# ISP Online Studies Policy

## Purpose

This policy provides guidance relating to online studies available to secondary school international students holding a subclass 500 Student ­– Schools visa (Standard and Study Abroad students) enrolled in the International Student Program (ISP).

This policy is for Department of Education (DE or department) International Education Division (IED) staff, international students, parents, legal guardians, department-accredited education agents and ISP-accredited schools.

## Scope

This policy is applicable to international students participating in, or considering participating in, online studies.

International student participation in online studies is limited to the following providers:

* the Victorian School of Languages (VSL)
* Virtual School Victoria (VSV)
* Victorian Virtual Learning Network (VVLN)
* Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES), limited to VCE subjects delivered by CHES.

International students are not able to participate in online studies with other Victorian government schools or third-party education providers, as these are not offered as part of the ISP. International students are also not permitted to take part in distance education, by which we mean full-time education offered primarily online or by written correspondence for students who are not able to attend a Victorian government school.

## Policy

* Once enrolled in a Victorian government school, it is expected that an international student will undertake their studies at their host school and that the studies will be delivered face-to-face. However, in limited circumstances and after assessing the international student’s suitability, a principal may permit an international student to undertake a subject that is not available at their school, or where there is a clash in class scheduling, via online studies with VSL, VSV, VVLN or CHES.
* Where an international student is permitted to undertake a subject via this mode of study, the student is limited to studying two subjects online per study period (semester). Each semester the international student must study at least one unit that is not by online learning, unless the student is completing the last unit of their course. As the student will only undertake limited subjects through online learning, this requirement should be met.
* To ensure that an international student receives appropriate support during their online studies, a member of staff from the student’s host school must be nominated by the principal as the student’s school supervisor. The school supervisor is responsible for completing the necessary paperwork prior to a student’s enrolment in these studies, checking the student’s study load to ensure no more than two subjects are being studied online per semester, maintaining contact and supporting the student throughout these studies, ensuring the school uses the [ISP Online Studies Student Assessment](https://study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Online_Studies_Assessment.docx) and [Acceptable Use Agreement](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/acceptable-use-agreement-for-upper-primary-secondary-schools-guidelines-template.docx) documents, and ensuring the school adheres to this policy and the [ISP Online Studies Procedure](https://study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Online_Studies_Procedure.docx).
* The school supervisor must maintain contact and provide support to the international student by meeting with the student following their first class or week of online studies to discuss the studies and respond to any questions or concerns raised by the student. The school supervisor must then meet with the student to discuss these studies a minimum of once per term, or more frequently if this has been identified as an additional support required by the student.
* Schools must demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to support international students who may be disadvantaged by taking part of their course by online learning. To demonstrate this, prior to permission being granted for a student to undertake online learning, schools must complete a student assessment using the [ISP Online Studies Student Assessment](https://study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Online_Studies_Assessment.docx) document to determine any additional supports the student may require, and, if the student’s participation is permitted, provide the supports at no cost to the student.

### Payment for these studies

* The fees that an international student accepts in their written agreement to study in a Victorian government school includes provision for the online study options outlined in this policy and a student is not required to pay any additional fees for undertaking studies online with VSL, VSV, VVLN or CHES.
* Schools are not required to pay for an international student’s participation with VSL, VSV, VVLN or CHES directly. As per Ministerial Order 819, DE (IED) will withhold a portion of the funds that would normally go to the host school and disburse payment for these studies to these schools directly.

### Monitoring international student attendance and course progress

#### Attendance

* International students holding a 500 Student ­– Schools visa have a visa condition that requires them to maintain adequate attendance, as described in the [ISP Attendance Policy](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Attendance_Policy.docx). This includes attendance in any online studies undertaken by a student. Providers can record online study attendance in a number of ways, including by presence in an online class, by coursework submitted or by a combination of both.
* The school supervisor must monitor and record an international student’s attendance when they are participating in online studies. The providers are required to make a notification to the school or DE (IED) if a student has not submitted work or engaged in online learning in two weeks.

#### Course progress

* International students holding a 500 Student ­– Schools visa have a visa condition that requires them to maintain adequate course progress, as described in the [ISP Course Progress Policy](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Course_Progress_Policy.docx). This includes course progress in any online studies undertaken by a student.
* The school supervisor must monitor an international student’s course progress by reviewing mid-semester and end-of-semester reports from providers. Providers must notify the school immediately if a student is at risk of not meeting their course progress requirements and requires additional assistance. The school supervisor should respond immediately to any such advice in accordance with the [ISP Course Progress Policy](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Course_Progress_Policy.docx) for early intervention to mitigate any risk to the student of not maintaining satisfactory subject progress. The school supervisor must liaise with the provider to ensure all reasonable learning and welfare supports are offered to the student at no additional cost.

