

Support For Students Policy

Table of Contents

1. Purpose	1
2. Scope	1
3. Policy Statement.....	2
Preparing students for success	2
Academic support	2
Non-academic support	2
Identification of at-risk students	3
At-risk support and response	4
Provision of responsive and relevant support	4
Ensuring timely access to support, information and student agency	5
Ensuring the policy is effective and sustainable	6
4. Responsibilities.....	6
Compliance, monitoring and review	6
Reporting	6
Records management	6
5. Definitions.....	6
6. Related Legislation and Documents.....	7
Key policies and procedures	7
7. Approval and Review Details	8

1. Purpose

This policy:

- 1.1. Outlines AFTRS commitment to and responsibilities for supporting award course students to successfully complete their studies.
- 1.2. Ensures compliance with the *Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003* (Cth).
- 1.3. Fulfils the requirements of the *Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023* through outlining AFTRS' strategies for identifying and providing support for award course students at risk of not successfully completing their subjects.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- 2.1. Students enrolled in an award course at AFTRS.
- 2.2. Academic staff and staff involved directly in award course student progression and student support processes and functions.

3. Policy Statement

AFTRS is committed to:

- 3.1. Providing a supportive and inclusive environment for students as per the [AFTRS Corporate Strategy 'Creating the Future' 2022-2026](#).
- 3.2. Utilising relevant and appropriate communication channels to proactively promote the support functions available to students.
- 3.3. Actively identifying, referring, and supporting students' need for academic and non-academic support.
- 3.4. Managing and handling all personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the AFTRS [Privacy Policy](#).
- 3.5. Supporting students towards successful completion of their subjects through a combination of academic progression, wellbeing and information functions.

Preparing students for success

- 3.6. AFTRS is dedicated to assessing a student's suitability to undertake and successfully complete study. [AFTRS Admissions Policy](#) establishes the basis for admission into AFTRS award courses.
- 3.7. AFTRS is committed to ensuring that students are at the centre of their own learning journey and to ensuring that students have access to adequate information and support to understand the requirements of their course and to make informed decisions about their learning.
- 3.8. AFTRS is guided by Standard 3.3 of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* in ensuring that students are supported by with appropriate and accessible learning resources and educational support that do not present unexpected barriers, costs or technological requirements that may hinder their study progress.
- 3.9. Commencing students are provided with clear guidance on how to prepare for, and what to expect from their studies at AFTRS. During Orientation Week students are provided with information about AFTRS support services, including transparency on AFTRS processes and standards.
- 3.10. Commencing students are encouraged to participate in the peer-support program aimed at pairing them with a member of the progressing cohort in their respective course.

Academic support

- 3.11. Academic staff provide academic support both holistically and on an individual basis where there has been an identified need. This support may include additional tutoring or mentoring, additional resources, standard extensions or alternative assessments.
- 3.12. Academic staff activate progression interventions as outlined in the *Managing Assessment Guidelines*.
- 3.13. Students are encouraged to access learning and study skills resources; consultations and assessment support are available through the [Library](#).
- 3.14. Students may request a standard extension as per the terms set out in the [Student Handbook](#).
- 3.15. Students are encouraged to access mentoring with relevant teaching staff and additional online materials via [Moodle](#) (Learning Management System).
- 3.16. Students are encouraged to access personalised writing feedback and study support via [Studiosity](#).

Non-academic support

- 3.17. Students with on-going extenuating circumstances are encouraged to apply for Special Consideration as set out in the [Student Handbook](#).
- 3.18. Students with an access requirement including (but not limited to) an ongoing Medical Condition or Disability are encouraged to activate a Learning Access Plan including relevant reasonable adjustments to be applied to their learning environment and broader student experience as per the [Student Handbook](#) and [Student Hub](#).
- 3.19. Students are encouraged to access pastoral care through booking an appointment with the Student Engagement Manager via the [Student Hub](#).
- 3.20. Students are encouraged to access free uncapped and confidential internal counselling through the [AFTRS counselling service](#). Appointments may be booked via the [Student Hub](#).

