

1 Overview

In line with the information recorded on the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) (previously referred to as the DIBP Course Progress Policy and Procedures for CRICOS Providers of VET Courses), ASQA Standard 1.7 and its organisational mission, EQUALS International (Aust) Pty Ltd (EQUALS) monitors, records and assesses the course progress of each international student for the course in which the student has enrolled.

EQUALS also proactively manages the course progress of domestic students in line with this policy, where applicable to domestic students.

Purpose

EQUALS has designed this policy to detail the rules for meeting course progression requirements and to define the grounds for exclusion of a student due to lack of satisfactory progress.

EQUALS will monitor the progress of students to ensure that they are able to complete courses within the expected duration. For an international student, the expected duration is specified on the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). Progress is monitored so that students who are determined to be 'at risk' can be provided with timely advice and support to ensure successful course completion whenever possible.

Scope

This policy applies to all students undertaking vocational education and training (VET) studies. It does not apply to students undertaking non-award studies.

2 Policy statement

- EQUALS monitors students course progress.
- EQUALS does not monitor attendance and is not required to monitor attendance by the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) agency, however attendance may be considered as a factor in determining satisfactory course progress.
- Students must make satisfactory course progress. In the case of international student, satisfactory course progress is a condition of an international student visa.
- EQUALS identifies and offers support to students at risk of not meeting course progress requirements. The progress of each student is formally reviewed at the end of each study period and monitored during the study period. EQUALS will assist students who are at risk or who are not meeting course progress requirements through a documented Intervention Strategy.
- A Study Period is defined as a Term. Each Term consists of a range of Units of Competency which are made available to the student at the beginning of the study period via Moodle and the student timetable. Students are assessed during a study period and the progress of each student is reviewed after results are published. Results are generally published on the date defined in the Term & Study Period Planner.
- In the case of international students, EQUALS will extend the duration of the student's enrolment in certain circumstances and advise them of potential impacts on their student visa.
- EQUALS will inform international students prior to beginning a course about the requirements to achieve satisfactory course progress.
- The expected duration of study specified on the international student's CoE will not exceed the registered duration for the course, as listed on the [Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses](#)

[for Overseas Students](#) (CRICOS). Therefore, EQUALS will monitor course progress to ensure students are able to complete the course within the expected duration outlined on the CoE.

- Where applicable, online learning will be delivered in accordance with the Learning and Assessment Strategy for the qualification. In the case of international students, up to one third of courses may be delivered online. In addition, at least one unit must be taught in a face-to-face (on campus) mode each Study Period, unless it is the last unit of the student's course and the unit is only available online.
- In the event that course progress is deemed unsatisfactory for a study period (as per definitions below) EQUALS will action an intervention strategy. In addition, the intervention strategy may be activated at any time during the study period, as soon as the student is identified as 'at risk' of not meeting minimum course progress requirements. The intervention strategy will be documented using the Intervention Strategy Form (F 199) and electronic client records.
- EQUALS will action the intervention strategy (please refer to below) as soon as possible and generally within the first four (4) weeks after the beginning of the following study period. Where a student is again found to make unsatisfactory course progress in the next consecutive study period, EQUALS will inform the student in writing of its intention to cancel the student's enrolment.
- In the case of international students, this notice will include details of EQUALS' intention to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs (DOHA) activating cancellation of his or her visa depending on the outcome of any appeals process.
- The student is given twenty (20) working days to access EQUALS complaints and appeals process.
- In the case of international students, EQUALS will notify the Secretary of DOHA and the TPS Director via PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory progress after the appeals process (if actioned) is finalised and upholds EQUALS decision to report, or at the end of the appeals period if no appeal is made by the student.

3 Monitoring course progress procedure:

- Each study period consists of a defined number of units in which students will be assessed in all courses.
- Final term results are published on a date stipulated in the Study Period and Term Planner, available on the EQUALS website. The publication date of term results may be subject to change from the above.
- Following results publication, responsible staff members will assess the total number of satisfactory outcomes for each student against the unit requirements for the relevant study period for the course in which the student is enrolled.
- Where a student is identified as not having satisfactorily completed a minimum of 50% of units in a study period, EQUALS will implement its intervention strategy.
- Evidence of review and any subsequent action is maintained in the student's file.
- A report of students who have not made satisfactory course progress will be given to the Academic Manager in the following study period, with details of the intervention strategy for each. The report is typically provided within the first four weeks of the study period.
- Where a student demonstrates unsatisfactory course progress in two consecutive study periods, the following actions apply:
 - i) in the case of an international student, the student will be sent an intention to report letter (F 860); or
 - ii) in the case of a domestic student, the student will be sent a notice of intention to cancel letter

(F 858).

