

P43: STUDENT RETENTION & SUCCESS PROCESSES POLICY

Overseer: PBC Principal & Dean of Academics & Research

Approval Authority: Board of Management

Review Schedule: 3 Yearly

Next Review Due: Aug 2021

Review Table			
Date	Review Type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled Policy amendment Admin update 	Summary of Changes	Review person/group
16/08/2018	Policy Development	Converted from 2016 PBC COPHE Benchmarking document to policy format	Hanlie van Rooyen & David Smith

Preamble

This policy is a formulated strategy to both maintain and increase student learning satisfaction, as well as to improve student attrition rates. It aims to optimise student academic commitment, student support, continued pursuit and student support achievement through tailored student learning and expanded teaching initiatives in addition to existing quality learning and teaching.

1. Underpinning Principles & Practices

- 1.1. Student retention is the responsibility of all academic and administration staff.
- 1.2. All faculty and staff are required to implement a student-focused, learner centered, model which is evidenced in delivery and assessment practices, initiatives and activities.
- 1.3. Support is available to students at all levels and students are aware of what is available to them.
- 1.4. A comprehensive professional development plan for staff and faculty to ensure currency of knowledge and practice for a student focussed delivery of theological education.
- 1.5. Knowledge of success strategies and areas for development within the college as determined by surveys and student responses.
- 1.6. Regular review of pastoral support and academic support for students.

- 1.7. Regular information dissemination to:
 - 1.7.1. Promote, engage and inform students regularly of what is happening in the College.
 - 1.7.2. Engagement with students who have finished or temporarily suspended their studies.
 - 1.7.3. Communication of relevant information disseminated in a timely manner.
- 1.8. A committee of academic and administration staff with the focus for the implementation of retention strategies and processes.
- 1.9. Management of policy implementation is the responsibility of the Teaching and Learning Coordinator as Chair of the committee.
2. **Aligned processes, policies and organisational structures in place to ensure support for students transitioning into and across the first year of study**

Rationale

Perth Bible College defines institutional plans and policies and students transitioning in[to] the first year of study as; prospective and first year students being *directly* and *indirectly* supported on a variety of levels. PBC is focused on meeting students where they are in terms of their abilities and previous educational experiences as well as providing clear guidelines, relating to academic processes and support structures, to ensure student wellbeing and academic success. These support mechanisms include, but are not limited to the following:

- 2.1. **Information Dissemination & Admissions Process**
 - 2.1.1. Prospective students are fully informed of requirements and expectations for study through prospectuses focused on either domestic or overseas students.
 - 2.1.2. Prospective students are guided through the admissions process and informed of the progress made with this process at appropriate times,
 - 2.1.3. A highly structured application and enrolment process, as well as a student management system is in place to ensure students do not have to be concerned about

unexpected or untimely events or requests for additional information,

- 2.1.4. Prospective students are invited to supply information on the Application for Admission form relating to their mother-tongue, any disability, impairment or long-term medical condition which may affect their studies, and whether they would like to receive advice on support services, equipment and facilities which may assist them.
- 2.1.5. The Dean of Students/Chaplain liaises with all other relevant third parties to ensure individualised care plans for academic and emotional support are implemented and maintained for those where mental health or specific physical health issues are identified.
- 2.1.6. Prospective students who qualify for Provisional Entry Admission/Enrolment are informed of additional criteria they have to satisfy to demonstrate a reasonable likelihood for satisfactory completion of the course requirements.
- 2.1.7. Prospective and enrolled students are made aware of PBC's Student Handbook, policies & procedures and how to access those documents.

2.2. Students Support Policies & Guidelines

- 2.2.1. The admissions process is outlined in P02: Admissions Process.
- 2.2.2. Prospective students are advised about the potential for Recognition of Prior Learning and guided through application for RPL at the time of enrolment as outlined in P19: Recognition of Prior Learning.
- 2.2.3. Prospective and enrolled students are informed that they may change their course enrolment and that their studies may be deferred, on reasonable grounds as outlined in P21: Academic Progress.
- 2.2.4. Unit lecturers continuously monitor students' academic progress and the Dean of Studies and the Dean of Students are notified with appropriate information when an individual has been identified as being 'at risk' as outlined in P21: Academic Progress.