- 3.21. Students are encouraged to actively participate in community activation and inclusion events, days of significance as well as advocacy and representative groups detailed on the [Student Hub](#) and [Student Handbook](#).
- 3.22. Students are encouraged to seek informal guidance on processes and support through the [Safe Conversation Officer \(SCO\) Network](#).
- 3.23. Students have free access to wellbeing resources including the [Headspace App](#).
- 3.24. Students are supported in confidentially reporting Sexual Harassment as per the *Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure – Students*.
- 3.25. Students are proactively encouraged to access all Mental Health and Wellbeing support available as set out in the AFTRS [Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy and Procedure](#).
- 3.26. The Student Centre will deliver community building awareness, inclusion, and development events, activities and activations for students as per the [AFTRS Corporate Strategy ‘Creating the Future’ 2022-2026](#).
- 3.27. Academic staff are encouraged to identify students who they believe may require additional non-academic support in consultation with the Student Centre and the Program Convenor. Where a student is identified in this way, the Student Centre will assess the feasibility and type of intervention and/or supports based on the students’ circumstances, and the academic staff member should not directly attempt to offer these supports themselves.

Identification of at-risk students

- 3.28. The at-risk process is the primary mechanism used to identify and respond to a student that is at risk of not successfully completing a subject or subjects.
- 3.29. The at-risk process is based on the principle that when a student is not in good standing or they are experiencing personal challenges, they may be at risk.
- 3.30. The concept of ‘being in good standing’ notionally represents a student that is on track to successfully complete their course requirements– referred to at AFTRS as the ‘progression rules’.
- 3.31. The Progression Rules consider both academic and non-academic factors including; assessment, attendance, engagement, behaviour, academic integrity and conduct
- 3.32. Academic staff and student-facing support staff will proactively identify students with potential at-risk factors through consulting with the relevant Program Convenor if academic or the Head of Student Centre if non-academic.
- 3.33. Academic staff and the Student Centre may collaborate in attempting to mitigate a potential at risk scenario where academic or non-academic support can be delivered and they have reason to believe that this support will alleviate the student becoming at risk
- 3.34. The Academic Governance Framework provisions the convening of Assessment Panels and Grade Review Panels to monitor attendance, engagement, and progression matters. These panels also confirm the grades that are awarded to students and identify and follow-up on students that are considered at risk.
- 3.35. The nature of any risks that arise in the governance processes are referred to the subject matter experts best positioned to mitigate, triage, or support that risk.
- 3.36. Risk scenarios that arise under the remit of the Governance Framework may be formally raised with the Academic Governance Committees as an Academic Red Flag. This may occur in any instance where staff have evidence of procedural risk or unfairness to students, or potential organisational risks, including the identification and management of students at risk.
- 3.37. AFTRS promotes and encourages students to proactively seek support where they need it through activating non-academic support including proactive checking in, regular pastoral care and activating additional wellbeing support to reasonably reduce impact of risk.
- 3.38. Students that have been identified as at-risk will be case managed by the relevant Program Convenor for academic identification purposes and the Head of Student Centre for non-academic identification purposes.
- 3.39. Discipline Leads or Subject Leaders are responsible for issuing notifications relating to non-submission of assessment tasks, which is one method by which a student may become at risk.

- 3.40. Students that have been identified as at-risk will be monitored and proactively supported by the parties identified in 3.32 until they have been demonstrated a return to good standing.
- 3.41. The combination of proactive identification from Academic and student-facing support staff, systematic governance processes, case-by-case referrals, and the promotion of student agency ensure that students are identified efficiently and effectively when they are at risk of not progressing in their course of study.
- 3.42. If the risk becomes mitigated or resolved and it is determined the student is in good standing, the student will no longer be identified as at-risk.

