Australian Computer Society Completion within Expected Duration Policies and Procedures

National Code Standard 9

The National Code states:

Registered providers monitor the workload of students to ensure they complete the course within the duration specified in their CoE and do not exceed the allowable portion of online or distance learning. Registered providers only enable students to extend the expected duration of study for the course through the issuing of a new CoE in limited circumstances.

Purpose and Scope

These Policies and Procedures will apply to all ACS ICT50115 Diploma of Information Technology (DIT) Partners.

The completion of courses within the expected duration identified in international students' Confirmations of Enrolment (CoEs) plays an important role in ensuring the integrity and quality of the education provided to those students, and in maintaining the integrity of immigration policies, regulations and procedures relating to international student visas.

Effective monitoring and documentation of student progress and effective intervention strategies play essential roles in ensuring that these standards and integrity are maintained.

The Australian Computer Society is committed to ensuring that:

- students complete their courses within the duration specified on their confirmation of enrolment (CoE);
- extensions to that time are limited to circumstances and reasons relating to:
  - compassionate or compelling circumstances,
  - academic intervention in the case of unsatisfactory academic progress, and
  - cases of approved deferment and or suspension of enrolment.

These policies and procedures are drafted to ensure compliance with all legislative and regulatory requirements established under the:

- ESOS ACT;
- ESOS Regulations;
- National Code;
- NVETR Act
- Standards for Continuing Registration (SNRs)
- Migration Act; and
- Migration Regulations.

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More specifically, the requirements are specified in *Standard 9, Completion with Expected Duration* of the **National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students**.

This document should be read in relation to policies and procedures relating to:

- **National Code Standard 6**,Student Support Services;
- **National Standard Code 8 (a) and (b)** Complaints and Appeals;
- **National Standard Code 10**, Monitoring Course Progress;
- **National Code Standard 11**, Monitoring Attendance

Policy

The National Code states:

> *9.1   The registered provider must have and implement documented policies and procedures for monitoring the progress of each student to ensure that at all times the student is in a position to complete the course within the expected duration as specified on the student's CoE. In monitoring this enrolment load, the registered provider must ensure that in each compulsory study period for a course, the student is studying at least one unit that is not by distance or online learning.*

The Australian Computer Society's ICT50115 Diploma of Information Technology was developed from IBSA's ICT (Information and Communications Technology) Training package. The core and elective Subjects are organised and delivered to ensure full compliance with:

- ICT Training packaging rules;
- NCVER nominal hours;
- CRICOS accredited course duration; and
- Standards for Continuing Registration (SNR) requirements.

The subjects are taught and assessed face to face in on-site class rooms by highly qualified trainers. Standard class hours are twenty (20) hours per week. No subjects are taught by either distance or on-line learning. Materials may be made available to students online, and quizzes and assessments/assignments will be submitted online, but this will be in addition to the 20 hours face to face per week (or in the case of quizzes may be done in a classroom setting as part of those hours, just as other assessments may be).

The units of competency are grouped in structured clusters which are taught in 11-13 week semesters, with the courses being constituted by three study periods per year. Study breaks range from one to four weeks at various times of year, for a total of 44 weeks.

This structured delivery of courses ensures that all students complete their course within the expected duration, providing there are:

- no outstanding instances of Subject 'failure' (assessed as 'not yet competent') at the completion date of the CoE;
- no compassionate or compelling circumstances related leave; and/or
- no approved deferment or suspension of study.

Student attendance and course progress is monitored and recorded and there are intervention strategies in place to identify and address problems with individual student attendance and course progress.

Attendance must be monitored on a class by class basis, and recorded on a weekly basis, with interventions occurring early in the study period (week 4), mid-study period (week 7) and after the completion of each study period. These interventions are documented in the ACS **Monitoring Course Progress Policies and Procedures.**

The National Code further states that:

> *9.2   The registered provider may only extend the duration of the student's study where it is clear that the student will not complete the course within the expected duration, as specified on the student's COE, as the result of:*
>
> *a.   compassionate or compelling circumstances (for example illness where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes or where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit)*
>
> *b.   the registered provider implementing its intervention strategy for students who were at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress; or*
>
> *c.   an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted under Standard 13.*
>
> *9.3   Where there is a variation in the student's enrolment load which may affect the student's expected duration of study in accordance with 9.2, the registered provider is to record this variation and the reasons for it on the student file. The registered provider must correctly report the student via PRISMS and/or issue a new CoE when the student can only account for the variation/s by extending his or her expected duration of study.*

The Australian Computer Society provides for the extension of a student's CoE on the basis of:

- circumstances in which a student has failed to secure a 'competent' assessment for a Subject despite having resubmitted for assessment and failed to attend a minimum of 70% of a Subject's class hours as a result of compassionate or compelling circumstances and/or a course deferral of starting date or temporary suspension of enrolment, despite meeting minimum attendance requirements for the related study period

- situations in which a student who has maintained satisfactory academic progress but who has failed to be assessed as 'competent' in one or number of subjects and is not eligible for re-submissions and re-assessments due to not meeting the required attendance criteria per each subject

Students who require an extension of course time for the reasons identified above will negotiate a Study Plan and be provided with an extension of their CoE enabling them to undertake the Subject(s) when they are next scheduled on the timetable.