- 2.2.5. An Intervention Strategy, as outlined in P21: Academic Progress (sub-heading 10) is activated in such instances for both domestic and international students.
- 2.2.6. In the case of a critical incident a student is supported through an action sequence, as outlined in P26: Critical Incident and P42 Sexual Assault & Harassment.
- 2.2.7. Students are supported in mental health related issues, as outlined in P32: Student Mental Health Policy.
- 2.2.8. Student grievances are taken seriously and a student's best interest is sought throughout the process, as outlined in P22: Grievance Procedure and P28: Academic Appeals.
- 2.2.9. Students are informed about assessment item policies and procedures related to extensions, supplementary assessments, late assessments, and avoiding academic misconduct as outlined respectively in P15: Extension of Assessment Items, P12: Grading Assessment Items Policy, P16: Supplementary Assessments, P17: Late Assessment Items, P18: Academic Misconduct, and G06: Avoiding Plagiarism Guidelines.
- 2.2.10. Students are supported to understand the processes related to incomplete units as outlined in P09: Incomplete Units.
- 2.2.11. An overseas student who wish to transfer to another higher education provider is assisted in following correct procedures if Perth Bible College determined that such a transfer will be in the student's best interest as outlined in P24: Overseas Student Request for Transfer.
- 2.2.12. Students are encouraged and supported in undertaking free intellectual inquiry and expression as outlined in P31: Free Intellectual Inquiry & Expression.
- 2.2.13. Students are made aware of detailed academic requirements both in verbal and printed format through individual Unit Plans, assessment criteria outlined in the Student Handbook, on the Assignment Cover Sheet, Presentation Marking Sheet, and in PBC Guidelines 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

- 2.2.14. Students are able to approach either their nominated Growth Group leader or the College Chaplain to raise pastoral care concerns, as outlined in P25: Pastoral Disclosure.

2.3. Academic Support

- 2.3.1. Prospective and enrolled students are supported in an academic and pastoral care capacity by faculty and in particular by the Dean of Students (also performing the role of Chaplain), from their first meeting through to graduation, and often beyond.
- 2.3.2. Enrolled students are guided through all aspects of academic and campus life on Orientation Day, when they also receive printed guidelines to support their studies.
- 2.3.3. Enrolled students receive a library orientation tour, an IT, Zotero and Moodle support tour, a Student Handbook, a "Getting Started Guide for New Students", "The Big Book of Answers" containing IT, Library, and Moodle instructions for accessing course information and submitting assignments, a "Library Handbook" and a "Using the PBC Wireless" instruction guide.
- 2.3.4. Students are guided through accessing the Student Portal, which makes a variety of support services and systems readily available to them, including Academic, Library, Moodle and Administrative services, access to Student Forms, Policies and Procedures, and additional software resources.
- 2.3.5. The Student Handbook, in particular, is referred to on Orientation Day and on a regular basis by lecturers, and academics aspects of the handbook are studied in detail in the Study Ready Units. This includes specific attention to orientation for international students.
- 2.3.6. Students enrolled in Study Ready units, Effective Academic Communication in Sem 1 and Theological Thinking & Writing in Sem 2, focus on graduate outcomes and receive structured support throughout the semester for their core subjects' assignments, both inside and outside the class environment. These subjects' lecturers have an open-door policy, allowing students to ask for

and receive guidance on an individual basis as often as required.

- 2.3.7. The Study Ready lecturer provides and invites students to make use of academic support through timetabled Study Ready tutoring available to all students at no additional cost.
- 2.3.8. The college provides low-cost grammar and plagiarism prevention software, including training in using the product.
- 2.3.9. Some of the first year student assessments are structured into staged submissions, to allow students to receive constructive feedback well before the final submission is due.
- 2.3.10. A number of PBC class activities and assessment items focus on the area of cooperative learning and group-work activities. PBC, being an interdenominational Bible college, believes that these opportunities allow students to experiment with ideas in a multi-cultural and multi-denominational setting, while learning a variety of approaches to problem solving. Group-work further allows students the opportunity to experiment with and develop collegial relationship skills.
- 2.3.11. Students are continuously reminded by unit lecturers of their responsibility to access lecture notes, study recommendations, video/audio recorded lectures, and all other related information from Moodle to ensure academic success.
- 2.3.12. The PBC library is accessible on a twenty-four-hour basis and offers computing and printing facilities, twenty-four study spaces, and a soft-furnished reading area. Students usually congregate in these areas at any hour of the day to study in groups and can often be heard asking questions and guidance from one another in relation to subject material, approaches to study and computer use.
- 2.3.13. Students are given the opportunity to give anonymous unit evaluation feedback on their experience of lectures, library resources, lecturer feedback, vocational relevance of the unit, and areas identified as in need of improvement.

- 2.3.14. Students are informed about class attendance requirements, demand hours and related information for each unit of study.
- 2.3.15. Student assessments are marked and feedback provided in a manner allowing students the best opportunity for improvement.
- 2.3.16. Students are informed well in advance of time about examination details such as dates, times, procedures and expectations.
- 2.3.17. The Teaching & Learning Committee's unit moderation process and final grading of units occur in an unbiased setting through a consensus decision, thereby supporting students by being equitable and ensuring appropriate academic standards.

