

### Policy Overview:

To establish guidelines for the identification, provision, and allocation of support services for students of the RTOs. This policy is intended to provide information to staff regarding their responsibilities and to ensure that students receive the support they require ensuring that the support is responsive, adequate and appropriate to all students.

### Objective:

To ensure a systematic process occurs nationally by implementing a centralised academic and personal support system to all students enrolled with the RTO, which is consistent and meets the organisations business objectives and compliance needs against the Standards of RTOs 2015.

### Staff Responsible:

This applies to all;

- State Managers
- Operations Manager
- National Curriculum, Compliance & Quality Manager (NCCQM)
- Compliance & Quality Department (CQD)
- Training Advisors (BDM)
- Trainers and Assessors
- Student Administration Manager
- Branch Administrators

### Compliance Standards:

This policy relates to the following SNR standards: 15.1, 15.5, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 20.1, 20.2

This policy relates to the following 2015 SNR standards: 1.3, 1.7

This policy relates to the following AQTF Standards: 2.1, 2.5

### Related Policies/Templates/Documents:

- D-001 Student Information Guide
- F-013 Student Support Form
- P-001 Enrolment Policy and Procedure
- P-018 Reasonable Adjustment Policy & Procedure
- P-046 Continuous Improvement Policy & Procedure
- M-405 Recording Student Support

## Definitions:

### **LLN online assessment**

Formal assessment process undertaken by students at enrolment to identify Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) levels against the Australian Core Skills Framework ACSF to determine suitable support services to individual students.

### **Support Service**

A strategy, tool or service available both internally within the RTO and externally to help assist students complete their studies when there is a need.

### **At risk**

The term used for students whom may have the potential for not completing their course in which they are enrolled.

### **Disability**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) defines disability as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour

### **Reasonable adjustment**

A form of adjustment to an assessment to assist a student who is disadvantaged when undertaking an assessment in its normal form.

### **aXcelerate**

The RTO student management system (SMS) used to manage students and their studies.

## 1. Overview of Student Support Services

It is the responsibility of the RTO to allow the individual learner to meet the requirements of the training product as specified in training packages or VET accredited courses by identifying any barriers that may impact on the students learning experience and achievement. If any barriers are identified, access should be offered to applicable individual support services to attempt to ensure that the barriers can be overcome. Such support services will be identified and provided during all stages of the student journey including prior to enrolment, at enrolment and commencement, and during their studies until their completion.

These services should be provided by suitably qualified persons and may include although not limited to:

**1.1 Cultural support**

People from all social and cultural backgrounds will be equally treated and due respect will be given to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**1.2 Disability support**

Offering students with a recognised disability the necessary support services to meet their individual needs physically and academically through highly qualified external services with appropriate resources to assist the recognised disability.

**1.3 Family support**

Offering student support when they are dealing with family issues.

**1.4 Financial support**

Offering students a payment plan to fee for service enrolled students or providing students with guidance to Government support services.

**1.5 Information Technology (IT) support**

Providing the support to assist students in applying IT skills relevant to the training program by the RTO internal IT staff or qualified/experienced trainers.

**1.6 Language, Literacy & Numeracy (LLN) support**

Identified by the student conducting an LLN online assessment during the enrolment process where students are assessed against the ACSF levels for the qualification they are studying.

**1.7 Learning support**

Support to assist different learner styles by providing strategies such as additional time to complete the course and assessment, contextualised resources, additional activities to assist in understanding or facilitation/teaching approach.

**1.8 Mentoring/Coaching**

Assisting students by offering a structured mentoring or coaching program by highly qualified trainers or other RTO staff.

**1.9 Professional Counselling**

Referring students to professional external counselling services.

### 1.10 Study support

Students provided with guidance and resources to assist and guide them during self-based study.

### 1.11 Travel support

Offering support around travel arrangements when the student has to travel as part of their studies or assessment.