At-risk support and response

- 3.43. When a student is identified as at risk, in the first instance, the Program Convenor and Head of Student Centre will collaborate to assess relevant support functions to immediately implement or offer the student. This ensures that both parties can provide each other with relevant context, anecdotal knowledge of the student and any other relevant information prior to the determination of next steps.
- 3.44. Students are encouraged to have agency in identifying and advocating for appropriate support. This may include a combination of Academic and Non-Academic Support (see sections 3.11 - 3.27)
- 3.45. Students are encouraged to proactively access relevant academic and non-academic support to prevent any future risk where reasonable.
- 3.46. Academic staff are provisioned to proactively implement classroom support for students that have been identified as at risk with classroom strategies where the strategies have been endorsed by the Program Convener.
- 3.47. Students are provided assessment feedback and support appropriate to the nature of their circumstances.
- 3.48. Students will receive communication advising them of their at-risk status including the support available to them based on the specific reason that they have been identified at risk.
- 3.49. If the risk is not mitigated, and when intervention strategies are unsuccessful, the matter may be escalated to the Head of Curriculum and a Show Cause process may take effect, or an assessment for fitness to study may be considered in consultation with the Head of Student Centre. Show Cause communications are issued by the Head of Curriculum in consultation with Head of Student Centre and the Program Convenor.
- 3.50. The identification of an at-risk student may trigger support in the form of an ongoing relationship between a student and the Student Centre in the form of a Learning Access Plan or Learning Contract.
- 3.51. Show Cause typically seeks to identify issues affecting the student's progression or good standing and engage the student to resolve any outstanding matters so they may be returned to good standing.
- 3.52. Where the risk originates from or includes wellbeing, medical, or other non-academic circumstances—referral will be made to a Student Engagement Manager to assess eligibility for Special Consideration, a Learning Access Plan or to explore alternative non-academic support.
- 3.53.** In the circumstances that AFTRS has evidence that a student is not on track to successfully complete their subjects after all interventions have been exhausted, it may undertake a faculty-initiated leave of absence, withdrawal, or as a last resort; exclusion. These mechanisms are only used where it is in the best interests of the student to do so.

Provision of responsive and relevant support

- 3.54. AFTRS recognises that certain cohorts of students may require additional or tailored non-academic supports outside those listed above and puts in place reasonable and appropriate measures to meet the diverse needs of students. These students may include (but not limited to):
 - First Nations students
 - Students with parental and/or caring responsibilities
 - Students with religious or cultural responsibilities and/or needs
 - Students with disability
 - Students who have experienced sexual harm, domestic or family violence or other traumatic events.
 - Students who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

- 3.55. AFTRS will monitor whether the offered support functions are relevant and appropriate via statistics and trend capturing, student demand and feedback on an ongoing basis.
- 3.56. AFTRS will assess staffing levels of support functions and whether student support functions are culturally appropriate on an ongoing basis.
- 3.57. AFTRS is guided by Standard 3.2 of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* in managing its staffing to ensure that students are supported by academic staff that are: academically suited to the level of the course, have knowledge and expertise relevant to the subject-matter, have the technical knowledge to instruct and resolve issues, and are supported themselves to recognise a student's academic and non-academic needs.
- 3.58. Students requiring targeted relevant support are encouraged and invited to speak with the Student Centre and explore additional academic and non-academic support where relevant and reasonable. These may be captured in a learning access plan and include a combination of academic and non-academic support functions.
- 3.59. Where reasonable, AFTRS may engage an internal or external specialist or subject matter expert to provide a relevant academic or non-academic support function, negotiate, explore, or advise on relevant individual academic or non-academic supports. This may include mentoring.
- 3.60. First Nations student support is available through the Student Centre and the First Nations and Outreach Division.
- 3.61. First Nations students are encouraged to actively participate in internal and external First Nations community activity and encouraged to access relevant academic and non-academic support.