All variations in students' enrolment for these reasons will comply with Australian Computer Society's policies and procedures on Monitoring Attendance, Monitoring Course Progress and Deferral, Suspension or Cancellation of Study During Enrolment, Re-assessment Policy and Procedure, and will be fully recorded, along with associated documentary evidence, in the student management system, the students' files and via the ACS on PRISMS.

> **9.4   The registered provider may allow the student to undertake no more than 25 per cent of the student's total course by distance and/or online learning. However, the registered provider must not enrol the student exclusively in distance or online learning units in any compulsory study period.**

As all course and subject teaching and assessment is conducted face-to-face in classrooms on approved premises, the requirements of this clause are not applicable. The online environment will only be used in this program for access to course materials, assessment and assignment submission, and the recording of grades by trainers. No teaching will be done online, and the full 20 hours per week will be delivered face to face. Any online activity will be in addition to this, except where trainers deem it appropriate to conduct online quizzes in class time in a supervised environment.

> **9.5   Except in the circumstances specified in 9.2, the expected duration of study specified in the student's CoE must not exceed the CRICOS registered course duration.**

The Australian Computer Society policies and procedures are devised to ensure full compliance with the requirement that all students whose circumstances are not addressed in clause 9.2 of Standard 9 shall complete their studies within the CRICOS registered Course duration.

Procedures

On the completion of each Subject trainers are required to document the students' results (Competent or Not Yet Competent). The trainer should also enter comments relating to the

possible explanation of the result. For example, a Not Yet Competent result could have comments such as "Failure to Submit" assessment task; "poor attendance", "difficulty with basic understanding of concepts", etc.

If a student has not submitted an assignment on time, they will be deemed Not Yet Competent and can be sent an *ACS - Academic Progress Subject Warning Letter* by the DIT Partner's Student Services at this point.

When students are identified as being 'at risk', the academic intervention strategy shall apply. The academic intervention strategy is applied in three stages, which are documented below.

The trainers are responsible for implementing the *Level 1 (Completion of Subject) Academic Intervention Strategy*, details of which are provided below.

When completed, the trainer signs and dates the results document and enters the subject results into the student management system. At this point results are **not** released to students.

On the completion of each Subject the ACS DIT Partner's Academic Coordinator or Manager has responsibility for checking that all trainers have completely and correctly entered the results.

On completion of this check, the results will be sent to the ACS for moderation. Once these processes have been completed, the results will be recorded both in the ACS DIT Partner's student management system, and in the ACS's (VETtrak) and then released to the students. The students' assessments will be filed in the individual student files.

The Partner's Academic Manager or Coordinator is also responsible for identifying students for the *Level 2 (Study Plan) Academic Intervention Strategy* (see below).

The Partner's Academic Manager or Coordinator is also responsible for implementing the *Level 3 (Unsatisfactory Academic Progress) Academic Intervention* strategy with students who identified as 'not making sufficient academic progress' (see below).

All stages of this process are to be carried out in conjunction with the ACS, and in addition to this, the ACS DIT Partner's RTO Manager will be ultimately responsible for ensuring the compilation and maintenance of aggregate academic progress data relating to overall course enrolment and completion data and individual subject enrolment and completion data on a semester and an annual basis for reporting to the ACS.

The ACS DIT Partner's student management system should generate reports on course completion rates, and the completion/pass rates for individual units and courses, and this data can in turn be used as an effective tool for the Australian Computer Society's continuous improvement process. This information will also be used to assist in the ACS's AVETMISS reporting.

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Level 1 (Completion of Subject) Academic Intervention Strategy

In situations where a student has failed to meet the necessary level of competence in any specific Subject, the trainers are responsible for implementing the *Level 1 (Completion of Subject) Academic Intervention Strategy* which entails:

- individually meeting students who failed to secure a Competent assessment;
- discussing options and strategies for ensuring that they address any issues interfering with their academic progress

This is done in order to maximise the student's opportunity to complete their course within the expected duration as defined on their CoE.

