



Institution	Mercury Institute of Victoria
Policy Name	Student Support Policy and Procedure
Policy Governance	Compliance Manager
Reference to Standards	Standards for RTO 2015 - Standard 1 Clause 1.7, Standard 5 Clause 5.4, Standard 6 Clause 6.1 – 6.6 National Code 2018 - Standard 6 Overseas student support services, Standard 8 Overseas student visa requirements, Standard 10 Complaints and appeals
Date of Approval	April 2022
Review Date	April 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and related procedure is to support students in adjusting to study and life in Australia, to achieve their learning goals and to achieve satisfactory progress towards meeting the learning outcomes of the course.

Mercury Institute of Victoria establishes this policy and procedure to:

- Comply with the requirements of Standards for RTO 2015 - Standard 1 Clause 1.7, Standard 5 Clause 5.4, Standard 6 Clause 6.1 – 6.6
- Comply with the requirements of the National Code 2018 – Standard 6 Overseas student support services, Standard 8 Overseas student visa requirements, Standard 10 Complaints and appeals

SCOPE

This policy applies to all student operations of Mercury Institute of Victoria and staff who deal with all matters of student support services.



1. POLICY

Mercury Institute of Victoria is committed to supporting students in adjusting to their life in Australia, achieving their study goals and achieving satisfactory course progress, while meeting their Student Visa conditions and their career objectives. Students have access to student support and academic support.

This policy ensures that all students are given support while studying in Australia. This support includes both academic support and personal support.

Nominated Student Services Representative

Whilst all staff employed by Mercury Institute of Victoria have the responsibility to provide support to all students, Mercury Institute of Victoria nominate a 'Student Support Officer/Administration Manager and Welfare Officer (External)' who are available to all students, on an appointment basis, through the standard Mercury Institute of Victoria operating hours of business.

Official Point of Contact for Mercury Institute of Victoria is: Jackie GE

Email: admission@mercury.edu.au

Mercury Institute of Victoria ensures that student's are provided welfare, intervention and academic support at no additional cost. Students are advised of the range of student support services available to them on Orientation Day and in Student Handbook, which contains information on:

- *Welfare*
- *Medical and emergency services*
- *Mercury Institute of Victoria policies and procedures*
- *Safety and Security*
- *Academic Support*
- *LLN and Technology support*

Mercury Institute of Victoria provides the opportunity for students to participate in academic support services, these services are designed to assist students in achieving course/unit requirements, and mentoring to maintain their academic course progress during their study period.

- Mercury Institute of Victoria provides students the opportunity to access welfare related support services to assist with issues that may arise during their study, including psychological factors (external referral where required).
- Mercury Institute of Victoria provides sufficient student support personnel to meet the needs of the students enrolled with Mercury Institute of Victoria.
- Mercury Institute of Victoria ensures that its staff members who interact directly with students are aware of Mercury Institute of Victoria's obligations under the ESOS Framework and the potential implications for students arising from the exercise of these obligations.
- Mercury Institute of Victoria maintains and delivers up-to-date and correct information for students relating to support services, study issues, emergency contacts, legal and health services and facilities and resources on campus.
- Mercury Institute of Victoria can arrange for students to be met at the airport and taken to their accommodation. Student needs to indicate the need of this service when submitting their Application Form.

Where there are any changes to agreed services, the RTO advises the learner as soon as practicable, including in relation to any new third party arrangements or a change in ownership or changes to existing third party arrangements.

(Excerpt taken from Standards for RTO 2015 – Clause 5.4)

All Student Support Services are at no additional cost to the students.

Mercury Institute of Victoria assists students to adjust to study and life in Australia, including through the Orientation Program that includes information about:

- Student support services available to students in the transition to life and study in a new environment.



- Legal services.
- Emergency and health services.
- Welfare services.
- Facilities and resources.
- Complaints and appeals processes.
- Any student visa condition relating to course progress and/or attendance as appropriate.

Students with LLN Needs- Mercury Institute of Victoria provides services designed to assist students in meeting course requirements and Language, Literacy and Numeracy Requirements (monitored in *Student Support Register*).

Students with Disability- Mercury Institute of Victoria acknowledges the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005, and its obligation as an education and training provider to support the rights of students with disability to participate in educational courses and programs on the same basis as students without disabilities. Students who wish to apply for adjustments to teaching or assessment methods based on a disability should contact Training Coordinator and bring supporting documents for consideration of disability (e.g., a letter from your treating professional).

Please refer to *Student Progression and Completion Policy and Procedure/Student with Special Needs Policy and Procedure*.

Student Hardship- The requirements of study may present some students with hardship, due to economic, social, or other difficulties. Where genuine hardship exists, a student may seek permission to review their workload or other related matters. The student Support Officer shall review the request and where necessary arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss the issues and provide the required support through internal or external referrals and advice.

Mercury Institute of Victoria provides the opportunity for students to access welfare related support services to assist with issues that may arise during their study, including course

progress and accommodation issues.

Mercury Institute of Victoria has a documented *Critical Incident Policy and Procedure* together with procedures that covers the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, required follow up to the incident and records of the incident and action taken (see *Critical Incident Policy and Procedure*).

Mercury Institute of Victoria will designate a staff member or staff members to be the official point of contact for students. The Student Support Officer will have access to updated details of the support services provided by the Institute.

All students will have unlimited access to our student support services through our Student Support Officer. The Student Support Officer shall have access to available student welfare services available locally.

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Legal Services

If you need legal advice contact a Student Support Officer or any other Mercury Institute of Victoria staff who will direct you to a Student Support Officer.

The Student Support Officer can advise you where you can go to receive confidential advice on your rights and responsibilities in legal matters. The Student Support Officer can provide details of local legal firms who are able to offer you a first consultation, free of charge, to discuss your circumstances and offer students a reduced rate for service based on a sliding scale.



