



7.1.4 Guidelines for Engaging and Monitoring Educational Agent Partnerships

1.0 Rationale

AE aims to choose agents that both perform effectively and have high levels of ethical practice and adherence to the Australian International Education and Training Agent Code of Ethics; 99% assess education agents' activities and practices to ensure that they act ethically, honestly, and in the best interest of international students. These guidelines frame the practice of contracting, monitoring, and terminating contracts with educational agents at Acknowledge Education involves a structured approach to ensure effective partnership management. This procedure should align with the organization's standards and objectives while maintaining compliance with relevant educational standards and regulations.

2.0 Regulatory Context

- 2.1 Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) & The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) provide regulatory enforcement powers and quality assurance mechanisms to assure the reputation of higher education studies in Australia.**

Domain 7.1 – 7.3 of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HES Framework) encompasses and requires that the providers representations (whether directly or through other parties) about themselves and the course(s) of study they offer are accurate, ethical, and not misleading in their claims.

- 2.2 The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)**

Standard 2 (Recruitment of an overseas student) and Standard 4 (Education agents) deal particularly with the roles and responsibilities of providers in managing education agents. Specifically, Standard 4 requires that registered providers ensure that their education agents act ethically, honestly and in the best interest of overseas students and uphold the reputation of Australia's international education sector.

- 2.3 The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015/2025**

Clauses 2.3, 2.4 and 8.3 of the Standards for RTOs details the requirements of recording, monitoring, and reporting third-party arrangements. It requires that if a third party is providing a service on behalf of the RTO, then it should be subject to a written agreement and that the RTO also establishes strategies and resources to systematically monitor any services delivered on its behalf and uses these to ensure that the services delivered always comply with these Standards.

3.0 Scope

These guidelines are relevant to AE internal stakeholders involved in the recruitment of students to AE courses, including those for which third-party agreements exist, and both prospective agents seeking to establish a partnership with AE and current agents operating under an existing agreement.

4.0 Guidelines

This section outlines the procedures, standards, and expectations for establishing and maintaining effective and ethical partnerships with educational agents, ensuring alignment with AE's commitment to integrity in the international education sector. These guidelines are designed to facilitate transparent, responsible, and compliant practices in student recruitment and agent management.

4.1 Meeting Eligibility to Partner with AE

4.1.1 Criteria Assessment

To be offered an agreement with AE Agents must commit to the following:

- enrolling a minimum of 10 students within a 12-month period.
- Adhering to the Agent agreement
- Always engage in ethical and proper conduct when representing AE.
- Engaging in regular training and information provision sessions.
- Being monitored and held accountable to standards by AE's Marketing team.

4.1.2 Agreements will not be offered to educational agents where evidence suggests that the agent:

- Offering migration advice without the necessary authorization as required by the Migration Act 1958.
- Involvement in, or past involvement in, unethical recruitment methods.
- Facilitating the enrolment of a student whom the agent thinks will not adhere to their visa conditions.
- using PRISMS to create confirmations of enrolment for non-genuine students.

4.1.3 All Educational Agents who partner with AE must sign an agency agreement before they are permitted to represent AE.

4.2 Entering a Written Agreement

Where agents meet the above eligibility requirement, a member of AE's marketing and student recruitment team will arrange for a written agreement to be provided to an educational agent.

The agent must complete the agreement form and return the form to AE within 10 working days

4.2.1 The written agreement will:

- Describe the responsibilities of the Agent to adhere to the ESOS Act and the National Code 2018.
- Outline the legal obligations of the education agent according to Standard 4 of the National Code 2018.
- Explain the below methods that AE uses for overseeing the education agent's activities to ensure they are providing prospective students with correct information regarding AE's courses and services.
- Detail the steps AE will take if the education agent fails to meet their responsibilities as outlined in the agreement, including corrective measures.
- Explain the circumstances in which AE will end the agreement with the education agent and the specific situations that would lead to such termination.
- Provide transparency about the conditions under which information regarding the education agent may be shared with Australian, state, or territory authorities by AE.
- Require the agent to provide a written declaration of their commitment to avoid any conflict of interest in their role as an education agent.

4.3 Onboarding Process for Educational Agent Accreditation

After the educational agent completes, signs and returns the written agreement, the Admissions team will undertake the following steps:

- 4.3.1 Upload the agreement to RTO Manager and await a student referral from the agent.
- 4.3.2 Once the agent's first student referral, Admissions will record the agent's details in both PRISMS and ASQANet.
- 4.3.3 Advise the AE Branding Manager to update the AE Website to include the educational agent on the AE website.
- 4.3.4 Notify the educational agent's case manager once the agent is formally recognised and integrated into the systems and confirm they are managing the educational agent.

