



Code of

---

Practice

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About AH&MRC

The Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of New South Wales (AH&MRC), formerly the Aboriginal Health Resource Co-op (AHRC), was established in 1985 following a recommendation of the *Breerton Report* by the NSW Aboriginal Task Force on Aboriginal Health in 1982-83. The *Report* recognised Aboriginal community control as crucial in laying the foundation for a better standard of health care for Aboriginal people. One role recommended for the AH&MRC was to advise Ministers for Health & Aboriginal Affairs at State and Federal levels on Aboriginal health policy, programs and needs. The *Report* sought an increased measure of control by the Aboriginal community over health service delivery and resources and acknowledged that the Aboriginal community controlled health sector is the most appropriate means by which this outcome can be achieved at both policy and service levels.

The AH&MRC aims to assist the delivery of culturally appropriate primary health care to Aboriginal people. An important objective is to provide training to address the needs of both those workers who are currently working as Aboriginal Sexual Health Workers (ASHW), and generalist Aboriginal Health Workers (AHW) needing to expand their knowledge and skills in the area of sexual health issues. This training is provided primarily through delivery of the Diploma of Community Services (Case Management) with a focus on Aboriginal Sexual Health.

The four most significant effects of this course are that participants will enhance their confidence and competence to:

- work in the area of Aboriginal sexual health
- provide access to socially, culturally and economically appropriate services for Aboriginal people at risk of contracting, or having been diagnosed as having an STI or BBI
- liaise with existing health services, thereby promoting access for Aboriginal people to other services
- raise awareness of the particular context and needs of Aboriginal people.

Over an extended period of time, each Aboriginal Sexual Health Worker's contribution will be an adjunct to the activities of other health professionals and community members in the enhancement of the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, families and communities

## 1.2 Registration

AH&MRC is registered to provide the following training:

- Diploma in Community Services (Case Management) with a focus on Aboriginal Sexual Health (CHC50902)s.
  
- Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ40198).

## 1.3 The aim of the code

The aim of this Code is to produce the best possible learning outcomes for students and clients by developing a quality service with standards of ethical behaviour between all parties concerned.

## 1.4 Purpose

AH&MRC is committed to high standards in the provision of education and training to Aboriginal people. This Code of Practice describes the minimum standards of our service delivery and customer support.

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), AH&MRC has agreed to operate within the Principles and Standards of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). This includes a commitment to recognise the training qualifications issued by other Registered Training Organisations.

The policies set out in this Code of Practice underpin the operations of AH&MRC. AH&MRC recognises that registration as a RTO may be withdrawn if it does not honour the obligations of this Code of Practice.

- AH&MRC has a commitment to providing a quality service with a focus on a continuous improvement.
- AH&MRC values feedback from students, trainers, assessors, clients and industry representatives.
- Where possible, AH&MRC designs diagnostic assessment instruments specific to student needs.

### 1.5 The Code is intended to produce the following outcomes:

- A framework for the delivery of high quality training services to all students
- Best practice and innovative delivery of training services
- A flexible and innovative training service that is responsive to a dynamic labour market
- A consumer protection measure for participants which ensures they receive the highest possible learning outcomes which are nationally recognised
- Methods for identifying inadequacies or problems in the delivery of services.

## 2. AH & MRC staff responsibilities

The following will be expected at all times from AH&MRC staff in the provision of training and assessment services.

### 2.1 Demonstrate respect and equitable access for students

- Recognising participants' particular needs and circumstances including taking account of their beliefs, cultural and community practices
- Informing students of the names and roles of the staff delivering the training service
- Behaving courteously to students and clients
- Providing accurate and up-to-date, culturally-appropriate information.

### 2.2 Act with professionalism and integrity

- Conducting all business in a manner which is ethical and lawful
- Ensuring that staff are appropriately skilled and qualified to provide clients with the best possible service
- Providing a safe and productive working environment for staff
- Conducting all business, including that with other providers, in a manner that encourages the respect of participants and employers and enhances the standing of the training industry
- Acknowledging any limits to AH&MRC's capacity, for example, by seeking external assistance where specialist expertise is required.

