



Australian Government Australian Skills Quality Authority

Fact sheet—overseas student attendance

Introduction

The reputation of Australia's international education and training sector depends on the quality of the courses provided to overseas students. Quality is influenced by a range of factors, including the training provided, the facilities and resources used, how much and how well providers engage with students, and the assessment practices that providers implement.

If you are delivering vocational education and training (VET) to students studying in Australia on a student visa (overseas students), you must comply with the requirements of the:

- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act)
- *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (National Code)
- *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (NVR Act), including the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (Standards for RTOs).

This fact sheet provides a summary of your responsibilities, as required by both the National Code and the Standards for RTOs, in relation to overseas student course progression and classroom attendance.

Why are there classroom attendance and progression requirements for overseas students?

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.

Meeting your obligations for ensuring student attendance and course progression



You have documented training and assessment strategies for all courses on your scope of registration that are based on 20 scheduled course contact hours per week.



Your training and assessment strategies include accurate information about course duration and contact hours for overseas VET students.



Any amendments to course structure are approved by ASQA before implementation.



You have written agreements with overseas VET students about attendance, training and assessment and competency expectations.



You have documented policies and processes to monitor overseas VET students' progress in courses.



You ensure all overseas VET students understand they are required to attend a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week.



You are able to demonstrate to ASQA that overseas VET students are participating in and attending scheduled classes.



You adjust the duration of a course for an overseas student if that student already has the skills and knowledge to complete assessment without attending training, while still ensuring you adhere to minimum course registration requirements.



You inform overseas VET students when they are at risk of not progressing in their courses.



You take appropriate action when overseas VET students are not progressing in their courses.



You understand and meet all requirements of the ESOS Act, National Code and the Standards for RTOs, including requirements relating to attendance and course progression.

Ensuring registered courses support student attendance

All providers must have training and assessment strategies that include clear information about course duration and contact hours

You must have documented training and assessment strategies for every course on your scope of registration.

If a course is delivered to overseas students, the training and assessment strategy must set out:

- that the course is offered on the basis of full-time study
- that the course is for a suitable course duration based on a minimum of **20 scheduled course contact hours per week** including scheduled classes, course-related information sessions, supervised study sessions, mandatory and supervised work-based training, and examinations
- that at least two-thirds (inclusive of 20 hours face-to-face) of the VET units of competency or modules being delivered to an overseas student will be provided face to face (that is, not through online or distance learning)
- that in each VET course study period, at least one unit is offered face-to-face
- a suitable course duration and amount of training, based on each learner's English language capabilities and their existing skills, knowledge and experience.

When you apply to ASQA to register a course on CRICOS, you must submit timetables and you may be required to demonstrate at audit how course requirements will be met. ASQA may assess how you have implemented these plans for the delivery of registered courses.

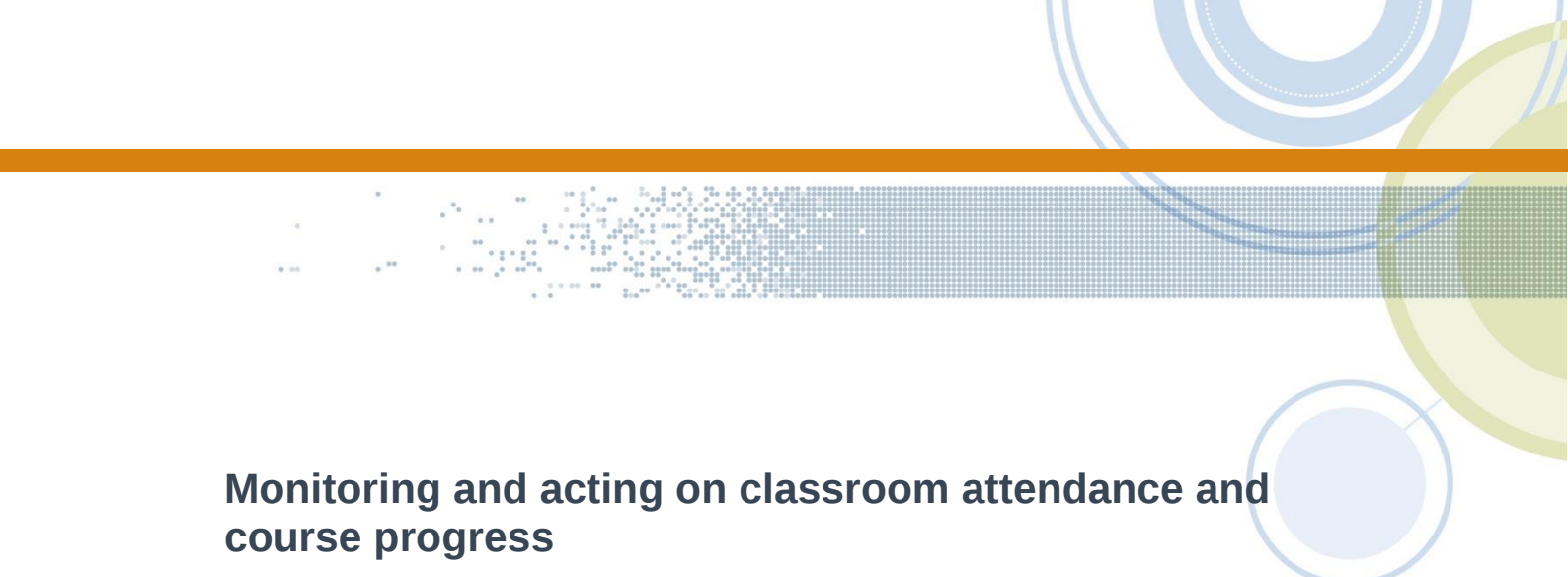
Amendments to course structure must be approved by ASQA before implementation

To change the approved structure of a course, you must apply to ASQA using the 'Application to change scope of CRICOS registration' form on [asqanet](https://www.asqanet.gov.au). Until ASQA approves your application, you cannot make changes to the:

- course duration
- amount of training
- mode of delivery.

