Student Welfare Policy

1. Background

Gateway Business College (GBC) recognises the importance of fostering a safe, supportive and inclusive environment that promotes and prioritises student welfare and offers academic and non-academic support services to assist students achieve their personal and professional goals.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines the processes through which GBC identifies student welfare needs, ensures support services adequately address these needs, and informs students of the support services available at GBC.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the *Student Counselling Policy, Workplace Health and Safety Policy, Anti-Discrimination Policy, Academic Language and Learning Support Policy,* and *Information to Students Policy*.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in a course at GBC.

4. Definitions

Academic Board: the Academic board is responsible for academic governance at GBC. The Academic Board reports and advises the Corporate Governance Board on academic activity. This board oversees academic activities such as teaching, learning, scholarship, research, course approval, student outcomes, academic standards and academic policy.

Corporate Governance Board: the formally constituted governing body accountable for the governance of GBC as a higher education operation.

Course Coordinator: a senior academic staff member responsible for the management, coordination and delivery of a course at GBC. A Course Coordinator is expected to hold a PhD, and is responsible for supervising academic staff teaching within a course of study, developing course design and content, reviewing course design and content, teaching into a course of study, remaining research active and contributing to the improvement of academic standards.

Orientation program: a scheduled program of events and activities that occur prior to the commencement of each semester to introduce students to GBC, fellow students and the academic learning environment. Activities are informative, social and academic, including campus tours, academic skills workshops and introductions to key GBC staff and teaching and learning staff members.

Student Support Services: Services offered to students at GBC that provide academic and non-academic assistance.

5. Principles

All students have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student welfare and accommodates the requirements of their course of study. All students will have equal access to GBC's support services.

GBC is committed to ensuring equitable access to higher education and will develop a teaching and learning environment that caters to students from groups who are under-represented in the student population, and to students who face extenuating circumstances that may affect their learning. This may include students who:

- have a disability or long-term illness
- experience difficult family circumstances
- have been unduly affected by socio-economic circumstances
- completed secondary school in a regional or isolated area
- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

GBC greatly values diversity and recognizes that providing adequate support services is key to promoting diversity. GBC must take all reasonable steps to support students where external factors risk negatively impacting a student's academic performance. GBC will take all claims of difficult or disadvantageous circumstances with utmost seriousness and all students should have access to reasonable support when they are experiencing difficult or disadvantageous circumstances.

GBC must proactively identify any disadvantaged students in need of Gateway's support services and refer them to the relevant services.

6. Procedures

6.1 Student Handbook

GBC must issue a student handbook to all students upon enrolment. This handbook will include resources available to students regarding facilities, course-specific information, and a description of the full suite of student services available to higher education students at no additional charge. Student services described will be to assist students with academic and non-academic issues.

6.2 Identifying welfare needs

As part of their professional development, all teaching staff will be trained to identify and respond to a student who may benefit from GBC's welfare support services.

Academic staff may use student's academic results and class performance to identify students in need of academic support and will direct students to these services at their discretion. Further information regarding academic support services can be found in the *Academic Language and Learning Support Policy*.

In their annual review of courses and education delivered, Academic Board will use the following information to determine the effectiveness of student support services:

- Attrition rates
- Percentage of students identified as 'at risk' and those who are making unsatisfactory course progression
- Uptake of student services

- Reports made to the Academic Board by it's the Course Monitoring Committee about Student Evaluation of Teaching Survey data and student performance metrics (refer to the *Student Evaluation of Teaching Policy*.)

Support services will be reviewed and directions for improvements made that will reflect the feedback provided in annual reports.

6.3 Communication of welfare services

A clear overview of the welfare services available at GBC will accompany a student's welcome letter to inform students of the various welfare services available at GBC, in addition to the material presented in the Student Handbook.

GBC will additionally inform all new students in detail of the welfare services available throughout the campus, their hours of availability, and relevant contact details during the new student orientation sessions (refer to the *Orientation Policy*).

6.4 Physical and Mental Health

GBC must ensure it fosters a learning environment that is safe for students both in terms of physical and mental wellbeing. In regards to physical wellbeing, GBC must:

- Ensure all buildings and facilities are compliant with all relevant health and safety legislation
- Employ trained staff who will be available during all working hours in the event of injury or illness
- Identify and mitigate or eliminate all workplace hazards
- Develop plans in the case of emergencies, as detailed in the current *Business Continuity Plan*
- Ensure that all buildings and facilities are disability friendly, as outlined in the *Disability Support Policy.*

Regarding mental wellbeing, GBC must:

- Establish comprehensive anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies, providing protection for students who are underrepresented in the student cohort
- Introduce strict disciplinary repercussions for those who engage in the acts of bullying or discrimination (refer to the *Anti-Discrimination Policy*)

GBC will also ensure that processes are in place to enable the referral of students to suitable medical practitioners if required (refer to the *Student Counselling Policy.*)

6.5 English Language Support Services

GBC must make English language support services available to all students for whom English is not their first language. These services will be designed to ensure that students have the adequate language skills to be able to complete their chosen degree at a higher education level.

Support will include writing, listening, reading and speaking skills designed to help students throughout their program of study. Students who utilise GBC's English language support services must still have met the requisite level of English proficiency as outlined in the *English Language Entry Requirements Policy*.

6.6 Disability Support Services

GBC is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment for all of its students. Crucial to this is the provision of services that adequately cater for people with a disability who are studying at GBC.

GBC will therefore implement adequate disability services including suitable infrastructure, facilities, procedures and any necessary departments designed to assist peoples living with a disability in their studies, as detailed in the *Disability Support Policy*.

7. Records

Records associated with this policy will be maintained according to the Records Management Policy.

8. Related legislation

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
- TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
- The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code 2018)
- the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board every three years, or more frequently should the Board deem it necessary.

Version Control

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