

**English Language Intensive Courses  
for Overseas Students  
NATIONAL STANDARDS**

*Consultation Draft*

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# English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students: National Standards

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## Introduction

English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) form a significant part of Australia's international education industry. Students come from overseas to study English for a variety of reasons. Some need to improve their English for work or career purposes, some have a personal interest in becoming fluent in English, and some intend to travel. Others may want to continue their education in English, either in Australia or elsewhere, and need to develop the language skills to undertake further study.

## Regulatory Framework for ELICOS

English language courses provided to overseas students as defined in section 5 of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) must be registered as ELICOS on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).

To gain registration on CRICOS, a provider must be approved by its ESOS agency as meeting:

- the requirements of the ESOS Act and associated regulations and legislative instruments, including the National Code made under section 33 of the Act; and
- the ELICOS National Standards, made under section 176B of the Act.

The National Code established under the ESOS Act sets out standards for all registered providers of education and training services to overseas students in Australia on a student visa. The ELICOS National Standards outline specific quality requirements for registered providers and are in addition to the National Code requirements.

## Definition

For the purposes of the ELICOS Standards, an ELICOS course is a course of education or training that is:

- solely or predominantly of English language instruction; and
- delivered to an overseas student as defined in section 5 of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*.

Courses which do not fall within the definition of 'ELICOS' include, but are not limited to:

- English language programs provided to non student visa holders;
- English as a second language programs or support services provided within a school curriculum; and
- Foundation Programs.

## **ELICOS National Standards**

### **Standard C1 – Mandatory requirements for course applications**

**Outcome of Standard C1:** *Providers address the information requirements of the ESOS agency to demonstrate that their proposed courses meet the required standards.*

- C1.1 Course applications are provided in the format required by the designated State authority, are fit for purpose and include:
- a) course name that reflects course purpose
  - b) details of course proponent
  - c) details of copyright owner of the course
  - d) total course duration expressed in weeks
  - e) rationale for the course
  - f) relationship with other course(s)
  - g) details of any articulation arrangements
  - h) profile of target learner group, including arrangements to meet the learning needs of students of different age groups and learning capability
  - i) course outcomes expressed in learner oriented terms
  - j) course entry requirements
  - k) strategy for monitoring learner progress
  - l) strategy for assessing achievement of learner outcomes including policies and procedures, materials or resources
  - m) samples of certification of completion and partial completion that indicate the CRICOS course name, levels of achievement or proficiency, course duration, date of completion, name and contact details of the registered ELICOS provider, and name and title of the signatory
  - n) modes and methods of delivery
  - o) overall structure of the course demonstrating that it meets the requirement of 20 hours of face-to-face classes, any other study requirements and any scheduled breaks
  - p) detailed course syllabus that provides a statement of the purpose and objectives of the course, expected learning outcomes, subjects, structure and assessment of learning and progress
  - q) strategy for ongoing course evaluation and review
  - r) teaching staff experience and qualifications
  - s) key and supplementary print-based and electronic teaching resources
  - t) maximum course fee.

## **Standard P1 – Scheduled course contact hours**

**Outcome of Standard P1:** *Written agreements between registered ELICOS providers and students provide accurate information to students regarding scheduled course contact hours for the ELICOS course.*

- P1.1 An ELICOS course has 20 hours of face-to-face tuition per week.
- P1.2 Written agreements between registered ELICOS providers and students specify:
- a) a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week of face-to-face classes of English language instruction for the course
  - b) any other scheduled course contact hours required by the course.

## **Standard P2 – Needs of younger ELICOS students**

**Outcome of Standard P2:** *Where a registered ELICOS provider enrolls students under the age of 18 years, the operations of the provider are appropriate for the age, maturity and English language proficiency of the students.*

- P2.1 The provider's arrangements for students aged under 18 years of age comply with the National Code.
- P2.2 Facilities and operations for any mixed-age student cohorts are designed to meet the needs of students of different levels of age, maturity and English language proficiency and ensure they have access to services, learning opportunities, facilities and equipment that addresses their English language learning needs.