2.4. Technical Support

- 2.4.1. Students have access to four internet ready computers, one printer, and one printer/photocopier in the library.
- 2.4.2. Students have access to technical support while using the above technology during the following times as offered by the person responsible/available:
 - Librarian - 4 days per week,
 - IT Support Manager - 1 day per week, on site and online 24-hours a day,
 - Perth Bible College Reception staff – 5 days per week, during office hours,
 - Study Ready Lecturer – 3 days per week, lecturing and tutoring,
 - Unit Lecturers – 5 days per week, while offering tutoring and academic support,
 - Senior students – 24/7, as a result of 24 units of on-campus accommodation, allowing students 24-hour access to the library and peer support.
- 2.4.3. Students have access to free campus-wide Wi-Fi in all the living units, with the IT Support Manager setting up personal computing devices for students as required.

2.5. Pastoral Care

- 2.5.1. Students are informed about the different options for pastoral care at their first point of contact with the Dean of Students/Chaplain and also on Orientation Day when they receive the "Getting Started Guide for New Students".
- 2.5.2. PBC considers the local church as the main source for pastoral care and liaise with pastors and church leaders to ensure quality support and care for individual students.
- 2.5.3. Information supplied to students regarding pastoral care support occurs in the following manner:
 - An initial interview with the applicant is conducted by the Dean of Students/Chaplain to identify specific individual needs,
 - The Dean of Students/Chaplains advises students of the pastoral care supports offered to all students by the College on the Orientation Day of each semester,
 - The Student Handbook outlines student support services, is distributed to students annually, and is available through the Student Portal on the website,
 - Faculty Growth Group leaders advise individual students of the pastoral care services that are available.
- 2.5.4. Different Growth Groups meet fortnightly and provide an occasion for developing both emotionally and academically supportive relationships. These groups are often the beginning of long-term support networks that go beyond a student's studies at PBC.
- 2.5.5. A vital administrative process that serves as a feedback loop, is the collating and processing of students' class attendance and assessment results records. This information is, on a regular basis, forwarded to the College Administrator and unit lecturers as alerts requiring follow-up action and referral to the college chaplain for pastoral care.
- 2.5.6. Journey Lines is a professional counselling service available by appointment at the college one day per week.

- 2.5.7. Masters Psychology is a practice of clinical psychologists to which students are referred to by the Dean of Students/Chaplain for assessment and ongoing counselling, as required.
- 2.5.8. The Dean of Students/Chaplain refers students to individual general practitioners for assessment and diagnosis, as required.
- 2.5.9. The Dean of Students/Chaplain liaises with individual students' private counsellors for ongoing support and assistance.
- 2.5.10. The Dean of Students/Chaplain engages with families, parents and partners when specific academic, emotional or mental health issues require support and connection.
- 2.5.11. The Dean of Students/Chaplain liaises with psychiatrists and mental health providers, when appropriate.
- 2.5.12. The Dean of Students/Chaplain requests support from individual church fellowships and pastors, where required,
- 2.5.13. The Dean of Students/Chaplain liaises with all other relevant third parties to ensure individualised care plans for academic and emotional support are implemented and maintained for those where mental health or specific physical health issues are identified.
- 2.5.14. The College Administrator refers students to institutions such as "Debt Cutters" for financial advice, which includes budgeting and debt management, if required.

2.6. Support through creating a sense of belonging

- 2.6.1. PBC also offers on-campus accommodation in the form of twenty-four units. These facilities allow students who live on campus to develop strong supportive relationships with other internal students as well as with staff living in the two staff houses.
- 2.6.2. The PBC library is accessible on a twenty-four-hour basis and offers computing and printing facilities, twenty-four study cubicles, and a soft-furnished reading area. This allows students to congregate in these areas at any hour of the day and to study in groups and ask questions and

guidance from one another in relation to subject material, approaches to study and computer use.

