Support for Students Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') believes in putting our students at the centre of what we do. We are welcoming, inclusive, and responsive and we aim to provide an outstanding student experience.

(2) The University recognises the importance of students effectively transitioning and progressing through their studies and connecting students with appropriate assistance and support to enhance their academic performance and achieve their study goals.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy outlines the support available for students of the University.

(4) This policy fulfils the requirements of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and the Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023 by outlining how the University will identify and support higher education students at risk of not successfully completing their units of study ('at-risk students').

(5) This policy fulfils the requirements of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 by outlining how the University will identify and provide training and wellbeing support for vocational education and training (VET) students.

Section 3 - Scope

(6) This policy applies to students of the University and employees who support student success.

Section 4 - Policy

Student support services

(7) The University provides academic and wellbeing support services to students. The University website provides up-to-date details of support services and how students can access them, including (but not limited to):

a. Study skills and online tutoring;
b. Language and learning support;
c. First Nations tutorial support;
d. Regional university study hubs;
e. Counselling and the wellbeing support line;
f. Disability and health support;
g. Complaints;
h. Student advocacy;
i. Careers and employability support;

j. International student support; and
k. Accommodation support.

(8) Students are encouraged to actively seek advice and support (online and/or in-person) regarding any challenges or difficulties that they may be experiencing at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support, guidance, and services can be put in place.

Part A - Support for higher education students

Providing information to students

(9) The University will provide information about support services to commencing students as part of orientation.

(10) The University will email all higher education students enrolled at the beginning of week 1 and the beginning of week 3 to advise them of this policy and the support services that are available.

(11) Lecturers and unit coordinators will remind students of available support services regularly throughout the semester.

(12) Throughout the year, the University will look for other ways to disseminate this policy and ensure students are aware of support services available to them in their studies.

Information about the census date

(13) From the first week of semester until the census date, identified support services will alert eligible students who contact them that the census date is the date they will incur a HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP debt.

(14) Identified support services may use the following means to alert students about the census date, as applicable:

a. Automatic replies to emails;
b. Voicemail recordings;
c. Information on the University website; and
d. Messages acknowledging bookings or receipt of queries.

Identification of at-risk students

(15) The University will identify at-risk students in higher education units by:

a. identifying students who have previously failed a unit in their course; and
b. monitoring student engagement in units.

(16) Lecturers and unit coordinators will monitor student engagement through indicators such as:

a. Class attendance (online and/or in-person);
b. Logging into Learnline and accessing unit content within the first two (2) weeks of the study period; and
c. Failure to participate in, or failure of, their first assessment item.

(17) When reviewing and assessing student work, lecturers and unit coordinators will consider whether students require literacy, numeracy, or other academic support and provide students with information about relevant support services.

(18) The University will communicate with at-risk students to ensure that they are aware of support services available

to assist them to complete their studies.

Supporting students

(19) The University recognises the important role of academic staff in providing academic support to students and referring students to non-academic support services.

(20) Academic staff are essential to the student journey and lecturers and unit coordinators will support students enrolled in their units by providing feedback, answering questions, and assisting students to engage with their studies and progress academically.

(21) Staff to whom a student reports academic or non-academic issues will advise the student of other supports that are available for their studies and wellbeing.

(22) The University has a number of services in place for students experiencing critical harm or distress. Support services, and how to access arrangements are listed on the CDU Life Health and Wellbeing support page.

(23) CDU's emotional distress and crisis response protocol outlines the arrangements in place for anyone experiencing distress, and guides anyone providing immediate support to someone in distress.

Provision of responsive and appropriate support services

(24) To ensure student support services are responsive and appropriate to CDU student needs, the University will assess on an annual basis:

a. student demand for and feedback in relation to support services;
b. whether student support services are culturally appropriate and trauma-informed; and
c. staffing levels of student support services.

(25) The University recognises that certain cohorts of students may require additional support and puts in place a comprehensive support system to cater to the diverse needs of students. Specific cohorts may include:

a. First Nations students;
b. Students with disability;
c. Students who have experienced gender-based violence, domestic, family, and sexual violence, and/or other traumatic events;
d. Elite athletes;
e. Students who are pregnant, breastfeeding or requiring postnatal support;
f. Students with religious or cultural needs;
g. Students with parenting or caring responsibilities;
h. International students; and
i. Students under 18.

Part B - Support for VET students

(26) Vocational education and training (VET) serves a diverse range of students, including school leavers, VET delivered to secondary students, international students, First Nations individuals, adults returning to study, and online and remote students, each with distinct characteristics, learning objectives, and support needs.

(27) During the design phase of a VET course, the VET Team Leader identifies student cohorts and designs training and assessment strategies to address their diverse needs.

(28) All strategies for training and wellbeing support specific to each student cohort are recorded in the curriculum management system (CMS).

Training Support

(29) VET delivery teams provide clear and accessible information about training support services such as how and when students can access lecturers, assessors and other relevant staff.

(30) Where required, training support services are identified for individual VET students to ensure their progress throughout the VET course. For further details on management of students' progression and students at risk, refer to the VET Domestic Student Progression Procedure and International Students - VET Course Progression Procedure, as applicable.

(31) VET lecturers will regularly remind students of the available training support services throughout the VET course.

(32) Reasonable adjustments are made for VET students with disability in accordance with the Students with Disability Policy. Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, the reasons are communicated to the VET student as soon as reasonably practicable.

(33) VET lecturers ensure that queries from VET students are responded to in a timely manner.

Wellbeing Support

(34) The wellbeing needs of student cohorts are identified within the context of their training and assessment.

(35) VET lecturers advise the VET student cohort of the availability of wellbeing support services, including any services students can contact, or additional action students can take to support their wellbeing within the training and assessment setting.

(36) Throughout the course, VET lecturers consistently remind students of the wellbeing support services available to them.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(37) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(38) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(39) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	31st October 2025
Review Date	31st October 2026
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	29th October 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Louise King Provost
Implementation Officer	Sarah Fletcher Director Student Engagement
Enquiries Contact	Sarah Fletcher Director Student Engagement Student Engagement

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.

"Gender-based violence" - Gender-based violence means any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy. Gender-based violence includes many acts of violence that are based on gender, and might include physical violence or abuse; sexual violence, abuse or harassment; sex-based harassment; emotional or psychological abuse; verbal abuse or threats; economic or financial abuse; stalking or monitoring; intimate partner violence; family and domestic violence; technology-facilitated abuse; coercive control; sexual trafficking; reproductive coercion; female genital mutilation; forced medical interventions; forced marriage; and/or a pattern or patterns of abusive behaviour. Intimate relationships where one person has supervisory, oversight, academic, or other decision-making responsibilities in relation to the other person can amplify or give rise to gender-based violence, including relationships that are or appear to be consensual.

"VET lecturer" - an employee of the University or a third-party partner who is a trainer and/or assessor for vocational education and training (VET) units of competency. VET lecturers include VET Team Leaders and higher education lecturers training or assessing in VET units.

"VET delivery team" - Vocational education and training staff involved in the delivery of training and assessment, inclusive of VET Team Leaders and VET lecturers. See also the glossary definition of VET lecturer.