## **Standard P3 – Teaching ELICOS**

**Outcome of Standard P3:** *Policies and procedures for teaching of ELICOS provide students with optimal opportunities for achieving successful outcomes from their courses.*

- P3.1 The provider has policies and procedures in place to ensure that:
- a) students are placed in a class appropriate to their current language proficiency level, learning goals and learning needs and consistent with their written agreement
  - b) students' special learning needs are identified as early as possible and arrangements are put in place to address these needs
  - c) teacher-to-student ratios do not exceed 1:18 per class
  - d) students are informed of the outcomes to be achieved from the course and, for each learning block, the learning outcomes for that block.
- P3.2 Planning policies and procedures enable teachers to:
- a) customise teaching to student needs
  - b) access resources required for delivery of the course
  - c) research any special purpose course content and developments in English language teaching to meet student needs.
- P3.3 Records of teaching delivery ensure:
- a) retention and accessibility of records
  - b) learning outcomes to be achieved are documented
  - c) effective review, revision and delivery of courses.
- P3.4 Delivery of courses is continuously improved by:
- a) making adjustments based on collection and analysis of feedback from students and other stakeholders as appropriate
  - b) monitoring appropriateness of delivery for student groups
  - c) regularly evaluating learning outcomes achieved.

## **Standard P4 – Assessment of ELICOS students**

**Outcome of Standard P4:** *Policies and procedures for the assessment of students provide them with optimal opportunities for achieving successful outcomes from their courses.*

- P4.1 Assessment policies and procedures are clearly outlined and documented, and provide for:
- a) formative and summative assessment
  - b) clear identification of assessment outcomes as they relate to progress through the course
  - c) assessment that is valid, reliable, fair, flexible and clearly referenced to criteria, and
    - (i) includes appropriate oversight or moderation of assessment outcomes
    - (ii) in the case of English for Academic Purposes courses, assessment outcomes should be benchmarked against external reference points commonly used in admission criteria for tertiary courses
  - (d) clear, regular reporting to the student and their parent or guardian, where the student is under 18, of their assessment outcomes and progress through the course.
- P4.2 Records of assessment ensure:
- a) retention and accessibility of records
  - b) documented learning outcomes
  - c) effective review and revision of assessment as necessary.
- P4.3 The registered ELICOS provider issues a document to each student, on completion (or partial completion) of study, that:
- a) indicates the ELICOS course name, registered ELICOS provider and contact details, dates of study, course duration, levels of achievement or proficiency, authorised signature and name of signatory
  - b) includes, or is accompanied by, an explanation in plain English of the terms used in awarding grades at all levels.
- P4.4 Assessment of courses is continuously improved by:
- a) making adjustments based on collection and analysis of feedback from students and other stakeholders as appropriate
  - b) monitoring appropriateness of assessment for student groups
  - c) regularly evaluating course outcomes achieved.



## **Standard P5 – ELICOS educational resources**

**Outcome of Standard P5:** *Registered ELICOS providers maintain a supply of sufficient educational resources that are aimed at achieving course objectives, encourage diversity in learning activities and teaching methodologies, and are appropriately organised and regularly reviewed.*

- P5.1 The registered ELICOS provider demonstrates access to educational resources that:
- a) are sufficient to provide for each student at every stage of their course, as appropriate
  - b) are appropriate for the type and level of courses offered
  - c) include access to a range of multimedia, as appropriate
  - d) enable varied learning activities and teaching methodologies
  - e) are developed for classroom and individual student use and address specific student needs and course outcomes
  - f) reflect new developments in TESOL theory and practice and changes in course offerings and student profiles.
- P5.2 The registered ELICOS provider has educational facilities with sufficient equipment and support resources for the number of enrolled students, including:
- a) educational and computer technology that supports classroom teaching/learning activities; independent student practice, study and research; and teacher study, research and preparation
  - b) where the registered ELICOS provider makes material available for self-access or self-study, that material is catalogued and presented for easy access
  - c) self-study areas and equipment organised to facilitate access and independent use by students.
- P5.3 The registered ELICOS provider provides its teachers with easy access to reference resources that reflect contemporary knowledge of the theory and practice of TESOL in its own facilities or through easily accessible jointly managed facilities.

## **Standard P6 – ELICOS specialist staff**

**Outcome of Standard P6:** *Registered ELICOS providers employ suitably qualified specialist staff and provide them with ongoing opportunities for professional development.*

### **Academic leadership of ELICOS**

- P6.1 The registered ELICOS provider has an academic management system that ensures:
- a) clear organisation-wide academic leadership of ELICOS
  - b) a coordinated and effective approach to developing, implementing and reviewing curriculum
  - c) management of educational resources
  - d) provision of guidance to teaching staff.
- P6.2 Senior academic leadership staff have a degree, suitable postgraduate TESOL qualification/s, and appropriate educational management and TESOL teaching experience or equivalent.
- P6.3 Senior academic leadership staff maintain an up-to-date knowledge of significant developments in TESOL theory and practice.

