English Language Bridging Program Manual

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The Education Services for Overseas Students Act (Cth) 2000 (ESOS) and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, 2018 (the Code) requires the University of Newcastle (University) to have documented policies and procedures for English language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS).

(2) In accordance with this requirement, this manual documents the University's policies relating to its English Language Bridging Program (ELBP).

(3) Course outlines for English language courses offered by English Language Pathways at the University can be found here.

Section 2 - Audience

(4) This manual should be read and understood by:

a. applicant's seeking admission to the University's ELBP;
b. students participating in the ELBP;
c. any staff member, unit, division, college, school or committee responsible for oversight and decision-making, operationalisation, administration and management of the ELBP; and
d. staff with responsibilities for teaching and supporting students of the ELBP.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This manual applies to:

a. all English Language bridging courses and programs offered by the University;
b. applicants seeking admission to the ELBP; and
c. students who are enrolled, participating, or completing the ELBP with the University.

Section 4 - Definitions

(6) In the context of this manual:

a. “attendance” means a student's physical attendance at ELBP classes, and excludes all absences from these classes, regardless of the reason for the absence;
b. “contact hours” means the face to face teaching hours, usually 20 hours per week / 4 hours per day;
c. “course of study” is the duration of study specified in the student's electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE);
d. “external proficiency test” refers to validated tests of English language proficiency that are developed by

external organisations (such as International English language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE), and the Pearson Test of English (Academic)). These external proficiency tests can be used by the University of Newcastle to advise students on an appropriate ELBP program duration. To be valid, at the date of application for admission to the University external proficiency test results must be no more than two (2) years old, from the date the test was undertaken;

e. “formative assessment” is an in-process evaluation of student comprehension, learning needs and progress during teaching;
f. “satisfactory pass” refers to an overall ELBP grade commensurate with the minimum English language proficiency requirements stipulated for a particular University degree program or the University of Newcastle College of International Education (UNCIE) pathway program.

Section 5 - Application

(7) The University's English Language Bridging Program is designed to assist International students develop their English language skills and to meet the University's English language proficiency requirements, under the direct entry arrangement with the University or the University of Newcastle College of International Education (UNCIE).

(8) The University establishes its English Language Proficiency Requirements via the English Language Proficiency Policy.

(9) For students who wish to participate in the University's ELBP the following pathways are available:

a. a satisfactory pass of the Advanced English for Academic Purposes level will gain direct entry into:
    i. a University undergraduate or postgraduate degree;
    ii. Foundation Studies in Medicine;
    iii. Express Preparation Program;
b. a satisfactory pass of the Upper Intermediate English for General Purposes level will gain direct entry into:
    i. Foundation Studies;
    ii. Degree Transfer Extended;
    iii. Degree Transfer;
    iv. Pre-Master’s Program.

(10) Students can transition to the above ELBP levels by completing a lower English language level offered by the University.

Application Criteria

(11) Applicants seeking entry into the ELBP must provide evidence of English language proficiency by completing an English language proficiency test approved by the University. Approved English Language tests for meeting the University's English requirements are listed in the English Language Proficiency Procedure. For information on other tests which can be used for ELBP placement purposes please contact Language.Centre@newcastle.edu.au. All tests must have been undertaken no more than two years prior to enrolment.

(12) The applicant's results achieved in an external proficiency test may be used to determine the most appropriate level for that applicant.

Application Process

(13) Applications for entry into an ELBP can be made by applicants themselves, or via a registered education agent.

(See How to Apply).

(14) Successful applications will result in a Letter of Offer being issued to the applicant by the business unit responsible for processing the application.

(15) Applicants issued with a Letter of Offer for an ELBP must ensure they hold a valid Australian Government Visa suitable for the length of their studies and adhere to their visa conditions.

Section 6 - Offer Acceptance Process

(16) To accept their offer international students must read and fully understand the terms and conditions set out in the Letter of Offer and meet all conditions outlined in the offer, including:

a. completing and signing the offer acceptance;
b. making the required payment at the link provided in the offer letter; and
c. uploading the completed and signed offer acceptance form to the application portal together with the proof of payment.

(17) Detailed information is available for students on the Accepting Your Offer page.

Section 7 - Deferment

(18) Student visa holders may apply to defer their commencement in the ELBP under compelling and compassionate circumstances only.

