# Student Support Policy

*Policy*

Swinburne Open Education (RTO 3059) provides access to non-academic support services for enrolled students. Swinburne Open Education student support services comply with the requirements of Clause 1.7 of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

*Purpose*

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Swinburne Open Education students have access to a sufficient range of non-academic support services to meet their needs.

*Scope*

This policy applies exclusively to non-academic student support services provided by Up Education Online on behalf of Swinburne Open Education (RTO 3059) in accordance with the established partnership agreement. Academic support services are described in the Learning Policy and Associated Procedures.

*Responsible Officer(s)*

The Head of Student Support is responsible for ensuring that all non-academic support services comply with this policy and associated procedures.

*Review and Improvement*

This policy and associate procedures are subject to regular review and improvement through Continuous Improvement processes as described in the Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures.

## Student Support Procedures

### 1. Support Principles

Swinburne Open Education defines 'Student Support' as the range of non-academic support services that are available to students.

Swinburne Open Education Student Support services are:

- Accessible,

- Responsive,

- Available as on demand and opt in processes,

- Provided at no additional cost to students,

- Aligned with access and equity principles,

- Non-discriminatory.

### 2. Student Privacy

When engaging with students, the Student Support Team will check and verify at least three of the following:

- Address,
- Date of birth,
- Phone number,
- Email address,
- Enrolment/student number.

### 3. Support available to students.

Swinburne Open Education provides the following Student Support services:

- Administrative Support
- Learning Support,
- Student Issues,
- Workplace Support.

*Administrative Support*

Is available to students requiring support for a range of administrative issues including:

- Leaning Platform technical issues,
- Change to personal details,
- Payment details,
- Third Party Authority,
- Accessing Reasonable Adjustment,
- Course extensions,
- Course deferral,
- Special circumstances,
- Course cancellation,
- Course improvements,
- Certificate re-issue.

Process:

- A student lodges a support request via either the learning platform or the Call Centre (Mon-Fri) and identifies the support service required,

- Support requests may also require the student to complete and submit a form (for example the Third Party Authority),

- The Student Support Team will receive, acknowledge and log the support case in the student management system within 2 days,

- In actioning the support case, the Student Support Team may:
  - Seek additional details from the student,
  - Refer the case to other business units for action,
  - Complete the support request within the limits of their role.

- Students are advised in writing the outcome of their support request within 5 working days.

*Student Issues*

Students are provided with an informal avenue to have minor concerns/issues addressed and resolved quickly without the need to engage with the formal complaint process. The Student Issues Procedure commences when a student encounters an issue relating to a course or their experience and contacts Student Support for assistance.

Note: Students may choose to engage with the formal Complaint process at any time.

Process:

- A student lodges an issue case via either the learning platform or the Call Centre (Mon-Fri),

- The Student Support Team will receive, acknowledge and log the issue as a case in the student management system within 2 days,

- Should the issue be about the Student Support Team, the Head of Student Support (or delegate) will deal with the issue,

- The Student Support Team will investigate the issue and may:
  - Discuss and/or seek further details from the student,
  - Consult with relevant Swinburne Open Education staff.

- The Student Support Team will propose a resolution to the student either verbally or in writing within 2 days or within 5 days if further investigation is required,

- Upon agreement, the Student Support Team will act on the proposed resolution and finalise the issue,

- Student Issues and outcomes are recorded in the student management system,

- The Head of Student Support will report on issues and outcomes to the Leadership Team on a monthly basis.

In the event a student is dissatisfied with the resolution of their issue or believes the outcome of their issue is inconsistent with Swinburne Open Education Policies and Procedures, they will be provided with an option to

submit a complaint in writing in accordance with the Complaint Policy and Procedures.

