

# RMIT Training Student Attendance Instruction

Student attendance monitoring requirements for ELICOS and Foundation Studies students at RMIT Training.

## What is it?

Students are expected to attend all scheduled course contact hours to be able to participate and progress satisfactorily. This instruction details the attendance requirements for students studying RMIT Foundation Studies and RMIT English Worldwide (REW) English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) with RMIT Training including recording, monitoring, breaches and appeal steps. This instruction is in accordance with the requirements of Standard 8 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas students.

## Who is this for?

Instruction for students, and staff who teach and support students, studying RMIT Foundation Studies and REW ELICOS at RMIT Training.

## 1. Attendance conditions and calculations

1.1. All student visa holders are required to maintain a minimum projected attendance rate of 80% of the scheduled course contact hours as a condition of their visa and enrolment.

a) Projected attendance is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(Total\ course\ minutes\ for\ the\ study\ period) - (Total\ minutes\ of\ absence)}{Total\ course\ minutes\ for\ the\ study\ period}$$

1.2. Total course minutes are:

a) for Foundation Studies, the scheduled face to face class contact hours plus home rooms

b) for REW ELICOS, the scheduled face to face class contact hours.

1.3. The specified study periods for attendance monitoring are:

a) Foundation Studies - one semester

b) REW ELICOS - the duration of the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

1.4. Attendance monitoring commences on the first day of an enrolled student's scheduled classes.

1.5. Periods of approved leave of absence and periods of suspension for misconduct are excluded from the calculation of attendance.

## 2. Communicating attendance requirements to students

2.1. Information about attendance requirements is communicated to all students:

- a) via the [RMIT Training Academic English](#) webpage for REW ELICOS and the [RMIT Training Foundation Studies](#) webpage for Foundation Studies students, and
- b) during the compulsory Orientation session following enrolment, and/or
- c) in the Student Diary, and/or
- d) for REW ELICOS students:
  - the student enrolment declaration details information about attendance requirements
  - a diagrammatic explanation of attendance monitoring is provided at enrolment, with a translation in their first language where possible and/or
- e) for Foundation Studies students:
  - the Foundation Studies Handbook provides information about attendance requirements and attendance monitoring.

### 3. Recording attendance

- 3.1. Attendance is recorded according to the official timetable of contact hours for each accredited program or course.
- 3.2. The class teacher maintains the formal attendance roll for each class.
- 3.3. The class roll is marked online by the class teacher in each class session.
- 3.4. Class teachers are required to ensure the attendance roll is completed accurately for each class session as specified in the official timetable.

### 4. Absence

- 4.1. For the purpose of this instruction, absence is defined as non-attendance in class, including, but not limited to lateness, leaving early and taking unscheduled breaks.
- 4.2. Lateness, leaving early and taking unscheduled breaks may be deducted from a student's attendance.
  - a) Lateness, leaving early or taking unscheduled absences of 15, 30, 45 or 60 minutes can be recorded on the class roll.
    - If a student is absent for less than 15 minutes, this can be noted in the comments on the attendance register, but it is not deducted from the student's attendance.
    - If a student is absent for more than 15 minutes, the time of absence should be rounded up or down to the closest option available for recording.
  - b) A student may be considered and recorded as "absent" for an entire session if the student is late, leaves early or takes an unscheduled break and the absence is more than 60 minutes of the duration of that session.
    - Teaching staff have discretion to consider and record a student as "present" on these occasions, provided that the reason for the student's absence was outside the student's control and the student can provide documented evidence (e.g. public transport disruption announced on Public Transport Victoria website/media).

- Teaching staff must note the time of late arrival, early departure or unscheduled absence from class in the notes section on the attendance register.
- c) Students arriving late or taking an unscheduled break will not be refused entry to class unless doing so causes disruption to an assessment.
- 4.3. It is primarily the teacher’s responsibility to counsel students who are consistently arriving late, leaving early or taking unscheduled breaks on:
- a) the importance of attendance for academic success
  - b) the student’s attendance obligations
  - c) strategies for full engagement.
- 4.4. Students who are absent should make every reasonable effort to ensure any missed component of study is covered.

## 5. Student absence due to illness

5.1. A student who is absent from class due to illness is recorded as “absent”.

5.2. Medical Certificates:

- a) It is the student’s responsibility to obtain a medical certificate from a registered health provider to cover the period of illness.
  - RMIT Training accepts medical certificates, or carer’s certificates from health providers who are registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- b) A medical or carer’s certificate explains an absence but does not cancel it. The absence will still be deducted from the student’s attendance.
- c) Statutory declarations are not acceptable evidence of illness.
- d) Backdated medical certificates will not be accepted.
- e) Teachers must not accept medical certificates from a student.
- f) The student must submit the original medical certificate to RMIT Training Student Services reception where possible. Students studying remotely should email the medical certificate to [pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au](mailto:pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au).
  - Original medical certificates are scanned and returned to the student.
  - The digital copy of the medical certificate is saved electronically and uploaded to the IQ diary in the student record on the database.
- g) Students must retain all original medical certificates to explain their unsatisfactory attendance.