## 2.3 Provide the best quality training services

- Professional assessment of students with regard to their particular training needs and in accordance with the National Assessment principles
- Provision of high quality training materials
- Recognition of Prior Learning and credit transfer, where appropriate
- Advising students of assessment processes and rights of appeals
- Provision of quality mentor support during training
- Ensuring learning and qualifications are delivered, assessed and recorded in accordance with the appropriate national guidelines
- Ensuring agreed delivery methods, standards and timetabling are adhered to, or immediate alternative arrangements are organised.

## 2.4 Provide access to a complaints, grievances, appeals process

- Making available to participants clear and concise information on the operation and procedures of the complaints, grievances and appeals process
- Establishing and maintaining an internal system to deal fairly with participants' complaints, grievances and appeals.

## 2.5 Exercise responsibility in advertising

- Advertising in a way that is not misleading, vague or ambiguous and accurately reflects AH&MRC's scope of registration for courses offered
- Seeking prior written permission from individuals or organisations referred to in any AH&RC advertising or marketing materials
- Advertising within the guidelines for advertising by RTOs and for accredited courses.

## 2.6 Ensure student's privacy and confidentiality

- Complying with contract requirements as well as the National Privacy Principles and Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988* when dealing with the management of personal information
- Complying with relevant legislation in the handling of information relating to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Blood Borne Infections (BBIs)
- Securing student records and respecting their privacy in the conduct of all business.



## 3. General information

### 3.1 Student grievances and complaints

In the event of a grievance or complaint about the quality of training services, the Chief Executive Officer, Ms Sandra Bailey, should be contacted. Alternatively, these can be lodged in writing to PO Box 1565 Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012. This will give AH&MRC an opportunity to address the grievance/complaint and provide student's with a quality training service.

All grievances and complaints will be dealt with:

- in a confidential manner and with impartiality
- within 14 days of receipt of the grievance/complaint
- and a written response of the outcomes and/or decisions provided.

Positive feedback and comments are welcome and can be provided in the same manner.

### 3.2 Educational standards

- AH&MRC adopts policies and management practices which maintain high professional standards in the marketing and delivery of Vocational Education Training services which safeguard the interests of our clients.
- AH&MRC maintains a learning environment that is conducive to the success of students. It guarantees to provide all necessary resources, in the form of trainers, assessors, facilities and materials to deliver its services.
- AH&MRC will issue qualifications and Statements of Attainment within its scope of registration to students who meet the required outcomes of the qualification or unit/s of competency, in accordance with all appropriate national guidelines.

### 3.3 Marketing

AH&MRC markets its products and services with integrity, accuracy and professionalism. In the provision of information no false or misleading comparisons will be drawn with any other service provider.

### 3.4 Student information

AH&MRC provides accurate, relevant and up-to-date information to clients and their employees prior to course commencement. This will include information such as:

- AH&MRC's Code of Practice
- any course pre-requisites or materials
- total costs/fees payable by students and employers
- certification to be issued to students on completion or partial completion of a course
- competencies to be achieved by students
- assessment procedures
- arrangements for mutual recognition and Recognition of Prior Learning
- complaints, grievances and appeals policies and procedures
- location of training venues
- student support services.

### 3.5 Recruitment

AH&MRC has sound human resources policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection, induction and ongoing development of each member of staff involved in training and assessment service delivery to students and clients. All human resources processes are conducted in an ethical, responsible and culturally appropriate manner.

AH&MRC also has a performance management system (see separate policy) which encourages and provides opportunities for the ongoing professional development of staff and performance monitoring.

Staff of AH&MRC undertake an induction process which provides information and materials relevant to their work including:

- Training Packages and the National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- Competency-based training & assessment
- VET requirements and policies
- New Apprenticeships/Traineeships
- Enrolment procedures
- RPL and mutual recognition arrangements
- Appeals, complaints and grievances processes
- Language, literacy and numeracy
- Disciplinary procedures
- Access and equity issues and principles
- Aboriginal health.