4.4 Educational Agent Induction Procedure

After an educational agent completes and signs the written agreement, the marketing team member responsible for managing the agent's case will execute the following steps:

- 4.4.1 Verify with the agent that their details on the AE website are accurate and complete.
- 4.4.2 Confirm that the agent's information on the AE website matches their details as listed in PRISMS.
- 4.4.3 The AE team member will ensure the agent is well-informed about the international education system in Australia, including the *Australian International Education and Training Agent Code of Ethics*.
- 4.4.4 Provide the agent with the AE Agent Handbook and guide them through the material to effectively integrate them into the organisation.
- 4.4.5 Offer induction and training focused on the AE website, highlighting key sections and where to find important information.
- 4.4.6 Supply the agent with essential marketing materials and resources.
- 4.4.7 Ensure the Educational Agent is registered to receive AE's monthly agent newsletters.

4.5 Monitoring Procedure

- 4.5.1 Each agent is assigned to a marketing team member for management.
- 4.5.2 The marketing team member will maintain regular contact with the agent and provide up to date information about:
- program changes
 - where intake for courses are closed due to insufficient enrolment numbers
 - new programs
 - other relevant information regarding the operation of AE.
- 4.5.3 The assigned marketing team member will be responsible for monitoring and reporting agent performance including:
- Statistics on student visa applications linked to students recruited or managed by an agent, detailing:
 - The number of applications granted.
 - The number of applications refused.
 - The number of applications withdrawn.
 - The number of applications deemed invalid.
 - The count of student visas issued to students recruited or managed by an agent that have subsequently been cancelled or are no longer valid.
 - The total number of students enrolled in courses at registered providers, who were recruited or managed by an agent.
 - The attrition, completion and progression rates of students who were recruited or managed by agents and accepted into educational programs.
 - Student Feedback on Agent Performance
 - Any complaints or appeals lodged by students about agents.
 - Evaluate agent performance against agreed indicators including the minimum agreed annual student referral targets (minimum 10 students over a 12-month period).
 - Information as detailed on HubSpot.
- 4.5.4 Educational Agent Case Managers will conduct formal reviews undertaken at least every 6 months.
- 4.5.5 Admissions will continuously monitor Educational Agents registered with AE who have no or low student numbers.
- Admissions will contact the agent in writing to highlight the agent's inactivity and determining the agent's needs.
 - Where there is no response by the Educational Agent, Admissions will follow-up in two weeks.
 - The responses or lack of response by agents to the Admissions email will be reported to the Educational Agent case manager.
- 4.5.6 Reports from case managers and admissions team will be submitted and minute at monthly Marketing and Student Admission minutes.
- 4.5.7 All relevant communication with Educational Agents regarding monitoring will be recorded using HubSpot or other information recording systems as approved by the Director of Student Recruitment or their delegate.

4.6 Educational Agent Performance Review

AE is committed to working with Educational Agents to ensure that they work in a way that preserves the integrity of the international education sector and protect students' interests.

4.6.1 Educational Agent case managers will engage in performance management exercises with Educational Agents identified as engaging in sub-standard performance such as:

- Providing out-dated or erroneous information regarding AE courses and services or not being straight forward and transparent with students or prospective students.
- Engaging with AE or its stakeholders where undeclared conflicts of interest exist.
- Not engaging with AE's educational and training sessions.
- Breaching or engaging in practices that have the potential of breaching student or potential students' personal information including releasing student information to third parties without authorisation or consent from the student or their carer.
- Providing advice to students that is unethical or inconsistent with the ESOS Act, National Code, Migration Legislation, Agent Code of Ethics.
- Discouraging or providing obstacles for students lodging complaints or appeals.

4.6.2 The Marketing and Admissions Case Manager may engage any of the following corrective actions:

- Formal communication of expectations regarding transparency and honesty in interactions with students and prospective students.
- Communication to the agent that agents conduct has been formally recorded by AE and disclosed at the Marketing and Student Admission Meeting.
- Clarification of the agency agreement emphasising agents' responsibility for declaring and managing conflicts of interest to maintain ethical dealings.
- Mandatory participation in AE's educational and training sessions for continuous professional development.
- Implementation of an increased schedule monitoring of the agent's performance and reviews of agent practices to ensure compliance with privacy laws and the safeguarding of student information.
- Provision of training resources focused on ethical practices and adherence to the ESOS Act, National Code, Migration Legislation, and Agent Code of Ethics.
- Provision of information regarding clear and accessible process for students to lodge complaints or appeals, with training for agents on facilitating this process.
- A formal warning that disciplinary actions or termination of partnership will be imposed for agents who repeatedly engage in sub-standard performance or violate ethical guidelines.