## 6. Monitoring Attendance

6.1. The RMIT Training Student Services team monitors student attendance daily using the online student database system.

6.2. Where a student is absent for 5 consecutive days, without prior approval or notice:

- a) The Student Services Compliance Administrator or delegate will investigate the student's circumstances to confirm that the student has not cancelled their enrolment, applied for a leave of absence or transferred to another provider.
  - b) The Student Services Compliance Administrator or delegate will contact the student within one working day of the student's 5-day absence.
    - If the student is under 18, contact will also be made with the assigned caregiver and RMIT International Compliance (Under 18 International Student Management) via email to [isunder18@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isunder18@rmit.edu.au).
    - If the student is a sponsored student, contact will also be made with the RMIT International Sponsored Student Coordinator via email to [isscholarships@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isscholarships@rmit.edu.au).
  - c) Contact with the student may be initially undertaken via phone call, SMS and/or email to advise them that there are concerns about their attendance and to investigate why they have not been attending. The communication may include:
    - a request that the student contact the sender
    - advice to the student to correct their enrolment records if they are no longer studying the program
    - advice that RMIT Training initiate the RMIT Missing Student Instruction if the student does not respond within five working days.
    - advice that RMIT Training may contact the student's emergency contact, the police and relevant government departments.
  - d) If the student is not contactable, the Student Services Compliance Administrator or delegate will attempt to contact the student's local emergency contact.
  - e) If deemed necessary in investigating the student's situation, the Student Services Compliance Administrator or delegate may also ask the student's classmates or associates (including agents) if they have had recent contact with the student, and if they could prompt the student to contact RMIT Training.
  - f) Details of attempted contact or any information and notes of the action taken are recorded electronically in the IQ diary.
- 6.3. If the RMIT Training Student Services staff cannot contact the student within 10 working days:
- a) For REW ELICOS students only, the Student Services Compliance Administrator or delegate will attempt to contact the student's home country emergency contact.
  - b) When all efforts to contact the student have failed, or sooner if a staff member has reason to believe that a student is missing, or their safety, health, well-being or welfare may be at risk, the RMIT Training Compliance Administrator or delegate will inform the RMIT Training Executive Director, Commercial and Operations or another member of the RMIT Training senior leadership team and RMIT Student Support via [student.support@rmit.edu.au](mailto:student.support@rmit.edu.au) which will initiate the formal section of the RMIT Missing Student Instruction.

## 7. Attendance counselling and warnings

- 7.1. Students who are identified as not maintaining projected attendance above 90% will receive formal warning letters from RMIT Training Student Services via their RMIT student email address:

- a) Warning Letter 1 is issued when the student's projected attendance is between 86% and 90%.

Warning Letter 2 is issued when the student's projected attendance is between 80% and 85%

#### 7.2. Warning letters:

- a) warn the student of their declining attendance
- b) ask the student to provide evidence of the reason(s) for their absence
- c) remind the student of the possible consequences that unsatisfactory attendance may have on their student visa, if applicable
- d) instruct the student to make an appointment to discuss their attendance situation with the Student Services Compliance Administrator or delegate.

#### 7.3. At a meeting with the Student Services Compliance Administrator or delegate, the student is:

- a) reminded of their student visa requirement, where applicable, and are advised of the procedure if their attendance falls below 80% at or before the completion of the reporting period
- b) invited to discuss the causes of their declining attendance
- c) offered support and advice if there are problems preventing the student from attending
- d) referred to support services to assist in resolving the problems causing a decline in their attendance
- e) asked to provide any relevant documentation.

7.4. Any relevant documentation submitted to RMIT Training Student Services within 2 working days will be considered and a determination made by the Student Services Compliance Administrator as to whether the student would benefit from taking a leave of absence from their course at this stage.

7.5. A record of meetings and a summary of what was discussed is entered in the IQ diary in the student record on the database.

7.6. REW ELICOS students with 4 or 5-week attendance monitoring periods (i.e. 5-week CoEs):

- a) are required to sign an agreement before their 4 or 5-week course commences which serves as an attendance warning and counselling session
- b) may be issued only one other attendance warning letter in addition to the agreement during the 5-week monitoring period when projected attendance falls between 80% and 90%.

## 8. Reporting to the Department of Home Affairs for unsatisfactory attendance

8.1. If the projected attendance of a student studying at RMIT Training on a student visa falls below 80%, RMIT Training will begin the process of reporting the student's unsatisfactory attendance to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

8.2. RMIT or RMIT Training may choose not to report the student for attending less than 80% if both of the following conditions are met:

- a) the student produces documentary evidence demonstrating that sufficient compassionate or compelling circumstances apply and
- b) the student is attending at least 70% of the scheduled course contact hours (i.e. current attendance percentage is greater than 70%).
  - Current attendance is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(Total\ course\ minutes\ to\ date) - (Total\ minutes\ of\ absence\ to\ date)}{Total\ course\ minutes\ to\ date}$$

### 8.3. For Foundation Studies students:

- a) If a student's projected attendance falls below 80%, the RMIT Training Compliance Administrator will issue the student with a Notice of Intention to Report (NITR) via their RMIT student email address, and where available, their personal email address. This letter notifies the student in writing of RMIT's intention to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS), for unsatisfactory attendance.
- b) The RMIT International Compliance Coordinator in Internal Audit, Compliance, Risk and Regulation is notified of the issuance of an NITR via [esos@rmit.edu.au](mailto:esos@rmit.edu.au).
- c) The student is advised in the NITR of the process for accessing both the internal and external appeals process.

