

CHSQF068 Student Engagement and Retention Policy

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1. Purpose

This Policy outlines the approach that will be taken by CHS to promote student engagement and improve student retention at CHS. The main purpose is to support students to enrich their experience and successfully complete their studies at CHS. This policy addresses the College’s compliance with the following Standards:

HE Standards Framework

- Section 1.1 - Admission
- Section 1.2 - Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning
- Section 1.3 - Orientation and Progression
- Section 3.1 - Course Design
- Section 5.3 - Monitoring, Review and Improvement
- Section 6.3 - Academic Governance
- Section 7.2 - Information for Prospective and Current Students

The National Code 2018

- Standard 6 – Overseas student support services

2. Definitions

When used in this policy the following words have the meaning set out below:

<i>Attrition</i>	The ratio of first-year higher education commencing students in a year who neither completed nor returned to study in the following year, to the total commencing students in that year (TEQSA, June 2017).
<i>Retention</i>	Retention is opposite to attrition and may be defined as the College’s ability to retain students so that they can progress through the different stages of their study and ultimately graduate with an award.
<i>Progress Rate</i>	The percentage of actual student load (EFTSL) for units of study that are passed to all units of study completed (passed + failed + withdrawn), in the last academic year or 12-month period. (Source: DET)
<i>Completion</i>	Percentage change of total Undergraduate (UG) and Post Graduate (PG) Coursework /Higher Degree by Research (HDR) student completions in the Reference Year. (Source: DET)

3. Principles

Complex factors influence student attrition, progression, retention and success rates in higher education. However, application of the following principles has shown that it will increase student engagement and reduce attrition over time:

Principle 1

Retention is a collective responsibility of all staff. Of critical concern is the experience and engagement of the first trimester students without losing the sight of the overall student experience with the College.

Principle 2

Students need to be engaged with the academic and social culture of the College and feel part of an enthusiastic and thriving learning community. The College shall offer activities that encourage and value student participation in the life of the College

Principle 3

Quality and accessibility of services will influence student satisfaction. The College needs has adopted a student-centred approach that values students as partners in the learning process and aim to meet their needs in a professional manner.

Principle 4

To the extent possible learning should be tailored to suit the needs of individual group of students. Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, accessing the resources offered by the College.

Principle 5

Assessment should inform and encourage learning. Assessment should be transparent, meaningful, relevant, consistent and timely, and designed to help students receive authentic feedback on their academic progress and standing.

Principle 6

Monitoring and timely intervention is the key to increased student success. The College shall schedule progress monitoring activities in order to identify poorly performing students as early as possible and implement a tailored intervention strategy to assist them to progress and successfully complete their studies.

4. Broad Strategies for Improved Retention

- Commitment to excellence in learning and teaching widely communicated to all staff, students and members of the College
- Quality teaching and learning facilities and resources to facilitate optimum student learning
- Qualified and enthusiastic academic staff who teach and inspire students to develop critical and analytical learning skills and become lifelong learners
- Student-friendly and supportive learning environment ensuring that students learn and engage with the relevant course contents in a scholarly manner

- Objective assessments as means of providing opportunities to students to demonstrate attainment of the relevant learning outcomes and graduate attributes
- Rigorous monitoring of all assessments to prevent, detect and address academic misconduct by students
- Early identification of at risk students, and provision of academic assistance tailored to student needs
- Teaching and assessment activities performed pursuant to all policies, regulations and guidelines in all modes of study
- Continuous focus on ways and means of enhancing courseware, tools, systems and facilities to make student learning more effective

5. Policy Statement

Check Preparedness for Entering Higher Education

Prospective students should receive accurate information on the challenges and commitments required to undertake an award course at CHS. They should receive academic counselling on the level of commitment required to complete an award course, particularly at graduate level. The College may use appropriate means of disseminating information about the courses on offer at CHS, including the prospectus, open days, education agents and counsellors. Clear statement on the academic and English language proficiency requirements for successful completion of an award course must be published on the CHS website.

Students should be guided to make the right course choice and where necessary start with a lower level course to see their preparedness first then articulate to a higher level course. It is very important that students possess the core academic capabilities required to undertake a course or are encouraged to undertake an academic preparation course prior to commencing their main award course.

With international students English language proficiency can be a major block to academic progress and it is critical that students have the minimum level of English proficiency required to successfully undertake a program of study or they are directed to undertake additional English students prior to or in parallel to their main award course.

The Dean Academic and Course Coordinators are responsible for evaluating students' preparedness for study at CHS, including determining additional English and academic preparation studies needed for each subgroup prior to their commencement of their main course of study. As part of this process all new students should be required to complete the post-entry language assessment test conducted by ELSIS and the results used to support students with insufficient English proficiency to complete their courses¹.

