

# Attendance Policy

## Purpose & Legislative Background

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Overseas students are required to be enrolled in a full-time registered course to undertake study. For VET courses, a full-time course is a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week, unless otherwise specified by ASQA.

Students are also expected to progress through their course so that they complete the course within the nominated course duration. The National Code defines course progress as 'the measure of advancement within a course towards the completion of that course irrespective of whether course completion is identified through academic merit or skill based competencies'. When providing VET courses to overseas students, providers deliver training prior to assessment to achieve skill-based competencies. Providers need to facilitate learning so that students can consistently apply knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in a workplace. This policy is to assist in management of attendance monitoring process at PARAGON POLYTECHNIC.

## Scope

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This Policy applies to all students and staff of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC.

## Policy

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PARAGON POLYTECHNIC Pty Ltd t/a PARAGON POLYTECHNIC policy is students should attend all classes (100%) of their course to gain optimum learning. However, if students have valid reasons for absence a minimum of 80% of their course contact hours must be maintained to avoid being reported to the Department of Education and Training (DET) / Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

Students must contact the college every time they will be absent prior to the regular class time, via email, phone or SMS to a member of staff.

Students who do not advise the college of absences will be contacted/counselled by the Student Support Officer or another staff member.

Maintaining satisfactory attendance is a student visa requirement.

Class attendance is essential in order for students to progress satisfactorily in their course and to be deemed as a genuine / bona fide student.

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will report students for non-attendance via PRISMS as per the conditions outlined in this policy. An outcome of reporting a student for no attendance via PRISMS is the student visa may be cancelled.

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC believes good attendance is important in order to achieve the desired educational outcomes.

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will at the minimum contact and counsel students who:

- have been absent for more than five consecutive days without approval; or
- are at risk of not attending for at least 80 per cent of the scheduled course contact hours.

All phone conversations, copies of letters, emails and notices relating to attendance will be kept on the student file. Students attendance is monitored daily by class teachers. Student absences are tracked and monitored at the end of each week.

All absences due to illness should be accompanied by a medical certificate.

Any **absences longer than two consecutive weeks** without approval will be investigated as a matter of urgency.

- Student Support officer will attempt to contact the student
- If student is not able to be contacted their agent will be contacted.
- Student Support Officer will counsel student on the importance of notifying the college when absent.
- If contact cannot be made the Student Support Officer will discuss with CEO and the relevant authorities will be notified (e.g. police, DHA, next of kin)

The formal process when attendance falls below is:

**WARNING 1 90% Attendance** Students whose attendance falls to 90% or less will be contacted by letter/email and/or SMS to alert them that their attendance is at risk. Students will be advised to discuss the matter with the Student Support Officer.

**WARNING 2 85% Attendance** Students whose attendance fall to 85% will be contacted by letter/email and SMS warning them that they are now at risk of being reported to DHA and they must make an appointment with the Student Support Officer ASAP for assistance/advice.

**Intention to Report (Less than 80% Attendance)** As soon as PARAGON POLYTECHNIC is aware a student will not achieve 80% attendance, PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will send students an 'Intention to Report letter' which shall inform the student that they have 20 working days in which to access the College's complaints and appeals process.

If a student chooses NOT to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20-working day period, withdraws from the process or the process is completed and the decision is in support of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC, PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will notify the Secretary of DOE via PRISMS that the student is not achieving satisfactory attendance as soon as practicable.

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC may decide not to report a student for 80% attendance where PARAGON POLYTECHNIC feels the student is a genuine student and can confirm the student is attending AT LEAST 70% of the scheduled course contact hours and maintaining satisfactory academic performance, where the college is satisfied they are a genuine/bona fide student and where they provide:

- Documentary evidence demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances for their absence s e.g., medical illness supported by a medical certificate, AND
- Attendance has not fallen below 70%, AND
- Academic progress is satisfactory.

Where a student with low attendance is able to demonstrate (and provide evidence of) compassionate or compelling circumstances, the CEO will assess whether a temporary suspension of studies is in the best interest of the student. Refer Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.

**In all circumstances if the student's attendance drops to below 70%, students will be reported to DOE/DHA via PRISMS.**

'Medical certificate' means a certificate issued by a registered medical provider such as hospitals, doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, chiropractors, optometrists, ophthalmologists, psychiatrists and psychologists.

'Compassionate or compelling circumstances' are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies; or
- a traumatic experience which could include: involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; and witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports) or
- where PARAGON POLYTECHNIC was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit.

Any other circumstance would require evidence to be considered as compassionate or compelling.

If a student ceases attending a course or does not return from leave, and/or is unable to be contacted, under Section 19(1) of the ESOS Act, PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will notify DOE and DHA via PRISMS of termination of the student's studies within 14 days of the event via a Student Course Variation.

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC in this instance does not have to give students access to the appeals process.

Students would not be entitled to a refund unless at the discretion of the CEO.

## Management action & Responsibility

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All trainers will hold the responsibility of notifying student support staff of any concerns with regards to attendance of the students.

Student support officer to take intervention steps as per the policy.

All managers and CEO hold the overall responsibility of the attendance policy.

## Definition

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**CoE:** Confirmation of Enrolment

**DHA:** Department of Home Affairs

**PRISMS:** Provider Registration and International Students Management System

**Compassionate or compelling** circumstances may include:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided);
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring their emergency travel and this has impacted on their studies;
- a traumatic experience which could include but is not limited to; - involvement in or witnessing of an accident, or - a crime committed against the student, or - witnessing a crime and this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports)

**VET:** Vocational Education & Training

## Legislative Framework

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The legislative base for this policy is as follows:

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth)
- The ESOS Act 2000
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001
- The National Code 2018

## Policy Control

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Version	Date	Changes / Updates	Approved
1.0	Aug 2020	RTO Policy and Procedure of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC	CEO