance Counsellor and make a formal appeal.
- At this meeting students are advised to check that all absences have been recorded correctly and present any medical certificates or other supporting documentation that they have relating to the absences.
- Students **MUST** keep all original medical certificates and the Attendance Counsellor will take a photocopy for the student's case file.
- If, at the end of the 20 working day period, if the appeals process has not been accessed and the student's overall attendance is below 80% the Shafston Admissions office will proceed with the reporting process through PRISMS to DHA as soon as practicable.
- The exception to this is students whose attendance is between 80% and 70% and Shafston have seen satisfactory course progression by the student. The decision to not report in these circumstances is at the discretion of Shafston as no appeal has been accessed by the student.
- Shafston will make further attempts, within reason, to contact students and instigate the appeal 2 to 3 working days prior to reporting.
- If, the appeals process has been accessed within the 20 working day period and the student's appeal has been denied, the Attendance Counsellor will notify the student in writing of the unsuccessful appeal stating the reasons why the appeal was unsuccessful. This letter will also notify students that Shafston will be reporting the student for unsatisfactory attendance.
- Students whose appeal is unsuccessful are also informed of their right to an external appeal. The Attendance Counsellor will assist the student in arranging an external appeal. Students refusing the right to an external appeal will sign an External Appeal Process Refusal Statement acknowledging the College's decision to report.
- Students wishing to access an external appeal must do so within 10 working days of accessing the internal appeal.
- Students must notify the Shafston Attendance Counsellor that they have accessed the external appeal within 10 working days. Shafston will not report the student until the External Appeal process is finalised.
- If the appeals process has been accessed within a 20 working day period and the student's **appeal has been successful** the Attendance Counsellor will notify the student in writing of the successful appeal stating the reasons why the appeal was successful.

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- l) Students will be notified in their Appeal Successful Letter of their need to maintain a minimum overall attendance of 70%. Should the student's attendance fall below 70% they will be issued with a second Intention to Report letter and the process will start again.
- m) Students may appeal based on the following grounds:
 - i. Their attendance for the study period has not fallen below 70% and the student is showing satisfactory course progression or student has compassionate and compelling circumstances.
 - ii. Shafston has recorded absences in error and once corrected the students overall attendance is 70% and above.
 - iii. For students with overall attendance 60% and above may appeal based on serious Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances.
- n) Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course attendance or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes. Evidenced by Doctor's medical certificate/s stating dates the student was unable to attend.
 - ii. Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents. Evidenced by death certificate and/or letter from a parent/relative stating the circumstances. The letter must have the author's contact details.
 - iii. Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies. Evidenced by flight tickets and stamped passports of exit and re-entry to Australia.
 - iv. A traumatic experience which could include involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; and witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime. Evidenced by police reports.
- o) Students appealing on Compassionate and Compelling grounds must have independent supporting documentation that justifies their length of absence. Appeals based on Compassionate and Compelling circumstances are at the discretion of Shafston.
- p) Students with overall attendance below 60% will be reported to DHA. Students who appeal will be notified of their unsuccessful appeal and rights to an external appeal.
- c) The unsatisfactory attendance report will be actioned on the CoE that corresponds with the student's absence and notification letters. This report notifies DHA.
- d) Students are to keep the originals of any independent supporting documentation they have in relation to the absence.
- e) DHA will consider if a visa cancellation will occur, if so, a notice of intention to consider cancellation will be sent to the students last known residential address by DHA. This will provide the student with an opportunity to respond. At this point students must comply with DHA's requests or risk having their student visa cancelled.
- f) Students with requests about what will happen to their Student Visa once reported are advised to contact DHA for assistance.

Reporting Students:

- a) Upon completion of the following steps the students file will be submitted to a member of the Shafston Management Committee for a final decision:
 - i. Warning/courtesy letter has been issued to student.
 - ii. Intention to Report Letter has been issued to the student.
 - iii. Shafston have attempted to contact the student to initiate the appeal meeting if the student has not made contact.
 - iv. Student has not attended appeal meeting and has been found to be in breach.
 - v. Student has attended appeal meeting and Shafston has found the student still in breach.
 - vi. The student has decided not to access the External Appeals process or if the student has decided to access the External Appeals process this has been finalised.
- b) Upon approval by the member of the Shafston Management Committee the student's attendance records and file will be handed to the Shafston Admissions Office who will action the report to DHA via PRISMS.