### 1.12 Work-based training support

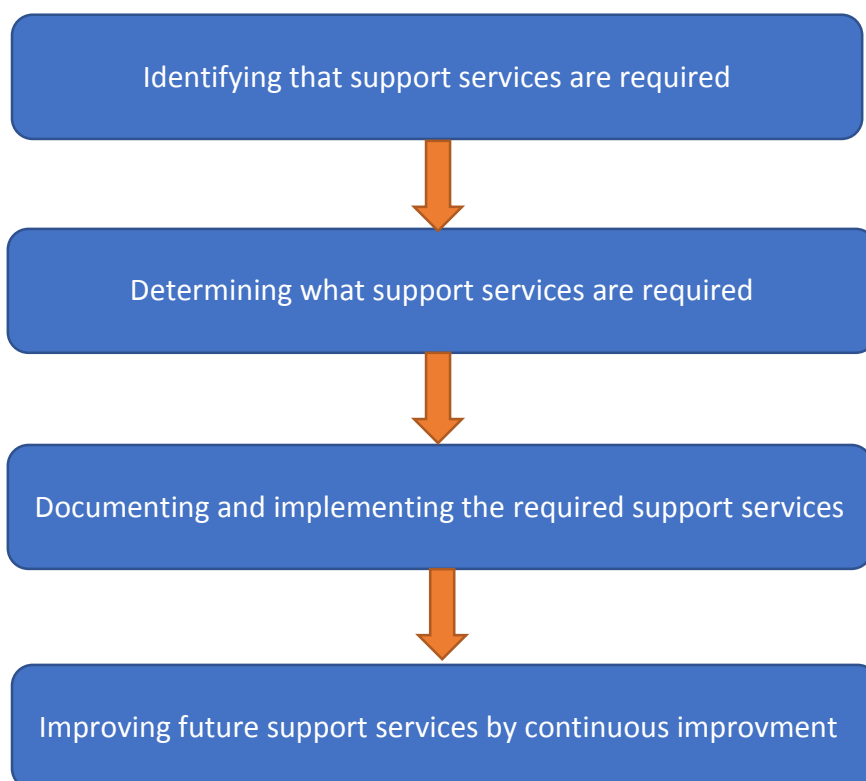
Offering support when a student is undertaking workplace learning and assessment.

## 2. Support services and reasonable adjustment

Student support services and reasonable adjustment are not the same thing. Support services are defined as possible support requirements during all aspects of the students journey, while reasonable adjustment is a form of support offered by academic staff to students who are disadvantaged in some manner during the assessment process of their studies. Guidance around reasonable adjustment can be found in the **P-018 Reasonable Adjustment Policy & Procedure**.

## 3. The support services process

The support services process is made up of four sequential steps that should be completed in order as displayed below:



Each step of the process is explained in further detail below, and each has its own procedure that should be followed.

#### 4. Identifying support

It is the responsibility of all RTO staff to identify students who require additional assistance. RTO staff should endeavour to identify students who require support assistance. This assistance may be personal, emotional, psychological or medical in nature or a combination of these factors.

Students requiring additional support may be identified by:

- Staff members
- Fellow students
- Through self-reporting
- Through systems designed to detect support requirements such as online LLN entrance assessment

Some examples of factors that may require additional support include, but are not limited to:

- A physical disability or medical condition
- A psychological disability or mental illness condition such as depression, anxiety, or Post-Stress Trauma Disorder(PSTD)
- Experiencing personal life events or dealing with lingering issues from previous personal life trauma
- Low education level
- Social awkwardness, anxiety or being around other people
- Being a victim of bullying during their studies or outside of their studies
- Emotional instability following a breakdown of personal relationship
- Difficulty sustaining studying with other life priorities
- Addiction to substances or gambling
- Financial troubles or currently facing financial hardship
- Difficulty with the transition to studying from working

Staff should be conscious for the following student behaviours which may indicate support is warranted:

- persistent bad mood
- lack of motivation/interest in their studies
- signs of stress, anxiety or panic attacks
- unpredictable behaviour, mood, or attitude
- signs of disorientation or delusion
- shutting down and not communicating
- withdrawal from social situations
- marked differences in academic performance and/or attendance

- constant worrying about their studies
- disruptive physical or verbal behaviour
- violent tendencies
- marked change in physical appearance
- being affected by drugs or alcohol

Refer to the procedures: **1. Identifying Student Support Procedure** and **2. Determining Student Support Required Procedure**.

## 5. Reporting & Recording Requirements

All staff are responsible for reporting and recording any conversations they have with student in regards to student support services. The **F-013 Student Support Form** should be used for this purpose, with entries made within aXcelerate, documenting support activities that have occurred in relation to the details recorded in the Student Support Form.

The Operations Manager is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the RTO reporting process and for ensuring all records are completed accurately and maintained to demonstrate that support has been provided.

At all times the RTO must remain conscious of the student's privacy and confidentiality during all contact between the staff and the student.

Refer to the following procedure: **3. Documenting Student Support Procedure**.

## 6. Improving student support services

Through the RTO's continuous improvement process, the staff involved in providing the support services are responsible for sourcing feedback from the student who was provided the support services on how this might be improved in future, and feeding these through to the National Compliance and Quality Manager.