3.1 Intervention strategy

- The designated staff member will contact the student to initiate counselling of the student on unsatisfactory course progress. Where appropriate, the staff member meets the student in person to establish the counselling relationship.
- The purpose of course counselling is to identify the possible causes of unsatisfactory course progress and to establish a plan to address and improve course progress. Remedial action may include one or more of the following strategies:
 - Attendance at an additional tutorial or study group
 - Attendance at academic skills programmes
 - Advising the student of opportunities for reassessment in tasks and/or units, or re-sitting the unit/subject/s
 - Attendance at counselling sessions, individual case management (including one to one meeting with Educator/s)
 - Assistance with personal issues which may be impacting progress
 - Providing a mentor / buddy
 - Referral to a qualified Social Worker/Counsellor (available in-house)
 - Increased monitoring of the student
 - A reduction in course load
 - Another mutually agreeable strategy as discussed with the student and Student Services Advisor
 - Advising students on the suitability of the course in which they are enrolled (where appropriate)
- International students are advised that unsatisfactory course progress in two (2) consecutive study periods may lead to the student being reported to DOHA.
- The meeting notes of the course counselling (including details of any strategies, agreed action items, target dates and the like) should be recorded on the Intervention Strategy Form (F 199) and signed by the student. If the meeting was by telephone, the meeting notes will be set out in an email and sent to the student for confirmation by return email. A failure to respond to such email will be treated as a failure to engage in their intervention strategy management. The student's case will be managed by a responsible staff member who will record in WiseNET that the student is on an intervention strategy and will regularly attempt to contact the student during the following study period.
- Where a student does not engage in their intervention strategy management, the responsible staff member will make note of this and consider this factor should the student make unsatisfactory course progress in a consecutive study period.
- Intervention Strategies will be kept on a student's file.

4 Reporting and Appeals

- Where a student is assessed as making unsatisfactory course progress in a consecutive study period, EQUALS will notify the student a written notification of its intention to report the student. Student Services will notify an international student by writing of their intention to report letter (F 860). A domestic Student will be notified using the notice of intention to cancel letter (F 858).
- The written notices will also inform the student that they have twenty (20) working days in which to access EQUALS' complaints and appeals process ([Grievance Handling \(Academic and Non-](#)

[Academic\) Policy and Procedure](#)). While the grievance process is being considered, the student must continue to attend classes. EQUALS will maintain the international student's enrolment by reporting a breach of course progress using the [Provider Registration and International Student Management System](#) (PRISMS) if:

- the internal and external complaints processes have been completed and the breach has been upheld;
 - the international student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 20 working day period;
 - the international student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process; or
 - the international student withdraws from the internal or external appeals process by notifying EQUALS provider in writing.
- A student may appeal on the following grounds:
 - EQUALS failure to record or calculate a student's marks accurately;
 - Compassionate or compelling circumstances; or where
 - EQUALS has not implemented its intervention strategy and/or other policies according to its documented policies and procedures that have been made available to the Student.
 - Where a student has not accessed the complaints and appeals process within the twenty (20) day period or if at the end of the complaints and appeals process:
 - in the case of an international student - the decision to report is upheld, EQUALS will report the student to the Secretary of DOHA and the TPS Director via PRISMS within 5 business days (The responsible Student Services Advisor will notify the nominated PRISMS officer of the expiration of the appeals period. The student's access to course materials will be disconnected and class timetables will be cancelled);
 - in the case of a domestic student – the decision to cancel the student's enrolment is upheld, EQUALS may cancel the students enrolment and disconnect access to course and program materials and timetables will be cancelled (Students will be notified of their enrolment cancellation using Cancellation Letter (F 112) by email or hard copy to their recorded postal address, and the letter will be uploaded to their electronic file).

Cancellation and close-out of file proceeds.

5 Extending course duration

- EQUALS will only extend the duration of the student's course where it is clear that the student will not complete the course within the expected duration. In the case of international students, the expected duration is specified on the CoE. Course duration may be extended in the following circumstances:
 - Where EQUALS has assessed that there are compassionate or compelling circumstances and there is evidence to support the assessment. EQUALS reserves the right to determine the suitability of evidence provided and may, at its sole discretion, refuse to accept evidence it believes to be invalid, inauthentic or insufficient;

Compassionate and compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. For the purposes of this policy, these may include but are not limited to:

 - a. serious illness or injury; where original (or verified) medical evidence is provided and states that the student was unable to attend classes;
 - b. bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (and where an original (or verified) death certificate should be provided);
 - c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the international student's studies; or
 - d. a traumatic experience, which could include:
 - i. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
 - ii. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the
 - iii. student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports)
 - e. where EQUALS was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit, or the student has failed a prerequisite unit and therefore faces a shortage of relevant units for which they are eligible to enrol.
 - EQUALS is implementing its intervention strategy for students who are at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress; or
 - where an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted in accordance with EQUALS' policy and procedure.
- Where EQUALS extends the duration of an international student's enrolment, it will notify the student to contact Immigration to seek advice on any potential impacts on their visa, including the need to obtain a new visa. If the student's visa will expire prior to completion of the course, the student will need to apply for a new Student visa (subclass 500) to complete their study. Students can obtain further information about the Student visa (subclass 500) via the [Department of Home Affairs](#) website.
- EQUALS will retain evidence, where applicable, to support the extension of the CoE. This will be recorded in the Student Management System (WiseNet) and/or the student hard copy file. The student CoE course duration variation is updated on PRISMS. Students will be notified of the extension to their CoE via email.