(19) Student visa holders wishing to defer commencement of the ELBP should contact International Admissions and Compliance (ia@newcastle.edu.au) and must supply evidence of compassionate and compelling circumstances in accordance with Clause 20 of this manual.

Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances

(20) Compassionate and compelling circumstances are generally those circumstances which are beyond the control of the international student, and which have an impact on the student's course progress or wellbeing. Examples include, but are not limited to:

a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the international student was unable to attend classes. In some cases English Language Pathways may require students to have the relevant medical practitioner complete this Professional Practitioner Form;
b. bereavement of close family members, for example parents or grandparents. (Where possible, a death certificate should be provided as evidence);
c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student's home country, requiring emergency travel where this will likely impact on the international student's studies;
d. a traumatic experience where this will impact on the international student, which could include one of the following, (these cases should be supported by police or psychologist’s reports):
    i. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
    ii. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime;
e. inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to a delay in receiving a student visa.

(21) All requests for consideration of compassionate and compelling circumstances will be assessed based on the

individual student's circumstance.

Section 8 - Arrival Process

(22) The University provides international students with information to ease their journey into a new country, including a Checklist of things to do before leaving home and after arriving in Australia.

(23) After arriving at the University international students with an ELBP pathway will be required to attend a two day face-to-face orientation program, and complete an online welcome training module.

(24) In the event a student's English language proficiency is found to be lower than their previously submitted evidence of English proficiency, the Program Convenor may advise the student to commence their ELBP at a lower course level which may result in a longer duration to that detailed in the Letter of Offer.

Section 9 - Mandatory Attendance Obligations

(25) The University is legally obliged to impose Commonwealth legislative requirements regarding attendance of international students in the English Language Bridging Program. International students must comply with the University's attendance requirements in order to retain their enrolment in the ELBP, and their visa.

(26) The University will inform students enrolled in the ELBP prior to commencement of the attendance requirements via:

a. written notification of the attendance requirements in the course outline and welcome module; and
b. verbal notification and visual representation during the orientation program.

Attendance Requirements

(27) ELBP students must maintain a minimum course attendance rate of 80% of the scheduled contact hours over their course of study in an ELBP.

(28) Please see an example of how the 80% attendance requirement is calculated in the Example Attendance Hours.

(29) The University may report a student to the Department of Home Affairs for unsatisfactory attendance if:

a. the student's attendance rate falls below 80%; and
b. it is clear that the student will not be able to reach 80% attendance by the end of their ELBP course of study following the implementation of an intervention strategy; and
c. the student chooses not to access, or fails to access the Show Cause Process or any subsequent appeals process outlined in this manual within the required timeframe after being notified of the University's intention to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs; or
d. the student formally withdraws in writing from the Show Cause Process or any subsequent appeals process before a determination is made.

(30) The University may decide to not report a student to the Department of Home Affairs for falling below 80% attendance if the student is projected to attend at least 70% of the scheduled contact hours and provides genuine evidence of compassionate and compelling circumstances in accordance with Clause 20 of this manual.

Recording and Assessing Attendance

(31) Student attendance will be recorded every hour by the ELBP teacher. If the student is absent from class for any

reason, the student's record will be marked as absent.

(32) The student will be marked as absent for one (1) hour if the student:

a. is late for class by more than 10 minutes;
b. leaves the class for more than 10 minutes before the end of class; or
c. is absent from the class for more than 10 minutes.

Attendance Absences – Under 18 Students

(33) In the event an under 18 student does not attend class, the teacher must immediately report this to administration staff who will attempt to contact the student. Where the student is unable to be contacted, administration staff may contact the student's emergency contact.

Section 10 - Mandatory Progress Obligations

(34) The University is legally obliged to impose Commonwealth legislative requirements regarding academic progress of international students in the ELBP. International students must comply with the University's progress requirements in order to retain their enrolment in the ELBP, and their visa.

(35) The University will inform students enrolled in the ELBP prior to commencement of the University's progress requirements via the following documents:

a. written notification of the progress requirements in the course outline and welcome module; and
b. verbal notification and visual representation during the orientation program.

Progress Requirements

(36) ELBP students must achieve completion of a course level within a maximum of thirty (30) weeks.