### 3.6 Fees and refunds

Upon AH&MRC acceptance of student registration for a course within its scope, an invoice will be issued and the student will become responsible for payment of fees. The student invoice clearly sets out the amount due and the payment due date.

Refunds may be paid to the student if:

- a course or program is cancelled
- the student withdraws from a course or program before the payment due date
- other circumstances require payment of a refund according to the AH&MRC refund policy.

### 3.7 Guarantee

AH&MRC will honour all obligations outlined in training contracts with students and clients.

### 3.8 International students

In the course of its usual business, AH&MRC provides training and assessment services to Aboriginal people. In the event that an international student participated in an AH&MRC course, AH&MRC would provide training and assessment services in line with the contractual and legislative obligations relating to service delivery for that student.

## 4. AH&MRC policies and procedures

### 4.1 Management, administrative and financial practices

*AH&MRC is committed to quality training and client service. As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) it operates under a Code of Conduct and this Code of Practice to ensure its commitment to quality service. It is committed to quality management with an emphasis on continuous improvement and staff, student, client and community satisfaction. This assists AH&MRC in understanding staff, student, client and community needs, ensures AH&MRC is measuring satisfaction with the services it provides, and drives and improves business processes by continuously checking if processes are working or need to be improved*

4.1.1 AH&MRC has developed policies and procedures to ensure the provision of quality training and assessment services to Aboriginal people consistent with its scope of registration and scale of operations. This Code of Practice details AH&MRC policies and procedures relating to the provision of training services.

AH&MRC also has the following separate statements of policies and procedures:

- code of conduct
- risk management policy
- workplace diversity – discrimination and harassment policy and principles
- human resources records policy
- performance management policy and procedures
- continuous improvement policy and procedures
- financial management policy and procedures.

4.1.2 AH&MRC's Chief Executive Officer ensures policies and procedures are circulated to and understood by staff.

4.1.3 AH&MRC's Chief Executive Officer ensures policies and procedures are consistently reviewed and improved.

4.1.4 AH&MRC's Chief Executive Officer conducts an internal audit of its compliance against the Australian Quality Training Framework and the AQTF standards on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance.

4.1.5 AH&MRC's Board of Management guarantees AH&MRC's sound financial position and safeguards student fees until used for training and assessment purposes.

- 4.1.6 Student records are managed securely and confidentially and are available for student perusal on request in accordance with relevant privacy guidelines.
- 4.1.7 AH&MRC maintains adequate insurance policies with regard to workers compensation, public liability, professional indemnity and building and contents insurance.

## 4.2 Training and assessment standards

- 4.2.1 All training and assessment strategies will be developed within AH&MRC's scope of registration as an RTO and using stakeholder/industry consultation and feedback processes. The training and assessment strategies should identify proposed target groups, delivery and assessment modes and strategies and assessment validation processes and pathways.
- 4.2.2 A panel of assessors, trainers and subject experts review all assessment and learning materials and provide feedback and recommendations before materials are finalised and implemented.
- 4.2.3 AH&MRC embraces policies and management practices that maintain high professional standards in the marketing and delivery of Vocational Education and Training services. These policies and practices will safeguard the interests and welfare of students.
- 4.2.4 All trainers will maintain a learning environment that is culturally appropriate and conducive to the success of students. They will have the capacity to deliver the training and facilitate the assessment relevant to the training services offered and provide adequate facilities and use appropriate methods and materials.
- 4.2.5 Assessment will meet the National Assessment principles (including Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer).
- 4.2.6 All training and assessment materials will be regulated through version control procedures to ensure currency and quality assurance of materials being used.