If any students have not submitted assignments by the due date, they should be sent the *ACS - Academic Progress Subject Warning Letter*. This letter informs students that they need to arrange an appointment with their trainer within 3 working days to discuss the situation.

Specific interventions begin with identifying the probable reason(s) for a student's failure to attain the required competency and, depending on a student's attendance, reasons for their failure and possible personal problems, could then include:

- If a student has attended a minimum of 70% of Subject class hours, encouragement to resubmit Subject assessment tasks assessed as 'Not Yet Competent' within two weeks of the Subject's completion.
- If a student has attended a minimum of 70% of class hours but failed to resubmit for assessment within the required two (or three) weeks, referral to the ACS/Partner's Academic Coordinator to negotiate a study plan including participation in an end of study period Reassessment Workshop (at no cost for the student) and undertaking reassessment.
- If a student has attended under 70% but over 50% of Subject class hours, referral to the Academic Coordinator to negotiate a study plan including participation in an end of study period Reassessment Workshop (at no cost for the student) and undertaking reassessment.
- If a student has attended under 50% of the Subject class hours, they will be required to re-enroll for that Subject and organise a corresponding extension of their CoE,.
- If a student has attended less than 50% of the Subject class hours as a result of Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances or other approved Leave of Absence and that student has no more than two Subjects left to complete their course, the Academic Coordinator may permit them to participate in the end of term Reassessment Workshop and submit for assessment. If they are then assessed as 'not yet competent' they will then be required to re-enroll for the Subject/s and organise a corresponding extension of their CoE.
- If a student's attendance is either 'at risk' or unsatisfactory for the study period, referral to the Attendance Coordinator who will negotiate an Attendance Plan.

- If the student appears to be in need of professional assistance and academic and personal counselling, referral to the Student Welfare Officer.

When completed, the Academic Coordinator is responsible for entering the Level 1 Intervention details in the student management system.

Trainers are responsible for ensuring that within two weeks of the completion of each Subject, all:

- students have received feedback on their assessments;
- assessments have been submitted to the Academic Coordinator with completed, signed and dated results documentation;
- assessment results have been entered in the student management system; and
- all student Interventions and referrals have been implemented.

Upon completion of each Subject the Academic Coordinator will check that all trainers have completely and correctly entered the results, and completed and signed all appropriate documentation of any Level 1 Interventions that have taken place. On completion of this check, the class's assessments are filed in the individual student files.

Level 2 (Study Plan) Academic Intervention Strategy

On verification of the student management system results entry the Academic Coordinator is responsible for identifying students who are:

- making satisfactory progress but failing a number of subjects;
- at risk of not making satisfactory academic and therefore at risk of not completing their course within the expected duration; and those
- not making sufficient academic progress (those failing more than 50 per cent of the Course Subjects taken over two study periods) and therefore unable to complete their course within the expected time.

The names of these students will be forwarded to the Student Services Officer who will formally inform the students concerned that they are 'at academic risk' and require students to organise a meeting with the Academic Coordinator within five working days to discuss this. The ACS will also be sent a list of the students' names.

At the intervention meeting the Academic Coordinator will discuss the student's academic progress, identify the reasons for their academic problems, and negotiate a Study Plan designed to redress those problems.

Such Study Plans are individually developed to address the specific difficulties and causes, and may include one or a number of specific elements, including:

- individual counselling on study habits;
- acceptance of referral for professional counselling;
- referral for remedial English language training;

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- if eligible, participation in end of term Reassessment Workshops and submitting for reassessment;
- entering an Academic Progress Agreement; and/or
- re-enrolling in Subjects and extending their CoE.

If on referral to professional assistance the student is advised that they are unfit to attend classes for a significant period of time on medical/psychological grounds, the ACS will be informed and the student will be provided Leave of Absence for the identified period of time, and the consequential extension of course duration and CoE will be implemented.

If a need is identified to refer a student to extensive remedial English language training the desirability of approving a temporary suspension of enrolment will be considered, with any consequential extension of the Course duration and CoE being implemented if required.

If it is possible for a student to complete their course without an extension of their CoE, the Study Plan will include the *compulsory enrolment* and participation by eligible students in designated Reassessment Workshops, and submitting for reassessment in all subjects in which the student has failed to be assessed as competent, and within a defined timeframe designed, where possible, to enable the student to complete their course within the expected duration.

In cases where a student's failing of subjects is associated with:

- unsatisfactory attendance of from 70 to 80 per cent for the study period;
- where there exist compassionate or compelling circumstances which justify the absences; and
- where the absences have resulted in a student being unable to attend at least 50% of a particular subject's class hours

that student will have to re-enrol in the missed subject/s at a time when it/they is/are next scheduled in the course timetable.