The Student Support Officer can also put you in contact with your nearest Legal Aid office and where you can receive free legal advice. If you need to go to court it is important that you receive legal advice. If you do not have a lawyer when you go to court, lawyers who give free legal advice and other help (duty lawyers) may be available to assist you.

A **free duty lawyer** service is provided at large courts and tribunals across VIC. Duty lawyers are lawyers who work for **Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)** or are private lawyers who are paid by VLA to help you.

The following is a useful link should you need legal advice: <http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au>.

The legal assistance service is provided to ensure that all students Mercury Institute of Victoria are legally protected and properly advised. The legal assistance service ensures that students have confidential support in gaining knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities. Matters covered by the legal assistance services include:

- Court matters, assault, drug offences, property offences, victim's compensation, criminal matters, domestic violence, discrimination, motor vehicle accident, workers compensation and restraining orders.

If you do not wish to proceed with free legal aid options and opt for your own preferred solicitor, Mercury Institute of Victoria shall not bear the charges for the solicitor. These charges will need to be paid by the student.

Counselling Services

Students must contact the Student Support Officer for any personal, professional or psychological issues they might be facing. The Student Support Officer shall refer the student to external counselling services.

Lifeline	13 11 14	www.lifeline.org.au
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Mensline Australia	1300 78 99 78	http://www.mensline.org.au/home.aspx
National Association for Loss & Grief	9650 3000	www.nalag.org.au
Suicide Helpline Victoria	1300 651 251	http://www.suicideline.org.au/
Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line	1800 806 292	http://sacl.com.au/

The student needs to pay the counselling services charges directly to the external counsellor.

Medical /Emergency Services

Mercury Institute of Victoria has a strong component of overseas students who hail from different countries worldwide, creating a dynamic, multicultural community.

Student Orientation Program

All students go through an Orientation program before commencing their studies. The orientation program involves familiarisation with Mercury Institute of Victoria staff, the welfare officer, and facilities, living in Melbourne and with the campus.

Content of orientation program include, but are not limited to:

- The Complaints and Appeal process
- Adjusting to life in Australia
- Payment options
- Mentoring and academic support
- Safety and Security and the law
- Important emergency and other contacts
- Visa information



- Welfare and Counselling (external on need basis)
- Assessments and submission of assessments
- Student first point of contact

Mercury Institute of Victoria will review this process as part of the ongoing continuous improvement of their student support services. Mercury Institute of Victoria will provide additional academic assistance and career pathway information where the student is identified as requiring or requesting the additional support.

An orientation program is conducted before classes begin and is compulsory for all newly arriving students. The program includes an introduction to Mercury Institute of Victoria, its services and facilities as well as an introduction to Australian culture, society and life. Students are also introduced to the academic culture and rules of the Institute that are necessary for successful study.

A complete orientation will ensure the student is introduced to key personnel, familiarised with the facilities and procedures of the Institute and adequately prepared for study at Mercury Institute of Victoria and commencing to adapt to Australia.

The needs of a wide range of participants should be considered. This includes students entering courses as International students or re-enrolling students. Apart from the Student Orientation Program, the Student Support Officer/Administration Manager can, on request, organise social events that allow all students enrolled at Mercury Institute of Victoria to mingle and socialise. These events may range from cultural and sightseeing events, to dinners, excursions and sporting events. Any suggestions can be forwarded to the Student Support Officer/Administration Manager.

Students are provided with

- A Student Handbook (refer to Mercury Institute of Victoria website or hardcopy)
- An introduction to the Mercury Institute of Victoria website where they can view

Mercury Institute of Victoria's student services, facilities and the relevant policies and procedures for future reference

- Their student ID
- Student safety information

Student Support Survey

Student Support Survey is conducted on a regular basis to improve Mercury Institute of Victoria's Student Support Services using '*Student Support Services Survey*'.

2. PROCEDURE

Student Initiated

- a) The students shall contact the Student Support Officer for any student support services as listed above.
- b) The student needs to fill the '*Student Support Services Request Form*'.
- c) The Student Support Officer needs to make an appointment with the student within 5 working days of the receipt of the request form.
- d) The Student Support Officer may direct the student to another staff member or an external provider depending on the nature of the student support /welfare request.
- e) Student Support Officer must maintain a record for all the student support requests received and handled.
- f) Student Support Officer shall provide feedback to the management on the student support services once every six months. The feedback may be used for continuous improvement.

Mercury Institute of Victoria initiated

- a) Mercury Institute of Victoria maintains a *Student Support Plan* for each academic year.
- b) The plan consists of student support and welfare related activities covering areas such as workshops, tutorials, excursions, festivals, field trips, mentorship workshops, and student parties.
- c) While undertaking excursions:



- The staff member organising the excursion/field trips needs to fill the *'Excursion Approval Form'* and get approval from the CEO.
 - The staff member needs to maintain an *Attendance Sheet for Student Support Activities* of the students participating in the excursion / field trip.
 - The participating students need to complete the *'Excursion Medical Authorisation Form'* and submit it to the staff member.
 - Taking pictures is always encouraged.
 - All the documents must be returned to the Student Support Officer.
 - Student Support Officer must maintain a file for all the excursion / field trip activities.
- d) While undertaking the workshops:
- The Student Support Officer/ Administration Manager will be responsible for finalising the details of the workshop (date, venue, timings) and promote the workshop to the students.
 - The staff member undertaking the workshop is expected to prepare the content of the workshop/presentation. The staff member will also need to maintain an attendance of the students participating in the workshops (*Attendance Sheet for Student Support Activities*)
 - The staff member is encouraged to seek feedback from the students after the completion of the workshop session.