### Child Safety

* Prior to permitting an international student to participate in online learning, schools must have in place an [Acceptable Use Agreement](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/acceptable-use-agreement-for-upper-primary-secondary-schools-guidelines-template.docx) relating to the use of internet and other online and digital technologies. The school supervisor must explain the agreement to the student, talk to the student about online cybersafety, and have the student sign the agreement.
* The VSL, VSV, VVLN and CHES are Victorian government schools and are subject to [Ministerial Order 1359 - Implementing the Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf). They must adhere to the department’s policy on [Child Safe Standards](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy).

### Complaints

* Where an international student has a complaint that they have not been able to resolve informally with the provider, the school supervisor should instruct the student to lodge a formal complaint with DE (IED). The [ISP Complaints and Appeals Policy](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Complaints_and_Appeals_Policy.docx) and [ISP Complaints Form](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/ComplaintsForm.pdf) can be accessed online under *Brochures and Forms* on [www.study.vic.gov.au](http://www.study.vic.gov.au).

## Roles and responsibilities

* The **Manager, Strategy and Quality Assurance Unit, IED**, is responsible for maintaining and updating this policy.
* The **Executive Director, IED**, is responsible for the approval of this policy as the nominated Principal Executive Officer of the department as a Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) registered provider.
* The **school supervisor** is responsible for undertaking pre- and post-approval administrative and support tasks.
* The **principal** is responsible for approving an international student’s participation in online studies after considering the assessment that have been conducted.

## Legislation

* *Migration Act 1958* (Cth)
* *Education Services and Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cth)
* *ESOS National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (Cth)
* *Education Training and Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
* *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
* *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic)
* *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic)
* *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic)
* *Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools* (Vic)
* *Ministerial Order 819 – Fees for Overseas Students in Government Schools* (Vic)

## Associated documents

* [ISP Online Studies Student Assessment](https://study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Online_Studies_Assessment.docx)
* [ISP Online Studies Procedure](https://study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Online_Studies_Procedure.docx)
* [DE Acceptable Use Agreement Template](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/acceptable-use-agreement-for-upper-primary-secondary-schools-guidelines-template.docx)
* [ISP Course Progress Policy](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Course_Progress_Policy.docx)
* [ISP Attendance Policy](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Attendance_Policy.docx)
* [ISP Complaints and Appeals Policy](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/School_Toolkit/ISP_Complaints_and_Appeals_Policy.docx)
* [ISP Complaint Form](https://www.study.vic.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/en/ComplaintsForm.pdf)

## Definitions

* **CHES** means Centre for Higher Education Studies. International students are only permitted to study VCE subjects delivered by CHES and not permitted to enrol in a higher education studies subject delivered by a university partner.
* **CRICOS** means Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.
* **DE** or the department means the Department of Education in Victoria.
* **DE (IED)** means the Department of Education – International Education Division. IED is the division in the department that administers the ISP in Victorian government schools. IED is not a separate entity to the department, which is the CRICOS-registered provider.
* **International students or students** for the purpose of this policy are defined as secondary school students participating in the ISP under a subclass 500 Student ­– Schools visa.
* **ISP** means International Student Program. For the purpose of this policy it is defined as the department’s ISP administered by DE (IED).
* **Online learning** refers to studies mostly conducted through electronic communication with the VSL, VSV, VVLN and CHES. The VSL refers to online learning as distance education which is not to be confused with our definition of distance education in this policy.
* **Parent** refers to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of an international student.
* **Provider** refers to VSL, VSV, VVLN and CHES (Victorian government schools).
* **School** means any Victorian government school accredited by DE (IED) to deliver the ISP.
* **School supervisor** refers to a staff member at the school nominated by the principal to provide support to an international student participating in, or considering participating in, online learning.
* **VCE** means Victorian Certificate of Education.
* **VSL** means Victorian School of Languages.
* **VSV** means Virtual School Victoria.
* **VVLN** means Victorian Virtual Learning Network (delivered through Bendigo Senior Secondary College).

## Policy contact and maintenance officer

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## Authorised

Executive Director, International Education Division

**Date of authorisation**: 04/07/2023

**Date last reviewed**: 13/11/2023

**Review frequency**: This policy will be reviewed at minimum every 24 months or when any changes arise impacting its currency, including legislative or regulation change.