Ensuring timely access to support, information and student agency

- 3.62. Where a student has been identified as at risk (in the current or previous semester), the next occurring census date will be utilised as a check-in date to ensure the student is on track towards successfully completing their subjects.
- 3.63. AFTRS will provide information about its support services to commencing students as part of Orientation Week, including transparency on AFTRS processes and standards.
- 3.64. AFTRS will communicate and advise award course students of this policy at the beginning of each semester, including transparency on AFTRS processes and standards.
- 3.65. AFTRS delivers a monthly Student Newsletter advising of key community activities, opportunities, academic and non-academic support, key dates (including census) and highlights wellbeing resources.
- 3.66. Additional follow up communications are delivered both verbally in classes at the commencement of each semester, and via email to students reminding of academic and non-academic support available including information on census dates.
- 3.67. The Student Centre team are available by appointment to assist students with the information and resources they require to make informed decisions prior to any census dates.
- 3.68. An invitation for a confidential conversation with the Student Engagement Manager will be extended where a student:
 - Is identified at risk after the census date and/or;
 - has previously failed a unit of study in their course and/or;
 - Is not in good standing and/or;
 - has not engaged with academic or non-academic support prior to census date, AFTRS will make every reasonable attempt to offer or implement academic or non-academic support.
- 3.69. AFTRS' website collates student-based processes and [public facing policy and procedure documents](#).
- 3.70. The [Student Hub](#) is an online resource for students that consolidates access and information for the support services that are available to students.
- 3.71. The Learning Management System, Moodle, couples specific support mechanisms with the circumstances in which they may be utilised by students, for example, providing access to requests for extension and special consideration alongside the issuance and submission points for assessments.
- 3.72. Course Guides identify relevant resources appropriate to each course.
- 3.73. Award course students are encouraged to actively seek support. The [Student Handbook](#) outlines academic and non-academic support available and processes for accessing relevant support.

Ensuring the policy is effective and sustainable

- 3.74. The Head of Student Centre will consult annually with key stakeholders about:
- Implementation of this policy;
 - Analysis of student support data to measure impact and identify areas for improvement.
 - Resources required to maintain effective support to students;
 - Lessons learned; and
 - If necessary, proposed amendments to this policy.
- 3.75. The Head of Student Centre will provide the outcomes of the annual review to the:
- Executive; and
 - Academic Board
- 3.76. The Academic Board will receive the annual reports and provide advice on the efficacy of this policy, and towards the continual improvement of AFTRS at risk and student support processes.
- 3.77. AFTRS assesses and responds to staff capacity and expertise related to the identification of students at-risk through its Workforce Plan.
- 3.78. Commencing student-facing Academic and Non-academic staff are required to review this policy as part of onboarding.
- 3.79. AFTRS will provide staff with appropriate support and training to be able to identify reasons why students are at risk and to be able to provide these students with support and guidance to enable them to succeed.
- 3.80. As part of the budget cycle AFTRS ensures resource allocation to support the processes identified in this policy.

4. Responsibilities

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1. This policy is to be reviewed annually alongside associated online AFTRS web pages.

Reporting

- 4.2. Reporting on this policy will commence in March 2025 in line with the requirements determined in the *Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023 Support Act (HESA) 2003*

Records management

- 4.3. All records relevant to administering this policy and procedure will be maintained by the Policy and Governance Officer.

5. Definitions

Academic Integrity: The expectation that teachers, students, researchers and all members of the academic community act with: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility¹

Academic Misconduct: An action or attempted action, including plagiarism, that may result in creating an unfair advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community

At Risk: The primary mechanism used to identify and respond to a student that is at risk of not successfully completing one or more subjects.