## 4.3 Legislative requirements

*AH&MRC has identified and complies with relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth legislation covering Occupational Health and Safety, workplace harassment, victimisation and bullying, anti-discrimination including equal opportunity, racial vilification, disability and discrimination.*

*It identifies and complies with legislation relevant to its RTO operations and ensures:*

- *Staff are provided with information about legislation that significantly affects their duties.*
- *Students and clients are provided with information about legislation that significantly affects their participation in education and training.*

*In addition, AH&MRC recognises and complies with the following legislation specific to the nature of its services:*

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*
- *Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987*
- *Crimes Act 1900*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1989*
- *Health Care Complaints Act 1993*
- *Health Services Act 1997*
- *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983*
- *Ombudsman Act 1974*
- *Protected Disclosures Act 1994*
- *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*
- *Public Sector Management Act 1988*
- *Public Health Act 1991.*

#### 4.4 Access and equity and recruitment

*AH&MRC is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination as they apply to the training and staff development function for all client organisations and their staff regardless of their sexuality, marital status, status as a parent or carer, pregnancy, race, religion or political conviction, social origin and impairment. It monitors staff performance against and adherence to access and equity principles through student/client feedback and the performance management system.*

*A separate Workplace Diversity policy has also been developed.*

*In particular, the following points are observed:*

- *training and assessment services are culturally appropriate*
- *characters (and their names) used in case studies, exercises and examples are free from stereotype and unlikely to cause offence*
- *material and presenters discourage and prevent polarisation of participants*
- *the course content, process and/or activities include all students and avoid giving an advantage to any one individual or group over another*
- *verbal and non-verbal language is non-discriminatory*
- *humour is non-discriminatory*
- *course materials (such as session plans, videos, handouts, graphics, cartoons, computer screens etc.) are non-discriminatory, unlikely to offend and promote EEO principles where possible.*

- 4.4.1 AH&MRC will meet the needs of individuals and the community through the integration of access and equity guidelines. AH&MRC ensures that that equity principles for all people are implemented through the fair allocation of resources and the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination. AH&MRC will increase opportunities for people to participate in the Vocational Education and Training system, and in associated decisions, which affect their lives.
- 4.4.2 All students are recruited in an ethical, responsible and equitable manner adhering to equal opportunity legislation and consistent with the requirements of the training services.
- 4.4.3 AH&MRC ensures that all staff members comply with access and equity legislation and principles.
- 4.4.4 Appropriate qualified staff will assess the extent to which the student is likely to achieve the unit of competency or outcomes of the course, based on the student's qualifications and competencies.
- 4.4.5 AH&MRC prohibits discrimination towards any group or individuals in any form, inclusive of:
- Gender
  - Pregnancy
  - Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or ethno-religious background
  - Marital status
  - Homosexuality (male or female, actual or presumed)
  - Age (in relation to compulsory retirement).

Access and equity issues and principles are considered in training delivery and assessment services.

## 4.5 Marketing and advertising

- 4.5.1 AH&MRC will market their Vocational Education and Training with integrity, accuracy, and professionalism, avoiding vague and ambiguous statements.
- 4.5.2 In the provision of information no false or misleading comparisons will be drawn with any other training provider or course.
- 4.5.3 AH&MRC's marketing strategies will not contravene legislation.
- 4.5.4 Students will be recruited responsibly and ethically at all times and recruitment will be consistent with any Training Package/product requirements. AH&MRC is committed to non-discrimination in any form when recruiting and selecting and at all times complies with equal opportunity and anti-



discrimination legislation. There may be prerequisites before commencing a program due to health requirements or the nature of the program.

## 4.6 Student/client service, welfare and guidance

- 4.6.1 AH&MRC has sound management practices to ensure effective student/client service. In particular AH&MRC has service standards to ensure timely issue of student assessment results and qualifications. These will be appropriate to competence achieved and issued in accordance with national guidelines.
- 4.6.2 Student records and documentation are recorded, kept confidential and securely archived. Students can access their own files upon written request to AH&MRC administration.
- 4.6.3 AH&MRC has student welfare and guidance services relevant to the training services. These include literacy and numeracy support, job search assistance and referral to counselling as appropriate.
- 4.6.4 Upon enrolment to a course, students are assisted to develop an individual learning plan. This process will identify any adaptive technology which may be required, any additional tutoring assistance and determine a timeframe for the training and assessment to be conducted.