(37) Students will be determined as at risk of not meeting the mandatory progress obligations if:

a. they fail a formative assessment;
b. they fail to achieve the required final grade for one course level, after 10 weeks of study;
c. they fail to achieve the required final grade in the same course level after 20 weeks of study; or
d. do not achieve the required final grade in the same course level after 30 weeks of study.

(38) The University will monitor students progress and should the student be determined as at risk of not meeting the mandatory progress obligations, the University will implement appropriate intervention support strategies.

(39) Intervention strategies may include:

a. academic progress interview(s);
b. academic counselling;
c. self study resources;
d. linkage to relevant support services;
e. enrolment in a lower course level;
f. development of a learning plan.

(40) Students who fail to attend an academic progress interview may be issued with a Notification of Intent to Report a Student which will provide students with details of how to access the Show Cause process.

(41) Students who fail to meet the requirements of a course level after 30 weeks will be issued with a Notification of Intent to Report a Student which will provide students with details of how to access the Show Cause process.

(42) Students are able to access the Show Cause Process outlined in this manual, within 20 working days of receiving a Notification of Intent to Report a Student.

(43) The University is obliged to report a student who has breached the University's progress requirements to the Department of Home Affairs if the student:

a. accesses the available Show Cause process within 20 working days, and the show cause finding is that the breach will be upheld;
b. does not access the available Show Cause process or any subsequent appeals process as outlined in this manual within the required timeframe, or chooses to not access these processes; or
c. withdraws in writing from the Show Cause process or any subsequent appeals process outlined in this manual prior to a determination being made.

Section 11 - Leave

(44) ELBP students have the following options for leave during their ELBP course of study:

a. Leave of Absence; or
b. Approved Leave.

(45) Please refer to the ELBP Student Leave Options for further information regarding leave.

Absences Due to Illness

(46) Students are required to advise English Language Pathways of their inability to attend classes due to illness as soon as possible.

(47) Students are encouraged to provide medical certificates for all absences due to illness as this documentation may be used as supporting evidence in the event of Show Cause or any subsequent appeal process. The University will obtain copies of medical certificates provided to verify an absence due to illness and return the original to the student.

(48) Documentation submitted to support sick leave, such as medical certificates, will be managed in accordance with the University's Privacy Management Plan and the Records Governance Policy.

Process to Request a Leave of Absence or Approved Leave

(49) To request Leave of Absence or Approved Leave, the student must obtain appropriate documentation to establish compassionate and compelling circumstances, as outlined in Clause 20.

(50) The student must complete a Request for LOA / Approved Leave Form and then make an appointment to see the ELBP Program Convenor or their nominee to provide the documentation and to discuss the request and the impact of the circumstances on their study, enrolment and visa status. The Program Convenor or their nominee will advise the student of their decision in relation to the request.

(51) Where a student's period of enrolment may finish either during the period of leave being requested or before the student can achieve the English proficiency requirements for their next program, the student must extend their ELBP enrolment so that a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) can be issued before the LOA/Approved Leave request can be approved.

Failure to Return From Leave

(52) Where a student does not return from leave that has been approved the student may be considered to be in breach of the mandatory attendance obligations.

(53) Students may seek to extend periods of leave under compassionate or compelling circumstances, which are outlined in Clause 20.

(54) Requests to extend periods of leave under compassionate or compelling circumstances must be:

a. made to English Language Pathways within five (5) working days prior to the Approved Leave / Leave of Absence end date; and
b. supported by genuine evidence of the compassionate and compelling circumstances.

(55) The Program Convenor, or their nominee, will consider all requests to extend approved periods of leave.

Non-Approved Leave

(56) Students who do not attend classes and who have not been approved to take leave or extend leave may be considered to be in breach of the mandatory attendance obligations and may be issued with a Notification of Intent to Report a Student.

Section 12 - Show Cause

(57) The ELBP Show Cause process is available to students who have been issued with a Notification of Intent to Report a Student for breach of progress or attendance requirements. The ELBP Show Cause process cannot be accessed where a matter has been, or is being dealt with, under the University's Complaint Management Procedure.

(58) During the Show Cause process, the student is required to:

a. maintain their enrolment; and
b. continue to attend classes.