- 2.6.3. The PBC dining and chapel area give students access to refreshments and musical equipment.
- 2.6.4. College lunches are provided free of charge every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during semester time. These lunches allow students time to spend with their peers and staff in a relaxed environment, to socialise and discuss lecture and assignment content, announce upcoming events, special celebrations/events in students' and staff lives, opportunities for ministry, social events, and a chance to serve while preparing for and cleaning up after meals.
- 2.6.5. Different Growth Groups meet fortnightly and provide an occasion for developing both emotionally and academically supportive relationships. These groups are often the beginning of long-term support networks that go beyond a student's studies at PBC.
- 2.6.6. The college helps overseas students in particular, to find a church community where they can connect with people from their own culture and find support during their studies.
- 2.6.7. The annual three-day College Retreat is an opportunity for spiritual reflection and community building, and offers the ideal environment for students to make new and long-lasting connections with both their peers and PBC staff. The retreat includes activities specifically designed to build and foster student relationships.
- 2.6.8. College events such as the Orientation Day, Commencement Celebration, End of Year Dinner, Graduation Ceremony, Open Day, and Seminars allow students and the Student Council opportunity to meet and make connections with peers, and in particular when they are invited to participate and perform duties to assist with the running and success of the event. The Orientation Day activities help new students to meet staff and returning students, and to settle into college life. Student Commencement Celebration formally acknowledges and welcomes each individual student into

the college community. The End of Year Dinner is a celebration for all students and staff, with their families, involving awards for students' achievements and acknowledgment of the year's effort. The Graduation Ceremony is the formal annual event held by the college to celebrate students' achievements as a community.

- 2.6.9. The Dean of Students plays a prominent role in enabling and supporting the Student Council's work. Their aim is to develop peer relationships and support networks through conducting a variety of events and activities during the year. These events and activities include Social Balls, Movie Nights, Sausage Sizzles, College Clean-up Week and much more. The Inter-Theological Games, in particular, allows PBC students to meet and to compete against other theological colleges in Perth in an all-day event. Another core student support project, managed by the Student Council and directly enhancing student experience on campus, is the maintenance and improvement of facilities and equipment in the student Common Room, which is available for student-meetings and relaxation on a twenty-four-hour basis.
- 2.6.10. The subjects Supervised Field Education and Educational Chaplaincy Field Placement allow students the opportunity to do fieldwork under professional supervision in Christian ministry in an area of their choice. The student is both protected and supported through a formal Supervised Field Education Agreement, signed by the college, the student and the supervising institution.
- 2.6.11. Ministry Forums are held fortnightly by inviting outside ministry groups and organisations to present their work and activities to PBC students. These forums expose students to different employment and further study options and specific advice on how they may participate or gain future employment within a particular establishment. Organisations who are invited range from those involved in chaplaincy and community support services such as youth work, aged care, prison fellowship, supporting homeless and pregnant women, to church ministry, Christian counselling, overseas ministry, and much more.

- 2.6.12. As a result of PBC's strong and positive relationship with the local Christian community, churches and para-church organisations regularly contact the college with requests to announce work-experience and employment opportunities to our student body.
- 2.6.13. PBC has an arrangement with Bethanie Aged Care that enables students to study part-time with the college while gaining work experience through a Chaplaincy Internships with the organisation.
- 2.6.14. YouthCARE academic requirements are met through the inclusion of Department of Education and Training Cert IV in Chaplaincy; Units of Competency, within the Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counselling electives offered by Perth Bible College,
- 2.6.15. Christian Counsellors Association of Australia provides opportunities for PBC counselling students to attend professional development, tailored towards industry accreditation.
- 2.6.16. Students are regularly assessed and identified for leadership opportunities within the college by the Faculty and the Principal.
- 2.6.17. Student awards for Student of the Year, the Alan F Meers award for Academic Excellence, the Masters with Distinction award, the Vocational Merit Award for VET students, the Principal's Award, are publically announced at the annual graduation ceremony and student names are engraved on a plaque, which hangs in the PBC foyer.
- 2.6.18. Students with demonstrated academic success and mature personal qualities are nominated for Student Council.
- 2.6.19. PBC also offers the Graham D. Michie Scholarship, and the Overseas Student Scholarship, which are awarded during the annual graduation ceremony.
- 2.6.20. Students who demonstrate leaderships skills are afforded the opportunity to participate in leading the annual Cambodia Mission Trip and Cambodian pastors' conference.

3. Financial Support

- 3.1. Apart from being a registered FeeHelp provider PBC further supports students through administrative processes to apply for additional government financial support.
- 3.2. PBC also offers the following scholarships as awarded during the annual graduation ceremony:
 - Graham D. Michie Scholarship, and
 - Overseas Student Scholarship.
- 3.3. Students can furthermore apply for a study grant from the Concerned Christian Growth Ministries Charitable Trust under the guidance of their lecturer.
- 3.4. Limited work contracts are available to students on the Perth Bible College campus, as outlined in the Getting Started Guide.
- 3.5. The Scarborough Christian Service Fund allows PBC to use interest earned on an investment loan “to be distributed to deserving students to provide funds towards College fees”.
- 3.6. PBC has a long-term base of individual donors who, from time to time, make donations to individual students and projects.
- 3.7. Individual students in need, are given the opportunity to use PBC's Foodbank account for grocery purchases.