*Learning Support*

Is available to students at anytime during their enrolment period. The services included as part of Learning Support include:

- Learning platform induction,
- Getting started/orientation for the course
- Discussion Forum communication
- Individual communication with the trainer

Process:

Several of the Learning Support services are self-selected within the learning platform. These include:

- Learning platform induction,
- Getting started/orientation for the course

To engage with on request Learning Support:

- A student lodges an issue case via either the learning platform or the Call Centre (Mon-Fri),
- The Student Support Team will receive, acknowledge and log the learning support case in the student management system within 24 hours,
- The Student Support Team contacts the student to book a Learning Support appointment,
- The Student Support Team facilitates the appointment, addressing the Learning Support needs identified by the student.

The outcomes from a Learning Support appointment may include but is not limited to:

- Development of agreed study plans and goals,
- Implementation of reasonable adjustment in line with the Reasonable Adjustment Procedures,
- Engagement with LLN evaluation and support programs,
- Scheduling follow up appointments to review and check in progress.

*Workplace Support*

Is available for courses that include Structured Workplace Learning and includes:

- Processing workplace approvals,
- Work Placement support.

Workplace Approval

Every workplace that is proposed to host a student for Structured Workplace Learning must be approved by Swinburne Open Education prior to the student commencing their Structured Workplace Learning. Students may seek to use their existing workplace where appropriate, or source a suitable workplace. A student may be required to use more than one workplace to successfully complete their Structured Workplace Learning requirements.

Where a course includes Structured Workplace Learning, a student is provided with the Structured Workplace Learning Support Guide. This guide provides information on sourcing a suitable workplace, the roles of the Workplace Supervisor and Assessor and any specific additional details. The guide includes a Workplace Approval Form to be completed and lodged for the proposed workplace to be evaluated for suitability.

Process:

- A student will complete and upload the Workplace Approval Form to the learning platform,
- The Student Support Team (or Industry Engagement Officers) will acknowledge receipt and enter details into the learning management system within 2 business days,
- The Student Support Team (or Industry Engagement Officers) will also allocate the case to the Assessor within the 2 business days,
- Within 14 days the Assessor will:
    - Evaluate the details and validate the workplace for suitability,
    - Conduct a Pre-Assessment Interview with the Workplace Supervisor,
    - Approve or reject the workplace and advise the Student Support team of the decision.
- The Student Support team will update the case details and inform the student of the outcome in writing within 2 business days,
- Where a proposed workplace is rejected, the student will be required to source another workplace and is provided access to Work Placement Support if needed.

Work Placement Support

When students have been unable to secure a suitable workplace for work placement themselves, and require additional support locating a work placement, the Student Support Team assist sourcing a host organisation.

Process:

- A student requests Work Placement Support via either the learning platform or the Call Centre (Mon-Fri),
- The Student Support Team will receive, acknowledge and log the support case in the student management system within 2 days,
- The Student Support Team contacts the student to book a Work Placement Support appointment,
- The Student Support Team member facilitates the appointment, reviewing the student's records of previous attempts to source a suitable workplace and develop alternate strategies with the student,
- The outcomes of a Work Placement Support Appointment may include:

- o Developing a CV and interview techniques,

- o Development of an action plan for the student to implement,

- o The student contacting potential host workplaces,

- o The Student Support Team contacting potential host workplaces on behalf of the student.

Swinburne Open Education cannot guarantee a work placement can be located. In the event a workplace is unable to be secured, Swinburne Open Education will discuss options and alternative strategies with the student.

### Student Support Guidelines
*Additional Details for Administrative Support Matters.*

Change to personal details.

*Change of Name.*

When a student wishes to change or correct their name they are required to provide evidence of the change or correction using the following legal documents:

- Birth certificate,
- Driver's licence,
- Marriage certificate,
- Change of name certificate,
- Passport.

On receipt and verification of the authenticity of the documentation provided, the Student Support Team will make the relevant changes to the student's records.


*Change of address and contact details.*

The Student Support Team will verify the details with the student and amend as required.


*Change of e-mail address.*

The Student Support Team will verify the new email address with the student. Where verified the Student Support Team will update the email address.


*Third Party Authority.*

Under the Australian Privacy Act 1998, Swinburne Open Education requires written consent from the student with regard to Third Party Authority. This authority will be dependent on the level of access authorised on the Third Party Authority Form. The third party will be able to access the student's records dependent on the level of access authorised.