Timeframe to Submit A Show Cause Letter

(59) From the date of receipt of a Notification of Intent to Report, an ELBP student has 20 working days to submit a Show Cause letter to the ELBP Show Cause Committee.

(60) If a student does not access the Show Cause process within 20 working days of being notified of their breach status, English Language Pathways will:

a. proceed to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs;
b. cancel the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE);
c. cancel the student's enrolment with the University; and
d. inform the student in writing of the need to seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs on the potential impact on their Student Visa.

Show Cause Letter Requirements

(61) The student's Show Cause Letter must be sent to Language.Centre@newcastle.edu.au, and must include:

a. the student's reasons for not meeting the University's progress or attendance requirements, supported by

documentary evidence, in accordance with clause 63; and

b. any additional evidence or information in support of their case.

(62) Documentary evidence must meet the following requirements:

a. the document must be:
    i. in its original format if hard copy, or a copy certified by a Justice of the Peace; or
    ii. an electronic colour scan of original documentation; or
    iii. an electronic copy of a document certified by a Justice of the Peace;
b. medical certificates or other supporting documentation from a health professional must be on letterhead, be signed by the health professional, and contain the health professional's:
    i. provider number;
    ii. registration number (or similar if provided from outside of Australia);
    iii. full name, address and contact details; and
c. if the documentation is not in English, a certified translation to English must be provided.

(63) Please see the University Support and Services webpage for how to access a Justice of the Peace.

Support Person

(64) Students who have submitted a Show Cause Letter may be accompanied by a support person when they appear before the ELBP Show Cause Committee.

(65) The support person is not permitted to speak during the committee appearance unless invited to do so by the Chair of the committee.

ELBP Show Cause Committee

(66) The ELBP Show Cause Committee meeting will be called within 20 working days of receipt of a student's Show Cause letter.

(67) The student will be advised by the Secretary to the ELBP Show Cause Committee of when and where the Committee meeting is to take place.

(68) The ELBP Show Cause Committee will comprise of at least 3 of the following staff:

a. the Director, Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre (Chair), or their nominee;
b. the relevant ELBP Program Convenor or their nominee;
c. one other staff member from the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre, as determined by the Chair; and
d. one co-opted member from outside the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre, for particular cases.

(69) The ELBP Show Cause Committee must uphold the Gender Inclusive Membership of University Committees Policy.

(70) All Committee members are required to uphold the University's Conflict of Interest policy and any associated procedure.

(71) The Committee will consider:

a. whether due process was followed;
b. any mitigating, compelling or compassionate circumstances provided by, or on behalf of the student; and

c. whether the decision to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs should be upheld or dismissed.

(72) The Secretary to the ELBP Show Cause Committee will record the minutes of the meeting and retain copies of the minutes in accordance with the University's Records Governance Policy.

Outcomes of the Show Cause Process

(73) The student will be notified of the outcome of the Show Cause process within 10 working days of the ELBP Show Cause Committee hearing the case.

(74) The outcome may be one of the following:

Table 1 – Outcomes of the Show Cause Process

Outcome	Actions
It is determined that due process has not been followed.	No report to the Department of Home Affairs will be made. The student will be notified of the outcome in writing.
Compelling or compassionate circumstances have been accepted.	No report to the Department of Home Affairs will be made. The student will be notified of the outcome in writing.
No mitigating circumstances have been accepted.	The case is dismissed once the period for an Internal Appeal has lapsed and where the student does not notify of their intention to access the internal appeals process, as outlined in this manual. The intent to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs will be upheld once all appeal periods are lapsed. The student will be notified in writing and provided with the details and timeframes regarding further avenues of appeal. English Language Pathways will notify the Department of Home Affairs and cancel the student's enrolment at the University and Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) if not notified of any appeal within 20 working days of notification.

(75) Where the Show Cause Committee determines that there are no mitigating circumstances, the student will be notified in writing, which will include:

a. details of the decision that has been made by the Show Cause Committee;
b. advice regarding the student's option to access the Internal Appeal process and the date by which this must be accessed;
c. details of whom a request to access the Internal Appeal process should be addressed;
d. details of how a request to access the Internal Appeal should be made; and
e. details of available support services.

(76) Where it is determined that due process has not been followed, the Show Cause Committee will:

a. provide recommendation regarding preventive or corrective action;
b. ensure that this recommendation is implemented immediately; and
c. advise the student of actions taken.