### 8.4. For REW ELICOS students:

- a) If a student's projected attendance is below 80%, and
  - insufficient evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances has been provided, and/or
  - the student's current attendance is less than 70%, and/or
  - a leave of absence is not approved or warranted

the RMIT Training Compliance Administrator will issue the student with a Notice of Intention to Report (NITR) via their RMIT student email address, and where available, their personal email address. This letter notifies the student in writing of REW's intention to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs through PRISMS for unsatisfactory attendance.

- b) The student will be advised in their formal NITR letter of the process for accessing the internal appeal process.

## 9. Appeals

### 9.1. Students are entitled to appeal an RMIT Training decision to report them to the Department of Home Affairs for non-attendance, where the student provides:

- a) evidence that there has been an error in the process that has been a significant factor in the decision, and/or
- b) evidence that significant circumstances have not been considered, and/or

- c) new, relevant evidence that was not available at the time the unsatisfactory attendance was identified, that would have been a significant factor in the decision
- 9.2. Internal and/or external appeal handling processes can be accessed at no cost to the student.
- 9.3. The student is expected to continue to attend classes as scheduled during the internal and external appeals, during which time attendance will continue to be monitored.
- 9.4. The student must submit the appeal in writing within 20 working days of the date the NITR email was sent advising them of the intention to report them to the Department of Home Affairs.
- 9.5. Students submit appeals to:
- a) the RMIT Training Executive Director, Commercial & Operations in person at RMIT Training Student Services reception or via email to [pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au](mailto:pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au), for REW ELICOS students.
  - b) the RMIT Manager International Compliance via the online [link](#), for Foundation Studies students.
- 9.6. Upon submission of a written appeal, the reviewing officer, or delegate will assess the submission against the criteria at 9.1.
- 9.7. The reviewing officer, or delegate, will commence assessment of the appeal within 10 business days and notify the student as soon as practicable of the outcome of the internal appeal via their RMIT student email account. Written advice of the appeal outcome will be held on the student's administration file.
- 9.8. If the appeal submission is deemed to have adequately addressed the appeal grounds, the student will be notified in writing that the appeal will be upheld.
- a) For REW ELICOS students, a new attendance monitoring period may be created from the date the NITR was issued.
- 9.9. If the appeal is dismissed, the written notification will include the reason for the dismissal of the appeal and advice to the student that they may seek a review of the decision externally within 10 working days:
- a) REW ELICOS students appeal to the Commonwealth Ombudsman at <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students> and must notify RMIT Training Student Services by emailing their lodgement reference number to [pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au](mailto:pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au) to avoid being reported to the Department of Home Affairs.
  - b) Foundation Studies students appeal to the Victorian Ombudsman at <https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/> and must notify RMIT by emailing the case number to [esos@rmit.edu.au](mailto:esos@rmit.edu.au) to avoid being reported to the Department of Home Affairs.
- 9.10. If the REW ELICOS student's program finishes during the appeal time, REW reserves the right not to make a further offer of ELICOS (i.e. the student may not be permitted to extend their program until the appeal process is finalised and the result is in favour of the student).
- 9.11. Students will not be reported to the Department of Home Affairs until the internal and external appeals processes have been finalised and the decision to report the student stands.
- 9.12. If the student
- a) chooses not to access the internal appeal process within the 20 working day period, or
  - b) chooses not to access the external appeal process within the 10 working day period, or

- c) withdraws from the appeal process by notifying REW or RMIT in writing, or  
if the internal and external appeals processes have been completed and the decision supports the registered provider, RMIT Training or RMIT will, as soon as practicable, notify the Department of Home Affairs that the student has unsatisfactory attendance via PRISMS. The student's CoE is cancelled as a result.
- 9.13. A reported student whose program is not finished will be provided with a new CoE for the remaining duration of the original enrolment.
- a) For REW ELICOS students, the new CoE will commence from the date the NITR was issued, and a subsequent new attendance monitoring period will commence.
- 9.14. REW reserves the right not to make any further offers of study to ELICOS students who have had unsatisfactory attendance.

## 10. Students under 18

- 10.1. All emailed communication to the student regarding attendance is copied to RMIT International Compliance (Under 18 International Student Management) via [isunder18@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isunder18@rmit.edu.au) as well as the student's caregiver contact email.

## 11. Sponsored students

- 11.1. All emailed communication to the student regarding attendance is copied to the RMIT International Sponsored Student Coordinator via [isscholarships@rmit.edu.au](mailto:isscholarships@rmit.edu.au) to forward on to the sponsor.

## Document history

Version	Last updated	Authority	Author	Register reference
V2.0	14/12/2020	RMIT Enrolment Policy	RMIT Training Executive Director, Commercial & Operations	TPOL/2020/00002