Organise Proper Orientation and Induction

The College shall conduct orientation and induction sessions to help familiarise students with the College environment, understand what is expected of them, receive information on resources and support services available, gain a realistic perspective in terms of time commitments, etc.

¹ See Section 4.6 of CHS Guidelines for Academic Performance Monitoring and Early Intervention

The College shall provide each student a pack containing vital information or publish such information on the CHS website, including:

- Communication points, channels and protocols at CHS
- Student portals and LMS access
- College email account
- IT support and related services
- Student code of conduct
- Social media policy and risks
- Local amenities and services
- Resolution of Appeals and Grievances
- Emergency procedures
- Banking and financial transactions
- Health and well being
- Safety and security
- Casual employment
- Student associations
- Professional and voluntary organisations

In order to make sure the first trimester students are thoroughly immersed and enculturated into their new environment the Director of Administration and Student Services shall organise a follow up session with all first trimester students after their first month in the College, attended by the Dean Academic and Course Coordinators, to receive feedback on issues that concern students, as well as the extent that students have assimilated into the College's social and academic culture and feel sufficiently empowered to manage their study, work and social commitments.

Focus on First Trimester Experience

Successful completion of the first trimester is key to student success in subsequent trimesters. The College shall allocate additional academic and staff resources to facilitate students completing their first trimester studies successfully at CHS. At the end of the first trimester students should be feeling in control of their studies.

Enrich Student Learning Through Quality Teaching

The College's Learning and Teaching Plan is designed to promote quality teaching and enrich student experience.

The College shall monitor the quality of teaching and student experience, and focus on the enablers outlined in the Learning and Teaching Plan to enrich student experience.

Make Appropriate Staffing Arrangements

The College shall appoint an academic staff or a tutor/mentor dedicated to the academic needs of the first trimester students. In addition, all academic staff engaged in delivering courses to the first trimester students shall be coached and trained to be receptive to the needs of first trimester students and be prepared to allocate more time outside of the scheduled class sessions to guide these students on their studies. The Dean Academic and Course Coordinators are responsible for making staffing

arrangements to ensure first trimester students are coached and mentored, including special tutorial sessions organised for poorly performing students.

General staff, particularly the Welfare and Engagement Officers, play a key role in ensuring that social and welfare needs of first trimester students will be met where appropriate. The Director of Administration and Student Services is responsible for pastoral care of first trimester students. Where required general staff shall undertake appropriate professional development activities to sharpen their skills in terms of serving the needs of first trimester and other students.

Organise Extra Curricular and Social Activities

The College shall organise a number of industry grade training workshops and excursions as well as regular social and collegial events. The industry grade training workshops should be organised with leading industry experts to come and share Australian experience with students. Excursions to encourage students connect with the industry bodies and observe the professional practices and processes etc. The social events should be organised to encourage engagement with the College life engendering a sense of belongingness and feeling part of a community of like-minded individuals. It is important also to encourage greater interaction among students on both academic and social fronts while observing the Student Code of Conduct fully.

Monitor Student Progress

The Dean Academic assisted by the Course Coordinators is responsible for monitoring student progress, identifying poorly-performing students and developing and implementing intervention measures as per the CHS Course Progress Monitoring and Intervention Policy and CHS Guidelines for Academic Performance Monitoring and Early Intervention. The Director of Administration and Student Services shall support this process. The Engagement Officer shall organise individual students in need of intervention to meet with their academic advisors for review and preparation of a tailored study plan. Progress monitoring can also include monitoring attendance and counselling students of the importance of time commitment to their studies. If students are affected by events beyond their control or where there are serious concerns on student health and well-being, the Engagement and or Welfare Officer may refer student to the duly-appointed external service providers for professional help.

Manage Deferrals, Leave and Withdrawals

The Engagement Officer shall interview every single student who applies for deferral or leave of absence or withdrawal from their studies at CHS. The purpose of the interview is to discover the issues that concern students and see what intervention can be applied to address these issues. The Engagement Officer shall inform student applying for deferral or leave or withdrawal of the consequence of their decisions and options that are available to them. In particular, new international students may not realise the ramification of discontinuing or deferring their studies, e.g. potential impact on their student visa etc.

6. Records

Records associated with this policy shall be maintained according to the CHS Records Management Policy and Record Retention and Disposal Schedule.

7. Related documents

- CHS Course Progress Monitoring and Intervention Policy
- CHS Course Progress Delegations Schedule (Decision Authorities)
- CHS Assessment Policy
- CHS Academic Integrity Policy
- CHS Policy for Review and QA of Award Course
- CHS Equity and Diversity Policy

8. Related legislation

- The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
- The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015
- The National Code of Practice 2018
- The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)