### **Teaching staff**

- P6.4 ELICOS teachers have the following:
- a) a degree or diploma of at least three years full-time or equivalent (teaching or other)
  - b) a suitable TESOL qualification or qualification that contains TESOL as a method
  - c) appropriate TESOL teaching experience or are formally mentored by a senior staff member with this experience.
- P6.5 Where the registered ELICOS provider offers courses of preparation for entry to Australian state or territory secondary schools, an appropriate percentage of the TESOL teachers are registered to teach in the Australian state or territory primary/secondary system as determined by state/territory legislation or policy.
- P6.6 Where students are 12 years old or less, their teachers hold a TESOL qualification and a recognised primary teaching qualification.
- P6.7 The registered ELICOS provider verifies the qualifications of all teachers employed by the provider.
- P6.8 The registered ELICOS provider:
- a) has and implements policies and procedures for the induction and ongoing professional development of its teaching staff
  - b) develops and implements a program of professional development each year.

**Counselling staff**

P6.9 The registered ELICOS provider:

- a) employs or contracts a person or persons with formal qualifications in counselling and/or relevant experience who is able to advise and provide counselling to students in an intercultural context about:
  - i. academic and future progress advice
  - ii. welfare matters.
- b) ensures that the person(s) described in 6.9a:
  - i. are available at suitable times for access by students
  - ii. are readily accessible to students.

## **Standard P7 – ELICOS premises**

**Outcome of Standard P7:** *The premises of registered ELICOS providers provide teaching and learning environments that are appropriately designed and equipped to support the range of English language courses and student support services offered.*

- P7.1 The registered ELICOS provider's premises comply with all relevant legislation and regulations.
- P7.2 The registered ELICOS provider ensures that students are safe and have access to facilities that support their education, including circumstances:
- a) where the provider accesses or uses areas that may also be used for other purposes
  - b) where facilities are accessed by people not associated with the provider's operations.
- P7.3 The registered ELICOS provider designates areas of its premises sufficient in size to support quality delivery of its ELICOS courses, including:
- a) rooms and equipment are fit for purpose and proportionate or appropriate to the number of students and course syllabus
  - b) teacher studies/staffrooms
  - c) student recreation areas
  - d) private study areas or areas for related activities, such as library, resource centre and language laboratory
  - e) storage areas
  - f) offices for the management of the ELICOS provider and for the confidential counselling of students.

## **Standard P8 – Business management**

**Outcome of Standard P8:** *The operations of the provider are supported by effective management actions.*

- P8.1 The registered ELICOS provider:
- a) complies with relevant Commonwealth, state or territory legislation and other regulatory requirements that are relevant to its operations
  - b) ensures that its staff, students and other clients are fully informed of these requirements where they affect their duties or participation in ELICOS education with the provider.
- P8.2 The registered ELICOS provider holds insurance for public liability throughout its registration period.
- P8.3 The registered ELICOS provider:
- a) has its accounts prepared to Australian Accounting and Auditing Standards, at least annually
  - b) provides the certificate of accounts to the ESOS agency on request
  - c) provides a full audit report of its financial accounts from a qualified and independent auditor, if the designated State authority reasonably deems this necessary
  - d) provides other business management documents as requested by the ESOS agency, if reasonably deemed necessary.
- P8.4 The registered ELICOS provider has management systems that are responsive to the needs of students, staff and stakeholders and the environment in which the provider operates, including:
- a) a systematic and continuous improvement approach to managing its operations
  - b) management of records to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

## Glossary

CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
Designated State Authority	As defined in the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act
ESOS agency	As defined in the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act
Formative assessment	Information collected (generally via a range of formal and informal methods) during a course to determine students' progress towards course outcomes or learning goals. Its purpose is to provide feedback in order to adapt or change teaching content or approaches, or to adapt or change student learning and study strategies.
Foundation Programs	As defined in the National Standards for Foundation Programs
Learning block	A discrete period of study within a course as defined by the provider
National Code	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 or later version where applicable
Scheduled course contact hours	The hours for which students enrolled in a course are scheduled to attend classes, course-related information sessions, supervised study sessions and examinations
Summative assessment	Assessment carried out during or at the end of a course of study (as appropriate) to determine and specify students' achievement of course outcomes or learning goals.
Syllabus	The syllabus provides a comprehensive outline of the purpose, content or subjects, outcomes and assessment of a course.
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
Welfare matters	Matters related to the mental, physical, social and spiritual wellbeing of overseas students. These may include accommodation, disability, equity issues, financial matters, legal issues, medical issues, mental health, religious and spiritual matters, and stress management.
Written Agreement	As required in Standard 3 of the National Code