6 Maximum candidature – domestic students

Notwithstanding the information outlined above, students must meet the requirements of a course within a prescribed number of years from the date of first enrolment. This is known as the candidature limitation date. The rationale for placing a timeframe on course completion is to ensure that the qualification awarded reflects currency of knowledge and skill and to ensure students fulfil their obligations to complete the qualification within a reasonable timeframe.

6.1 Years to complete – domestic students

The number of years allowed to complete the requirements of a course are listed in the table below. The time elapsed is calculated from the date that the student commenced their first study period. EQUALS sends students a courtesy reminder after 3 months of inactivity to notify students of the maximum period of candidature.

Course	Years
Advanced Diploma	5
Diploma	3
Certificate IV and under	2

6.2 Applications for an extension of time

Students who fail to complete within the prescribed period and who can reasonably be expected to meet the course requirements within two additional study periods may apply for an extension of time. Each application is considered on its merits and with reference to the student's academic performance to date.

Applications for an extension of time to complete the course must be made in writing on the form outlining reasons for compelling or special circumstance consideration and providing documentary evidence to the Academic Manager at least one study period prior to the expiry of the student's prescribed period of maximum candidature. The application must include reasons for the student's inability to complete the qualification in the prescribed time period. The Academic Manager provides a written response to the student within twenty (20) working days outlining their decision and informing the student of their right to appeal the decision.

6.3 Students who fail to complete within the time limit

Students who fail to complete course requirements within the specified time limit (including any extension of time granted) have their enrolment terminated and a statement noting that the maximum period of candidature has been exceeded appears on the final record of results issued to the student. The student is advised in writing of the decision to terminate their enrolment and are also advised that they have twenty (20) working days from receiving notification of the decision to terminate their enrolment to appeal the decision.

7 Definitions

Terms not defined in this document may be in the [EQUALS Glossary](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/home?lx=GCzY7kacE2GweBYJA3450Q)
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/home?lx=GCzY7kacE2GweBYJA3450Q>

Course progress is defined as the measure of progression within a course, towards completion of that course, that is demonstrated through competency-based training and assessment.

Institute – EQUALS International (Aust) Pty Ltd trades as EQUALS International. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to ‘EQUALS’ or ‘the Institute’ should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective trading names.

PRISMS: Provider Registration International Student Management System (PRISMS); a database used by registered providers for international students, and managed by the Department of Home Affairs.

Student – means an individual who is formally enrolled to study at the Institute. The individual person is that who appears on the Institute’s documents such as admissions, information systems, and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

Study Period is defined as a Term.

Unit – A Unit is a subdivided component within a course. A combination of required “units” known as “Core Units”, along with “Elective Units” would make up a “Course”.

Unsatisfactory course progress is defined as not successfully completing or demonstrating competency in 50% or more of course requirements within the study period.

Term: a period of study that is no less than 9 weeks and not exceeding 13 weeks.

8 Approval and Amendment History

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
16.0	CEO	September 2016	Policy archived.
16.1	CEO	May 2018	Improved references to National Code 2018 and streamlined procedural steps for implementing intervention strategies
16.2	CEO	February 2019	Minor updates to terminology, definitions and procedural steps. Grammatical fixes. Change of policy number from 3-20V16.2 to current.

9 Document Map

Approval Authority:	Executive Management Committee	Advisory Committee for Approval Authority	
Authorised By:	Chief Operating Officer		
Effective from:	01/02/2019		
Next Review Date:	01/02/2022		
File Location:	The current version of this policy can be accessed from the Policy Register (internal users only)		
Relevant Legislation:	Standards for RTO's 2015 Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018		
Related Documents and/or Registers:	External Standard 8 Fact Sheet AEI Internal Deferral and Withdrawal Policy International Student Prospectus Student Handbook F 199 Intervention Strategy Form F 860 Notice of Intention to Report F 858 Notice of Intention to Cancel F 112 Notice of Cancellation of Enrolment F 444 End of Term Review Checklist		
Policy Subdivision	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate or Academic Governance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Management <input type="checkbox"/> Operational Management		
Administrator:	Quality Advisor		