Census Date: The last date before which a person can withdraw from a unit of study and not incur an academic or financial penalty

¹ Tertiary Education Standards and Quality Authority (2022), 'What is Academic Integrity' (<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/students/understanding-academic-integrity/what-academic-integrity>)

Conditional Enrolment: A course enrolment status used when a student is given a conditional enrolment with the proviso of meeting specific requirements by the census date. This would typically be for students who are working through conditions of a show cause or special consideration, or as determined by the Director of Teaching & Learning or delegate

Exclusion: The cancellation of a student's course enrolment due to sustained performance issues, behaviour and/or conduct issues, or a failure to pay fees that have been incurred

Faculty-initiated Leave of Absence: A mandatory period of time-off from studying where the faculty has determined that it is in the best interests of the student to pause their course

Faculty-initiated Withdrawal: The cancellation of a student's course enrolment due to academic or wellbeing reasons, and only after attempts to contact a student and remedy the situation have been unsuccessful

Fitness to Study: A mechanism for the faculty to assess a student's circumstances where there is reason to suspect that their health, wellbeing and/or behaviour is adversely impacting performance or engagement with their course

Good Standing: A concept that reflects student that is unencumbered by any circumstances that may affect their enrolment and progression, including academic and non-academic circumstances. All students are in good standing until evidence suggests otherwise.

Learning Access Plan: A mechanism to manage the provision of Reasonable Adjustments, through agreement between an individual student and the Student Centre

Learning Contract: A mechanism used to establish conditions regarding a student's continued enrolment in the course. This will occur when a student has demonstrated a pattern of behaviour that is detrimental to their good standing or requires support that cannot be captured in a Learning Access Plan.

Misconduct: Any behaviour that violates the Student Code of Conduct

Progression: The process of meeting the requirements of a course on a semester-by-semester basis, including fulfilling attendance requirements and successfully passing subjects

Show Cause: The formal process following one of more serious issues related to a student's Good Standing. The issuance of a Show Cause notice must always be preceded by an at risk intervention.

Special Consideration: Special Consideration is available where a student requires an extension that is greater than 5 days due to special circumstances beyond their control such as illness, misadventure, or other factors.

6. Related Legislation and Documents

Key policies and procedures

6.1. The Student Handbook is the primary Policy document that provides students and staff with consistent and plain English explanations for the processes, standards and mechanisms that support students to successfully complete their subjects. The Student Handbook is supported by other internal documents including:

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Policy
- Academic Progression Procedure (internal only)
- [Academic Board Terms of Reference \(internal only\)](#)
- Access and Inclusion Policy
- Critical Incident Management Plan and Procedure (internal only)
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Governance Framework (internal only)

- Guideline for Managing Assessment (internal only)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Procedure (internal only)
- Student Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure – Students

Related Legislation

- *Higher Education Support (HESA) Act 2003*
- Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*
- *Privacy Act 1988*

7. Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	CEO
Responsible Officer	Director, People and Culture
Contact Officer	Head of Student Centre
Distribution	Intranet and AFTRS website Staff and Public facing
Next Review Date	01/04/2025 Annually

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority, Date and Details	CEO, 15/04/2024 — Review focussed on ensuring compliance with the additional requirements of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) and HEP Guidelines 2023
Amendment History and Date	1 January 2024 —v1.0, new document, no amendment history. <DD/MM/YYYY —Amendment detail; DD/MM/YYYY—Amendment detail >
Notes	Initial version of this policy (interim policy) was introduced in Dec 2023 in response to the Higher Education Provider Amendment (Support for Students Policy) Guidelines 2023, with a scheduled review to take place in April 2024 as per the phased milestones set out by the Department of Education.
Minor Amendment Approval and History	N/A <<DD/MM/20YY — Xxxxx>> <i>[A minor amendment consists of an administrative edit made to the document or a change that is not material to the document. The Responsible Officer can approve a minor amendment. Insert the date that the Responsible Officer approved the minor amendment along with the details of the amendment (E.g., “01/12/2020 —administrative amendment: update of role titles aligned to restructure” or insert, if not relevant, N/A [If making a minor amendment, do not amend details in the Original Approval Authority section nor amend the version number, only replace the new minor amendment approval date to the file]</i>