Upon receipt of a Third-Party Authority the Student Support Team will upload a copy to the student management system. Unless authorised the Swinburne Open Education is unable to discuss the student's records with anyone other than the student.

*Course extensions.*

The maximum duration of the course is specified on the Swinburne Open Education website and Confirmation of Enrolment. If a student does not complete the course within the maximum duration time, the enrolment expires without refund.

If a student wishes to extend the course beyond the enrolment expiry date, the student must:

- Be up to date with course fees payments,
- Contact the Student Support Services prior to their enrolment expiry date,
- Pay any applicable fee as outlined in the Schedule of Administrative Fees.

Upon receiving a student's request for extension, the Student Support Team will check that an extension can be granted. Extensions may not be granted if:

- Payment of course fees is in arrears,
- There are material changes to the Training Package,
- The current course is in a teach-out period,
- The maximum extension period will be exceeded,
- The course or unit of study has expired.

Where conditions have been met, an extension of up to 3 months may be granted subject to availability of course. A student may apply for two extensions of up to 3 months to a maximum of six months during their enrolment period.

Swinburne Open Education retains the right to refuse an extension.

A confirmation email advising the outcome of the extension request is forwarded to the student.

*Course deferral/Special circumstances.*

If a student encounters difficulty or changed circumstances that directly impacts their ability to study, they may request a deferral of study by contacting the Student Support Services. Documentation to support the request might include a medical certificate or any other form of supportive documentation.

A Course Deferral of up to six (6) months will be granted in circumstances where:

- The student or a member of their immediate family has been hospitalised or become seriously ill for an extended period of time (a minimum of 4 weeks) and such events are supported by a medical certificate; or

- The student, spouse or de-facto has given birth; or

- Swinburne Open Education is of the opinion that the student would be unreasonably disadvantaged (e.g. if a student has met with a serious accident, event or misadventure that will impact adversely on their ability to continue the course for a significant period of time)

If a Course Deferral is approved, Swinburne Open Education may:

- Extend the maximum duration of course within the teach out period,

- Pause student access to the learning platform for the period of the deferral,

- Agree with the student on an alternative payment plan (which may include deferral of payments for up to 6 months), or

- Provide additional academic and learning support services.

An approved deferral request does not constitute/entitle the student to a refund of course and the student remains liable for all payments due under the Student Agreement.

A confirmation email will be forwarded to the student advising the deferral request outcome.

*Course cancellation.*

If a student wishes to terminate their studies before completion of course, the student is required to notify Swinburne Open Education by emailing their request to the Student Support Team at studentservices@soe.edu.au

A refund of course fees paid, less any applicable administrative fees (as described in the Schedule of Administrative Fees) will only be issued if Swinburne Open Education receives the Cancellation Request within the Cooling Off Period which is defined as **seven (7) calendar days** from the day that the student's enrolment conditions have been met.

A 50% reduction in course fee liability, is applicable if Swinburne Open Education receives the Cancellation Request before the student reaches the halfway point of their enrolment period (excluding any extensions applied).

The Student Agreement and Cancellation and Refund Policy and Procedures outline the terms and conditions governing the cancellation of a course and whether any refund is payable.

*Certificate re-issue.*

Graduated students who may have a reason to request a re-issue of their awarded certificate and academic transcript will need to provide Swinburne Open Education with a Statutory Declaration and pay the required certificate re-issue fee (refer to the Schedule of Administrative Fees). The student is required to contact the Student Support Services to request a certificate re-issue and organise payment. Upon payment of the fee, the Swinburne Open Education will send a request to Swinburne University of Technology to re-issue the certificate.

Should a student declare that their certificate was not received there is no fee payable in this case.

If the received certificate or academic transcript has incorrect spelling of the student's name, Swinburne Open Education will request the student returns the certificate and academic transcript before a corrected certificate can be re-issued. There is no fee payable in this case.