4.6.3 Where Educational Agents are inactive the Marketing and Admissions team will make assessments on the viability of retaining a partnership with the agent based on:

- Evidence of the agent's ability to meet their commitments.
- Any factors impacting the Agents engagement with AE stakeholders.
- Poor student outcomes centred in specific Educational Agent refers.
- The ability of the Educational Agent to promote AE in accordance with AE's Sales and Marketing Plan.

- 4.6.4 All relevant communication with Educational Agents regarding performance management and corrective actions will be recorded using HubSpot or other information recording systems as approved by the Director of Student Recruitment or their delegate.

4.7 Rescinding Educational Agent Agreements

AE is committed to partnering with Educational Agents who are dedicated to maintaining the integrity of Australia's education systems, the international education sector and protect students' interests. To enable AE to monitor and maintain partnerships with high quality Educational Agents, it is necessary to maintain a manageable team of contracted Educational Agents.

- 4.7.1 AE will terminate agreements with Educational Agents where:
- Any member of AE Marketing team becomes aware of, or suspect, an education agent has been non-compliant with their obligations as detailed in the written agreement and where corrective action undertaken by the marketing team member assigned to the agent have been ineffectual.
 - The marketing team becomes aware of an education agent engaging in false or misleading recruitment practices.
 - The Educational Agent has allowed their agreement to lapse and has not responded to correspondence by AE.
 - Where Educational Agent has remained inactive with AE for a period of 12 months or more and has not engaged in communication with AE.
 - Where audits by Marketing and Admissions Team reveals consistent poor student outcomes for students referred by the same agent and AE interventions to improve the performance of the educational agent has been unsuccessful.
- 4.7.2 All terminated Educational Agents will be recorded at monthly Marketing and Admissions Team Meetings.
- 4.7.3 Where there is justification to maintaining a relationship with an Educational Agent with a poor performance record is made at monthly Marketing and Admissions Team Meetings, Educational Agents will be provided with a provisional term whereby their performance will be closely monitored, and the case manager will provide additional support and training to help improve the agent performance.
- 4.7.4 The admissions team will inform the Educational Agent of the intention of AE to rescind the agreement, and admissions will change the agent's status on RTO Manager as inactive.
- 4.7.5 The admissions team will inform the Educational Agent of their right to appeal the decision to terminate the agreement within 30 days.
- 4.7.6 Once Educational Agent Agreements are terminated, admissions will remove the educational agent from AE systems and advise the Branding Manager to remove the details of the agent for AE website.

6.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Agent Agreement	A formal contract between AE and an educational agent outlining the responsibilities, expectations, and terms of the partnership.
Conflict of Interest	A situation where an educational agent's personal interests could improperly influence their professional judgement or actions while representing AE.
Educational Agent	An individual or organisation that recruits students on behalf of AE and is bound by an agreement with AE to follow specific ethical and operational guidelines.
ESOS Act 2000	The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, which provides a regulatory framework for the delivery of education to international students in Australia.
HubSpot	A software platform used for CRM, marketing, and managing communications with educational agents and other stakeholders.
Migration Act 1958	An Australian law regulating immigration and the legal status of people in Australia, including provisions relevant to student visas and migration advice.
National Code 2018	A set of nationally consistent standards that govern the protection of international students and delivery of courses to them by providers registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.
Onboarding Process	The procedure of integrating a new educational agent into AE's systems and procedures, including signing agreements and providing necessary training and resources.
Performance Review	The assessment of an educational agent's performance in terms of student recruitment, adherence to ethical practices, and compliance with the agreement terms with AE.
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Student Management System, a system used by Australian education providers to manage the enrolment and visa-related reporting of international students.
RTO Manager	A management system used by AE for administrative tasks, including monitoring educational agents and student enrolments.
Student Recruitment	The process of attracting, enrolling, and managing the admission of students, particularly international students, to AE.

7.0 Related Documents

Document Name
AE's Risk Management Plan
AE's Student Recruitment and Marketing Plan
Marketing Material Integrity Policy
Engaging Educational Agents Policy

8.0 Document Information

Document name:	Guidelines for Engaging and Monitoring Educational Agent Partnerships
Document number:	7.1.4
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Contact	Risk and Compliance Regulator.compliance@ae.edu.au

9.0 Change Log

Date	Version	By	Notes
30/10/2023	1.0	Dean (Narelle Whatley)	New policy development
10/03/2025	1.1	Head of Risk and Compliance	Update currency of information. Added attrition and progression rates as agent reporting metrics.