Any amendments need to:

- ensure that the course is set for the minimum duration based on 20 scheduled course contact hours per week
- meet all other National Code and Standards for RTOs requirements.



Monitoring and acting on classroom attendance and course progress

All providers need to implement training and assessment practices that reflect their training and assessment strategies

Your documented training and assessment strategy for each course must be reflected in the actual **practices** of your training provider.

You must have sufficient resources to deliver to the number of students enrolled for the learner cohort, including to deliver to overseas students enrolled in full-time study. This includes having:

- suitably qualified trainers and assessors (Clause 1.13 – 1.16 of the Standards for RTOs)
- sufficient facilities (Clause 1.3 of the Standards for RTOs)
- appropriate learning resources (Clause 1.3 of the Standards for RTOs).

You must also document and implement a range of policies and procedures, which align to the training and assessment strategy, to monitor course progress including:

- the requirements for achieving satisfactory course progress which promote and uphold the integrity of the course
- how to address misconduct and allegations of misconduct
- processes for recording and assessing a student's course progress
- processes to identify, notify and assist overseas students who are at risk of not being able to complete their course within the nominated duration (including from their participation in tuition activities)
- details of an intervention strategy to assist students who are at risk of not meeting course progress requirements
- processes for determining the point at which a student has failed to meet satisfactory course progress.

All providers must implement documented policies and processes to monitor student course progress

It is your responsibility to make sure each overseas student progresses through their course and meets the requirement to attend on a full-time basis. You need to make sure every student is receiving training and undertaking assessment, as per your documented training and assessment strategy and timetables, in a way that will enable them to complete their course within the nominated duration (as set out in their [written agreement](#)).

When you monitor a student's course progress to assess if that progress is satisfactory, you must ensure the student has:

- participated in the training as set out in the training and assessment strategy, including (where the strategy requires) participating in scheduled classes, course-related information sessions, supervised study sessions, and mandatory and supervised work-based training
- completed all required assessment up to that point of time.

You must retain evidence that students are attending scheduled classes in order to show that:

- your practices are consistent with your training and assessment strategies
- the amount of training being provided is suitable for each student
- your students are participating in tuition activities
- your students are satisfactorily progressing through their course.

The evidence you retain to demonstrate that students are attending scheduled classes could include marked student attendance records.

Providers must take action if students are completing assessment without attending training

If **an overseas student** is not attending scheduled classes, but is making satisfactory progress in their course, then the course duration set is not suitable for that student—because they must already have the skills, knowledge and experience to progress in their course without receiving structured training.

In this case, you will need to **reduce the duration of the course to the minimum duration** required given the student's existing skills and knowledge, while maintaining a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week.

If **multiple overseas students** are not regularly attending scheduled classes for training and making satisfactory progress in their course, this is indicative of a systemic problem. This can indicate that your organisation:

- is not able to determine a suitable course length and amount of training for your intended student cohort
- does not have a valid, sufficient or authentic assessment system to assess a student's existing skills and knowledge or progress towards attaining competence.

Systemic issues risk the quality and reputation of Australia's VET and international education sectors. If ASQA considers that you are systemically not ensuring your students attend scheduled classes, we can impose a condition on your registration. The condition will require you to develop and implement policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and report breaches if a student does not attend required classes. If your organisation fails to identify or address systemic issues, we may also cancel or suspend your VET and/or CRICOS registration.

Keeping students informed

Providers must develop appropriate written agreements with students as part of the enrolment process

A written agreement includes information about the course. The written agreement must provide information about how training and assessment will enable the student to develop and demonstrate the competencies of the course.

Before your overseas students start their course, your written agreement must tell them:

- the duration of their course and the modes of study (including campus locations and facilities)
- that they must participate in scheduled classes in accordance with course timetables to make satisfactory course progress, and if they don't satisfactorily progress in their course, they will be in breach of a condition of their visa
- that if they don't attend scheduled classes, you may need to reassess their course duration, and you may shorten their course duration
- that ASQA may, at any time, require a training provider to implement policies and procedures to monitor minimum attendance requirements and if students don't meet these requirements, they will be in breach of a condition of their visa
- that the Department of Home Affairs may cancel a student's visa if they fail to maintain their enrolment.

Providers need to inform students who are at risk of not progressing

Students who cannot show that they are meeting the requirements of the qualification or accredited course are at risk of not progressing in their course. (That is, they are at risk of not completing the course within the nominated duration).

You must monitor student progression in accordance with your documented intervention strategy and notify students if they are at risk of not progressing.

If a student is not attending scheduled classes, in the first instance you should:

- remind them that enrolment in a **full-time registered course**, which is a course with a minimum of **20 scheduled course contact hours**, is a visa condition for overseas VET students
- remind them of scheduled class times.

If a student fails to make satisfactory course progress (including by not participating in the training outlined in the training and assessment strategy and timetables), you must have and implement a process for reporting unsatisfactory course progress in PRISMS. You must:

- have undertaken an intervention strategy to assist the student at risk of not meeting course progress, in sufficient time for the student to achieve satisfactory course progress
- tell the student of the intention to report them and the reasons why you are reporting them
- tell the student how they can access an internal complaints and appeals process
- advise them on their external appeal rights.

More information?

You can contact ASQA by:

- emailing enquiries@asqa.gov.au
- contacting the Info line on **1300 701 801**, Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 7.00 pm AEST.