Where Leave of Absence is approved, a possible Suspension of Enrolment and an extension of the course duration will be organised.

In cases where a student's failing of Subjects is associated with:

- the student attending less than 50% of the Subject class hours as a result of Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances or other approved leave; and
- that student has no more than two Subjects left to complete their course

the student will be referred to the Academic Coordinator who may permit them to participate in the end of term Reassessment Workshop and submit work for assessment. If they are then assessed as 'not yet competent' they will then be required to re-enrol for the Subject/s and organise a corresponding extension of their CoE. All such decisions regarding student progress must be made in consultation with the ACS.

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Reflecting its interdependence with students' academic progress, the Student Attendance Intervention Strategy is designed to identify and address academic progress problems frequently associated with 'at risk' or 'unacceptable' attendance.

Some of these interventions involving term break tutorials and re-submission for assessments are able to be implemented without any extension to the overall course duration; but others may require students to repeat subjects and extend the period taken to complete their course.

Student Study Plans do not and cannot involve any reduction to student load. The ICT50115 Diploma of Information Technology subjects are grouped on a semester basis of eleven to thirteen weeks of 20 hours of class time per week. This arrangement cannot be modified to reduce the number of subjects an individual student may take on any one semester.

Students will be assisted through the procedures to extend their CoEs and, where necessary suspend their enrolment for their present courses, and defer the commencement date for subsequent courses if they are enrolled in a sequence.

All Study Plans negotiated and agreed by the Academic Coordinator, the ACS and an 'at risk' student have to be signed and dated by both parties and a copy of the Study Plan is to be given to the student. The requirement to maintain satisfactory academic progress and the consequences of not meeting that requirement will be clearly explained to the student.

In all cases, students will be required to remain in regular contact with the Academic Coordinator who is responsible for monitoring the student's progression through the Plan's stepped assistance and requirements.

Students who have completed their formal classes for the course and who, despite the above interventions, fail to be assessed as Competent in up to 50% of their course subjects will, on application to the Academic Coordinator, be eligible for an extension to their course duration to enable them of re-enrol in those Subjects assessed as Not Yet Competent, provided they have:

- maintained their attendance rates;
- made satisfactory academic progress; and
- complied with all requirements of the Academic Intervention Strategy.

Details of the application, the granting of the extension and the reasons for the granting will be entered in the student management system and reported to the ACS for entry in PRISMS. All documentation will also be placed in the student's file.

Level 3 (Unsatisfactory Academic Progress) Academic Intervention

A student will be deemed to have unsatisfactory academic progress if they:

- have failed to achieve Competent assessments in more than 50% of their Subjects in a period greater than one study period; and/or who

- are at risk of not making satisfactory academic progress and have failed to meet the requirements of their Study Plan.

Those students identified as 'not making sufficient academic progress' will informed of this in writing by Student Services, and of the intention to report them as a result.

The student will be provided with 20 working days within which to appeal against being reported and will be advised that the grounds of successful complaint or appeal are that they believe, and have supporting documentation and evidence to demonstrate, that:

- The ACS/Partner has not made the Academic Progress Policy and Procedure, Completion within Expected Duration Policy and Procedure and Complaints and Appeals Policies and Procedures available to them; and/or
- The ACS DIT ACS/Partner has not recorded or calculated their academic performance correctly or accurately; and/or
- The ACS DIT ACS/Partner has not implemented its Academic Progress intervention and support strategies in accordance with its documented policies and procedures; and/or
- There are compassionate and/or compelling reasons which have contributed to your unsatisfactory attendance.

They will be informed that the procedure for making an appeal is published on the website www.acs.org,au , and that if they decide to appeal they must continue to attend classes and work towards completing course requirements during the time their appeal is being considered.

Management of the internal and external appeals processes and their outcomes will follow the procedures set down in the Australian Computer Society **Complaints and Appeals Policies and Procedures**.

Students are expected to maintain their enrolment, academic progress and attendance throughout any internal and external appeals procedures.

For queries regarding this Policy and Procedure, please contact:

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End of Document
Completion with Expected Duration Policies and Procedures

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Version History

Date	Version	Revision History	Author /Reviser
September 2014	1	Original draft	DS
September 2014	2	Minor changes resulting from editing by AJ	DS
November 2014	3	Clarification of roles of ACS and Delivery Partner incorporated	DS
March 2015	4	Addition of CRICOS Code to header	DS
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June 2017	5.1	Addition of more guidance around students not submitting assignments on time and the consequences in Level 1 intervention; changed Unit to Subject throughout document	DS

Approvals
This document requires the following approvals.
Date of issue and version details must be entered upon approval.

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Asheley Jones	Director, Education	September 2014	1
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Distribution
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