Refer to the following procedure: **4. Improving future support activities**.

## Student Support Procedure

1 Identifying Student Support Procedure		
Action / Task	Responsible	Timeline
<p><b>1.1 Informing students of support services</b> Students must be informed prior to beginning their studies what support services are available and where they can find further information about these during their studies.</p> <p>1.1.1 Support services should be advertised via the following communication channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTO website</li> <li>• Student Information Guide</li> <li>• Course brochure</li> <li>• Enrolment interview</li> <li>• RTO induction</li> </ul> <p>1.1.2 The RTO must monitor all communication channels to ensure information is current, consistent and accurate.</p>	<p>BDMs Trainer/Assessors</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>1.2 LLN online assessment</b></p> <p>1.2.1 All students must complete the mandatory LLN online assessment tool to the AQF level as part of the enrolment process. Refer to <b>P-001 Enrolment Policy and Procedure</b>.</p> <p>1.2.2 The LLN online assessment is designed to identify any LLN issues that the student might have prior to them commencing their studies. The assessments is designed to identify whether the student has the appropriate LLN skills to undertake their studies without support, and the appropriate level of support required where issues are identified.</p> <p>1.2.3 Where it is identified there are LLN issues for the particular qualification they are about to undertake, a discussion should occur between a staff member and the student to discuss any issues identified, and appropriate support services that might be applicable to help address these issues. Refer to the following procedure: <b>2 Determining Support Required Procedure</b>.</p>	<p>Trainer/Assessors</p>	<p>During enrolment</p>

Action / Task	Responsible	Timeline
<p><b>1.3 Other methods used to identify that support may be required</b></p> <p>1.3.1 As well as the LLN online assessment, students requiring support services may be identified via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students self-reporting that they need support</li> <li>• Feedback from a student that another student requires support</li> <li>• A staff member observing behavior or actions that may indicate that support is required or through a major change in academic performance.</li> </ul> <p>1.3.2 If a student self-reports that they need support services, then an initial discussion should be held between the staff member and the student to discuss why they require support, and what support services may be applicable. Refer to the following procedure: <b>2 Determining Support Required Procedure.</b></p> <p>1.3.3 A student may approach a staff member in confidence to report that they believe another student requires support. If this is the case the staff member should discuss with the student why they believe this is the case. If there is a concern that support may be required, the staff member should approach the student to discuss these. Refer to the following procedure: <b>2 Determining Support Required Procedure.</b></p> <p>1.3.4 If a staff member observes student behavior or actions that are indicative that support is required, or there is a marked change in academic performance and attendance, then the staff member should approach the student to discuss their concerns. Refer to the following procedure: <b>2 Determining Support Required Procedure.</b></p>	<p>All RTO Staff whom identify the need</p>	<p>When identified</p>
<b>2 Determining Student Support Required Procedure</b>		
<p><b>2.1 Approaching the student</b></p> <p>2.1.1 When the need to approach the student to discuss concerns they have or support options available, staff must ensure that they approach the student in a considered and confidential manner as the student may be sensitive to the issue that requires support.</p> <p>2.1.2 The culture and any experiences the staff member have had with the student should provide guidance</p>	<p>RTO Staff member who identified the need</p>	<p>When identified</p>



Action / Task	Responsible	Timeline
<p>on whether a formal approach or informal approach would be better suited to approaching the student.</p>		
<p><b>2.2 Undertaking a support discussion</b></p> <p>2.2.1 The point of a support discussion is so that any support needs can be determined, and what appropriate support service would best meet the support needs.</p> <p>2.2.2 Appropriate support needs is determined by the discussion but some examples are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal support services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One to one coaching;</li> <li>○ Group study sessions;</li> <li>○ Pre-course self-based study arrangement;</li> <li>○ Adjustments to the learning environment;</li> <li>○ Additional time;</li> <li>○ Guidance to online resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>• External support services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Language support</li> <li>○ Professional counselling</li> <li>○ External tuition or mentoring program</li> <li>○ Budgeting Assistance</li> <li>○ Referral to a General Practitioner</li> <li>○ Interpreters</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>2.2.3 Where there is an external support need or one that is beyond the knowledge of the staff member, then another staff member may need to become involved, or the need to consult with industry may be required to determine the most appropriate support service.</p> <p>2.2.4 At all times the student should be involved in the process so that they are happy with the support service(s) identified.</p>	<p>RTO Staff member who identified the need</p>	<p>When identified</p>
<p><b>3 Documenting Student Support Procedure</b></p>		

