Academic Literacy and Learning Support Procedure

Document History

Version	Date of Review	Date of Implementation	Change(s)
1.0	Mar–May 2016	3 June 2016	-

Approved by: **Academic Board**   on   **3 June 2016**

Distribution List

To: RCDC Academic Staff
All Student Services Staff
Associate Colleges, College Directors

Cc: Chair, Council
Chair, Senior Management Committee

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1   Purpose

Raffles College is committed to providing quality education and outstanding teaching and learning to all students and recognises that some individuals require additional literacy and learning support. This document outlines the literacy and learning support procedure that is designed to ensure the success of 'at risk' students.

2   Scope

This policy applies to all Raffles staff, and students enrolled with Raffles College of Design and Commerce (RCDC), including those enrolled at offshore campuses, with a specific focus on students who are identified as students 'at risk'.

3   Rationale

The Academic Literacy and Learning support programs aim to improve students' knowledge of study skills, academic literacy and learning. The programs outlined in the policy are designed to assist students who are classified as at risk, due to language, personal, physical or emotional difficulties through the intervention programs to achieve the learning outcomes of the course in which they are enrolled.

4   Definition of Terms

At Risk: Students with poor attendance or poor assessment outcomes

ACER: Australian Council for Educational Research Literacy and Numeracy Assessment

EALD: English as an Additional Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

IELTS: International English Testing system

5   Objectives

5.1   Personalised Learning

In general, college learning support programs adopt an organic, transformative and personalised approach towards learning. In this sense, considering the individual learning style and needs of students is substantial to achieve the desirable teaching and learning outcomes. To attain continued success and maintain a quality education framework, the Academic Literacy and Learning Support Program follows the following streams:

- Academic Literacy Program for VET students who do not achieve an IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent) at admission; or domestic students entering Certificate IV programs where admission is subject to a co-requisite Academic Literacy Program; or students directed to undertake the program as per student intervention procedures

- The Support Referral Stream for lecturers, tutors and student services staff to identify and refer the 'at risk' student[1] to the Learning Support Program (Intervention Program)

- Advanced and topic-specific Academic and Language Support Stream for continuing students who experience learning difficulties, for example difficulties in writing an extended assignment piece

- Commencing Student Learning Support Stream program providing compulsory seminars to new students in library and information research, academic integrity and referencing

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[1] Students with poor attendance or poor assessment outcomes

- One-to-one Stream to maintain an individual needs-based and subject-specific consultation program.

To achieve sustainable teaching and learning outcomes, support services maintain an on-going and touch-based approach to the programs.

5.2 Learning Difficulties

There are different causes of student learning difficulties that may lead to poor attendance and poor outcomes. The main causes are a lack of: academic language, literacy and numeracy, study skills and techniques; time management and organisational skills, experience working individually or with others, computer and I.T skills, or educational and academic awareness.

For EALD, international/transnational students (ESL/EFL), English language difficulties, cultural, emotional and educational adjustments should be regarded as well.

RCDC is committed to facilitating appropriate academic and learning support services ensuring students' achievement in their studies. The College acknowledges learning difficulties originate from various and underlying factors holding a wide scope of understanding. Its focus is to create a hub that promotes innovative and creative learning to educate and deliver confident, resilient, responsible and independent learners. RCDC values diversity and holds access, respect, equity and fairness as a part of its quality education framework. All students are considered equal and valued as individuals irrespective of nationality, ethnic/racial origin, religion and beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economical status, disability or any other grounds.

The support program recognizes that students may experience adjustment and learning difficulties based on personal and cultural specific attitudes and values. In terms of learning styles, personality and cognitive traits, the program allocates individuals' needs in acquiring knowledge at different pace, rate and level of ease/difficulty. Considering the multifaceted nature of some difficulties or barriers in learning, temporary or permanent, the support services seek to adopt a versatile outlook on learning issues other than solely lack of academic skills. These issues include bereavement, illness/mental health issues, lack/low self-efficacy and confidence, or other underlying conditions, disorders, disabilities, impairments and special needs.

Through understanding each individual's circumstance, points of strength and weakness, the academic literacy and learning support ensures to meet each student's needs through special considerations, allowances, differentiations and expansions. The program also takes a personalised teaching and learning approach to education, and celebrating learning diversities to facilitate equal learning opportunities. To ensure all students receive the appropriate support the college appreciates the staff and students' input and view in identifying and setting the scopes of learning support services in regards to special education and needs.

6 Procedure

6.1 Intervention Program

The Support Program includes disengaged or at-risk students through collaboration and closely working with the college student services, academics and staff. As part of RCDC early intervention policy, students with low attendance or and/low results will be contacted and referred to the academic literacy and learning support program either by the student services staff through referral scheme or the academic staff through learning contracts. The program also utilizes other ways to identify and support the students who are at-risk of low performance or attendance as follows:

- Screening, assessment and observation (admission, enrolment, arrival and on-going)
- Test results/reports[2]
- Student record/reports
- Academic data/need analysis
- Other related document/review/evaluation and assessment result

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[2] ACER, IELTS and as such

6.2   Academic Literacy and Learning Support

Compulsory classes on using information resources, academic referencing and academic integrity will be provided to all newly enrolled students tailored to the type and level of course the student is undertaking (VET or higher education). Where a student articulates from a VET course into a higher education course, additional instruction will be provided that is relevant to the additional requirements of higher education.

As per the Admissions Policy, students admitted to Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs with an IELTS of 5.5 (or equivalent) who intend, subject to satisfactory completion of the VET course, to articulate into a Bachelor program, must undertake a weekly academic literacy class with the aim of achieving equivalent to an IELTS 6.0 at the completion of the course. Domestic students admitted to a Certificate IV course may also be required to undertake these courses should the admission process determine that the student needs additional academic literacy support to complete the course.

The Learning Support Program will introduce and focus on workshops, tutorials and seminars exploring popular topic to academic improvement topics such as time management, learning effectively, note-taking, reading techniques, writing academically, paraphrasing, quoting and referencing, research and resource finding, presentation and speaking effectively.

The general information sessions on library research, academic integrity and misconduct, style and appropriate referencing classes will be run in the first week or week prior to each term and as per need throughout the term at the library. The academic literacy course will be run each term on a weekly basis according to college timetable and per intake.

The workshop/seminar timetable and contents will be publicized each term through RCDC e-learning system and as required for further promotion. The consultations run according to referrals, appointments and walk-ins throughout the college term/semester calendar.

6.3   Consideration

Subsequent to the initial observation, need analysis and evaluation, the program will consider:

- Learning diversities/Cultural variations
- Cross-cultural outlook
- Differentiation, Special Consideration and Expansion
- Need-based/Field-based approach (Content/assessment)
- On-going and Touch-based approach (Follow-up sessions)

7   Supporting or related documents

The following procedures, related documents and policies support the production, implementation and execution of the current policy:

- RCDC Academic Literacy and Learning Support Policy
- RCDC Admissions Policy and Procedure
- RCDC English language Proficiency Policy
- RCDC Student Handbook
- Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)