

STUDENT SERVICES, AMENITIES, REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY GUIDELINES

The Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines (the Guidelines) will be a legislative instrument made under proposed amendments to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA).

Higher education providers (HEPs) that receive funding under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme will be required to satisfy the Guidelines which detail the **National Access to Services Benchmarks**, relating to the provision of information on and access to student support services of a non-academic nature and the **National Student Representation and Advocacy Protocols**, relating to mechanisms for opportunities for student representation and access to advocacy services.

The Benchmarks and Protocols are intended to ensure that higher education providers give appropriate attention to a range of essential student support services and that enrolled students are able to participate in the decision making processes of the HEP through opportunities for democratically elected student representation.

Part 1 – National Access to Services Benchmarks

Part 1 of the Guidelines is the **National Access to Services Benchmarks**.

These Benchmarks set out the services which HEPs are to provide information on, and access to, for enrolled students.

1. HEPs must provide an orientation program for all enrolled students.
 - a) An orientation program should be accessible to all enrolled students, including allowing for those enrolling at different entry points.
 - b) An orientation program may provide relevant information to enrolled students in a number of ways. This might include electronically on the HEP's website, via email, SMS broadcasts or pod casts, in written or oral form.
2. HEPs must ensure that enrolled students are provided with information on and access to available:
 - a) **Health services**
These services will include medical and emergency health services, mental health services and health-related counselling. HEPs must not charge students when making a referral to an external provider.
 - b) **Welfare services**
These services will include services to assist with accommodation, financial matters, legal concerns and employment. HEPs must not charge students when making a referral to an external provider.

3. HEPs must ensure that where they provide services directly to enrolled students trained and qualified staff are engaged to meet the needs of enrolled students under each Benchmark.
4. HEPs are expected to consider the varying and differing circumstances of the enrolled student body in determining the level of support at a particular campus.

Part 2 – National Student Representation and Advocacy Protocols

Part 2 of the Guidelines is the **National Student Representation and Advocacy Protocols**.

These Protocols set out a framework that ensures there are opportunities for the interests of enrolled students to be considered in institutional decision making. These Protocols also aim to ensure that independent advocacy services are available to all enrolled students.

1. A HEP must provide enrolled students with the opportunity to participate in a process to democratically elect student representatives:
 - a) Student representatives must be students enrolled at the relevant HEP.
 - b) The form of student representation will be established through consultation between enrolled students and the relevant HEP.
 - c) In meeting this obligation a HEP is to meet the necessary and reasonable costs of conducting valid and transparent polls for this purpose.
2. A HEP must publish the details of the mechanisms, approved by the governing body of that HEP, by which students would be consulted by the HEP.
 - a) A HEP must consult with students to identify the best way of satisfying the Protocols at that HEP.
 - b) A HEP must consult with students regarding the provision of non-academic services and amenities funded by the proceeds of a compulsory services and amenities fee.
3. A HEP must provide adequate and reasonable support resources and infrastructure for elected student representatives to carry out their functions on behalf of enrolled students.
4. A HEP must provide enrolled students with access to independent advocacy services in relation to matters arising under the academic and procedural rules and regulations of the HEP.