Action / Task	Responsible	Timeline
<p><b>3.1 Recording support discussion</b></p> <p>3.1.1 The support discussion between the student and the staff member and any other interested parties should be recorded in detail using the <b>F-013 Student Support Form</b>.</p> <p>3.1.2 The purpose of the <b>F-013 Student Support Form</b> is to set out recommendations on how support services should be implemented.</p> <p>3.1.3 The staff member must ensure that all fields are completed and that no information has been left out.</p> <p>3.1.4 The student must sign and date that they are in agreement of the support services to be offered/implemented as documented in the <b>F-013 Student Support Form</b>.</p>	<p>RTO Staff member who identified the need</p>	<p>During the support discussion.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Gaining approval to proceed with support recommendations</b></p> <p>3.2.1 After the support discussion has been concluded and documented in the <b>F-013 Student Support Form</b>, the Manager must sign off on the support service recommendations documented by the staff member.</p> <p>3.2.2 If any modification has been made to the support services to be offered by the Manager as part of this approval, these changes must be discussed with the student and agreed upon.</p> <p>3.2.3 After the Manager has signed off on the support recommendations in the <b>F-013 Student Support Form</b>, and any appropriate communication has occurred with the student in regards to any modifications if applicable, the staff member should upload the <b>F-013 Student Support Form</b> to aXcelerate and record an appropriate note. Refer to <b>M-405 Recording Student Support</b> on how this is completed</p>	<p>RTO Staff member who identified the need Manager</p>	<p>Within 24 -48 hours after student discussion concluded.</p>
<p><b>3.3 Maintaining student engagement</b></p> <p>3.3.1 RTO staff must provide ongoing communication to the relevant student informing and consulting with them on the process and implementation of required support service(s).</p> <p>3.3.2 Any communication between the staff member and the student must be recorded as a note in aXcelerate so it provides an ongoing plan of what has occurred in relation to the support services.</p>	<p>All RTO Staff involved in providing support services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action / Task	Responsible	Timeline
Refer to <b>M-405 Recording Student Support</b> on how this is completed		
<b>4 Improving future support services</b>		
<p><b>4.1 Improving support services</b></p> <p>4.1.1 Any staff involved in offering or assisting with the support services should ensure that they are following up with the student during and upon conclusion of the support services to gather the students feedback on how well these services helped them.</p> <p>4.1.2 If feedback indicates that they were unhappy with the support services offered, or that improvements could be made, the staff member should document this and send this through to the <a href="mailto:compliance@ash.edu.au">compliance@ash.edu.au</a> email.</p> <p>4.1.3 Compliance will review the feedback, and if appropriate contact the staff member(s) who offered the support services for further information if required.</p> <p>4.1.4 If possible improvements can be made Compliance will determine what these are and the appropriate steps to implement these.</p> <p>4.1.5 The implementation of the improvements is planned and undertaken as appropriate with an update made on the Continuous Improvement Register.</p>	All RTO staff offering the identified support services Compliance	Ongoing

### Document Revision History

Version Number	Author	Date Published	Description
2.0	Aleena Velich	04/05/2017	<p>Reviewed and revised policy including responsibilities for when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering student support services;</li> <li>• Identifying support;</li> <li>• Reporting and recording requirements;</li> <li>• Continuous improvement;</li> </ul> <p>Developed procedures for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying support;</li> <li>• Actioning support internally and externally;</li> <li>• Implementing work based training support.</li> </ul> <p>Updated Policy and Procedure to new format.</p> <p>This policy now replaces <b>P-038 Language, Literacy &amp; Numeracy Policy</b></p>
2.1	Natalie Robinson	26/05/2017	Added transition letter template and Document Revision History.
2.2	Aleena Velich	24/7/2017	Reviewed and included relevant supporting documents.
2.3	Natalie	25/07/2017	Renaming to Student Support Policy & Procedure to be in line with naming conventions in other policies & procedures and general VET vocab.
2.4	Sarah Wong	14/09/2017	Formatting
2.5	Sarah Wong	14/09/2017	Formatting
2.6	Natalie	16/02/2018	<p>Specifying that Entry Assessments are not a Pass or Fail assessment, but a guide to the skill level of the applicant.</p> <p>Also tied in that the F-013 Student Support Form.pdf form must be completed when gaps identified.</p>
3.0	Aaron Hansen	08/05/2019	Major re-write to ensure all current practices are incorporated.
	Rebekah Faleafaga	09/05/2019	Reviewed by Operations and comments implemented.