Appealing an Outcome of the Show Cause Process (Internal Appeal)

(77) A student may appeal a decision made under Clause 74 to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) within 10 working days of the date of the Show Cause Outcome notification.

(78) Where the student chooses to appeal a decision made under Clause 74 they must notify English Language Pathways (Language.Centre@newcastle.edu.au) of their intention to appeal, and provide evidence of the appeal.

(79) An appeal of the outcome of the ELBP Show Cause process must be in writing and must include evidence that any of the following grounds have occurred:

a. that the requirements of this manual have been breached by the University;
b. that the original determination was affected by a conflict of interest; or
c. new information has become available that could not reasonably have been provided by the student earlier, and it is probable that this information would have affected the show cause determination.

(80) If a student does not submit an internal appeal, English Language Pathways will inform the student in writing of their right to an external appeal with the NSW Ombudsman.

(81) If the student does not submit an Internal Appeal or External Appeal, all avenues of appeal will be considered exhausted and English Language Pathways will cancel the student's enrolment at the University and Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), and report the breach to the Department of Home Affairs.

Internal Appeals Process

(82) Upon receipt of an appeal of the outcome of an ELBP show cause process that is made within the timeframe outlined in Clause 77, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global):

a. will consider the information provided in the appeal, to the extent that the information relates to one of the grounds of appeal set out in Clause 79;
b. will consider material taken into account by the ELBP Show Cause Committee in making their determination, which is relevant to the grounds of the appeal; and
c. may request further information from the student or from the ELBP Show Cause Committee.

(83) The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) will either dismiss the appeal or uphold the appeal.

(84) Upon determination of the appeal, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) will:

a. inform the student in writing of the determination of the appeal, including reasons for the determination, via the student's University email account;
b. where the appeal is dismissed, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) will inform the student:
    i. that they may have the right to further appeal outside the University to the NSW Ombudsman;
    ii. of the NSW Ombudsman contact details;
c. send a copy of the determination notification to English Language Pathways for appropriate action.

(85) The determination of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) is final, and there is no further avenue of appeal within the University.

(86) Where the student's internal appeal is not upheld and where the student does not notify English Language Pathways that they have submitted an External Appeal to the NSW Ombudsman within 10 working days, English Language Pathways will cancel the student's electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), as well as any remaining enrolment, and report the matter to Department of Home Affairs.

External Appeals

(87) External avenues for further appeal may include an appeal to the NSW Ombudsman.

(88) If a student chooses to submit an External Appeal, they are required to notify English Language Pathways (Language.Centre@newcastle.edu.au) of their intention to do so within 10 working days of being notified in writing of the outcome of the internal appeal by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global), and provide evidence

of their External Appeal to English Language Pathways.

Section 13 - Complaints

(89) A student may choose to lodge a formal complaint under the University's Complaint Management Procedure if the requirements of this Program Manual have been incorrectly applied, or where procedural fairness has been denied.

(90) A matter cannot be dealt with under both the Show Cause Process and the Complaint Management Procedure.

(91) Where a complaint is being lodged by a student in response to being notified of the University's intention to report a student for breach of attendance or progress requirements, the student must:

a. notify English Language Pathways of their intention to lodge a complaint;
b. lodge their complaint within 20 working days of being notified of the University's intention to report a student for breach or attendance or progress.
c. notify English Language Pathways should they withdraw from the Complaint Management Procedure.

(92) During the complaints process, the student is required to:

a. maintain their enrolment; and
b. continue to attend classes.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	22nd June 2026
Review Date	10th April 2028
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Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance Academic Division

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Class" - When referring to a class attended by Students, a class is any teaching and learning activity of a course. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)" - Means the document issued through the Australian Government's relevant department and associated systems, by authorised officers of the University that confirms that an international student is eligible to enrol in a course. The CoE is required under Commonwealth Legislation for the student visa.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Pathways" - A mechanism to allow students to move through qualification levels with full or partial recognition for the qualifications and/or learning outcomes they already have.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Program Convenor" - The academic staff member with overall responsibility for the management and quality of a program.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"International student" - A student (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). This includes students who will be studying offshore and those who will be studying onshore and have a student visa, provisional residency, temporary residency, bridging visa, or any other category of non-permanent visa for Australia.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.