## 4.7 Student information and assistance

- 4.7.1 AH&MRC will provide accurate, relevant and up-to-date information to all students prior to commencement about all aspects of their training and assessment. This will include but not be limited to:
- A copy of this Code Of Practice
  - Information about AH&MRC's refund policy (where applicable)
  - Information about AH&MRC's complaints, grievances and appeals processes
  - Information about AH&MRC's access and equity policy
  - Details relating to total fees, costs and charges (where applicable)
  - The award to be issued to the student on completion or partial completion of the course
  - Competencies to be achieved by students
  - Admission procedures and criteria
  - Assessment procedures
  - Student support services
  - Arrangements for mutual recognition and Recognition of Prior Learning.

- 4.7.2 Where necessary, arrangements will be made for those students requiring literacy and/or numeracy support programs. All students may elect to be assessed in order to ascertain if their literacy and numeracy skills are sufficient to successfully undertake the training program. This is usually via interview or completion of an exercise contained in the proposed training program. Those who require further assessment will be assisted through an external qualified expert. Any costs incurred for fee-for-service students will be the responsibility of the student.
- 4.7.3 AH&MRC recognises special needs that some students may have because of their individual background and experience. Some may progress at different levels, and may encounter different learning barriers than others. AH&MRC will endeavour to provide and maintain a professional learning support environment, wherein the student can progress at a pace consistent with their own expectations.
- 4.7.4 AH&MRC will take every opportunity to ensure that this information is disseminated, understood and valued by all AH&MRC staff and students.

## 4.8 Complaints, grievances & appeals

*AH&MRC's policy of handling complaints, grievances and appeals is based on the following principles:*

- *Feedback on performance provides an opportunity for AH&MRC to improve its service to students and clients.*
- *Staff, students and community members are encouraged to comment on any aspects of AH&MRC's performance to ensure continuous improvement and to resolve difficulties.*
- *Staff, students and clients have rights and responsibilities which are integral to the resolution of any problems.*
- *Complaints should be taken seriously by staff at every level and every effort should be made to resolve identified problems as soon as feedback is received and to ensure that the problem does not recur.*

- 4.8.1 AH&MRC has a fair and equitable process for dealing with student grievances, complaints and appeals. AH&MRC team members will be fair, courteous and helpful in all dealings with students. In the event that complaints or grievances cannot be resolved internally, AH&MRC will advise the student of the appropriate external avenue for assistance.
- 4.8.2 Student/client complaints, grievances and appeals will be dealt with in a timely and constructive manner.
- 4.8.3 Each complaint, grievance or appeal and its outcome will be recorded in writing.
- 4.8.4 Appeals will be heard by an independent person or panel.
- 4.8.5 Each appellant will be provided with an opportunity to formally present his or her case and will be provided with a written statement of the appeal outcomes, including reasons for decisions.

## 4.9 Continuous improvement

*AH&MRC's is committed to continuous improvement of its programs, subjects, teaching methods and administration. Feedback is encouraged from staff, students, clients and community members to ensure the continuous improvement of quality, culturally-appropriate and targeted training services to Aboriginal people.*

- 4.9.1 AH&MRC conducts regular reviews of its training service. Feedback from staff, students, clients and the community is encouraged, welcomed and implemented through continuous improvement planning. Surveys are used by AH&MRC to gauge the effectiveness of service provision and staff/student/client satisfaction.
- 4.9.2 AH&MRC Board of Management reviews its business practices and training services through an annual organisational planning process. Outcomes of this review including feedback received are implemented to ensure ongoing improvement in business practices and training services.
- 4.9.3 AH&MRC conducts an annual internal audit of its compliance against the AQTF. This enables continuous improvement of systems and services through the compliance process.
- 4.9.4 AH&MRC has agreed to participate in external monitoring and audit processes required by the State Training Authority. This covers random audits, audit following complaints and audit for the purposes of re-registration.

## 4.10 Apprenticeship/Traineeship training contracts

*In the course of its normal education and training services, AH&MRC does not enter into agreements involving Apprentices/Trainees as part of an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract. In the unusual circumstance that AH&MRC did enter into such an agreement and in conjunction with the usual services provided to students:*

- 4.10.1 AH&MRC would develop a Learning Plan which is tailored to meet the needs of the employer and the Apprentice/Trainee
- 4.10.2 AH&MRC would outline in the Learning Plan what training and assessment would be conducted off-the-job and what would be conducted on-the job and how AH&MRC would assist in ensuring the integrity of both aspects of the training and assessment process
- 4.10.3 AH&MRC would provide the employer and Apprentice/Trainee with appropriate induction information about the Learning Plan.

## 4.11 Records management

*AH&MRC provides quality systems for record management which ensure the privacy, integrity, access and currency of student records. Through its records management procedures, AH&MRC provides for the following:*

- 4.11.1 Student records are stored securely including backup of electronic records.
- 4.11.2 Retention, archival and retrieval of student results for a period of 30 years.
- 4.11.3 Retention, archival and retrieval of all other records consistent with contractual and legal obligations and requirements of the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB).
- 4.11.4 Transfer of student records and results consistent with VETAB requirements.
- 4.11.5 Compliance with external reporting requirements such as AVETMISS (if applicable).
- 4.11.6 Safeguarding of confidential information obtained by AH&MRC or any committees, individuals or organisations acting on its behalf.
- 4.11.7 Privacy of information about students and clients. Such information will not be disclosed to a third party without the prior written consent of the individual with whom the information relates to.
- 4.11.8 Access by students and clients to their personal records.

## 4.12 RPL/RCC and mutual recognition

*AH&MRC recognises Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other RTOs. Advanced standing will be awarded for the successful completion through another RTO of national units of competency which are included in programs offered by AH&MRC.*

*AH&MRC also provides a Recognition Application for students to undertake a self assessment process to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This process accounts for work experience, life experience or formal study which cannot be recognised by credit transfer. It recognises the skills and knowledge which students have and can demonstrate.*

- 4.10.1 Students who consider that through prior learning and/or experience they have gained the skills/competencies required for units of competency within courses offered by AH&MRC may be granted credit upon substantiation of that claim.
- 4.10.2 Students should complete a Recognition Application prior to gathering necessary evidence to support their claim for recognition.

## 4.13 Assessment criteria

*AH&MRC has developed quality learning and assessment materials. The Assessor Guides provide information for students on the assessment process, developing an evidence portfolio and undertaking a self assessment process for recognition of prior learning.*

4.11.1 The objective is for the student to show that they have achieved the skills and knowledge for the required units of competency. Students may be assessed through one or more of the following methods:

- Observation – the completion of a specified task or set of procedures, normally performed under close supervision, using a detailed checklist.
- Oral questioning – a response is provided to a series of questions presented in order to demonstrate understanding of principles or reasoning behind the action taken.
- Case study – an opportunity to display problem solving and decision making skills is provided in a simulated context.
- Multiple choice – a question or incomplete statement followed by several options from which the student selects the appropriate answer/s.
- Written short answer – a written response item consisting of a question/s with answers of a single word, a few words, a sentence, or a paragraph.
- Work project – an exercise or investigation based on a real life situation, generally requiring a significant part of the work being carried out without supervision, and involving the completion of a project report.
- Or any other method outlined in the student's guide.

Students will be advised of the assessment methodology before training commences.

#### 4.14 Issue of certificates and statements of attainment

4.12.1 AH&MRC will issue the specified Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment within 14 working days in accordance with the following:

- **Qualification:** for successful completion of the assessment requirements for **all units of competency** for the national qualification
- **Statements of Attainment:** for successful completion of the assessment requirements for **clusters of individual units of competency** from the national qualification.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Officer of: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

## Attachment 1 to AH&amp;MRC Code of Practice

# information to be provided to students:

- copy of the Code of Practice
- the accreditation status of the course
- entry requirements
- fee structures and refunds
- arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Learning and mutual recognition
- the commencement dates and duration of courses
- the time commitment involved in undertaking the training offered
- the qualification/certification to be issued on completion or partial completion of the course of study
- requirements to achieve the qualification
- how the course articulates with other training
- expected employment outcomes
- policies on assessment
- internal and external complaints, grievances and appeals processes
- student rights and responsibilities
- RTO rights and responsibilities
- withdrawal arrangements
- conditions under which tuition may be terminated
- student support services