

GORDON INSTITUTE OF TAFE

(ABN 27 241 053 246 RTO 3044 CRICOS 00011G)

Private Bag 1, Geelong Mail Centre, Victoria, Australia

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www.thegordon.edu.au

Admission of Underage Students Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to specify the conditions under which underage students will be enrolled into programs at the Gordon to support our obligations to protect this vulnerable student cohort under the Child Safe Standards and duty of care principles.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all staff involved in admission and enrolment processes where the youth seeking admission to the Gordon is under 18 years of age. Additional requirements apply to:

- Any youth seeking admission who is of compulsory school age
- Any youth seeking to establish a payment plan or VET Student Loan

This policy and procedure **excludes** the admission of students into:

1. Short courses including Gordon approved short courses and Skill Sets offered during term breaks which are specifically designed for a youth cohort
2. Tertiary taster programs
3. Apprenticeships/traineeships which will be delivered and assessed solely in the young person's workplace
4. VET Delivered to Secondary Schools (VDTSS) programs where the delivery occurs within a Department of Education managed senior secondary school or Trade Training Centre.

3. Definitions

The following terms and abbreviations are specific to this procedure:

Mature Minor: The law recognises that as children become older and more mature they are more capable of making their own decisions about a wide range of issues including decisions about the education, healthcare and wellbeing. The law recognises that a young person may reach this stage before they are 18 years old. These young people are referred to as "mature minors".

A mature minor consent must be informed, voluntary, specific and current. A student counsellor must assess and establish this, based upon their interview/s and conversations with the student and considering the student's:

- age
- level of maturity for their age
- understanding of the issues and consequences
- minor living independently
- previous academic results

Minor Living Independently: A minor living independently generally means a young person aged at least 15 years who is not living in the day to day care of a parent or carer pursuant to a court order.

However, minors sometimes choose to live separately or independently from their parents, many trainees and apprentices are financially independent of their parents. When a student is living independently, the student may ask that the Gordon deem them a mature minor for all aspects of their education and welfare, so that the Gordon no longer involves their parents in decisions about their education, and no longer inform their parents about their educational matters.

Compulsory School Age: The compulsory school age is a mandatory requirement for:

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- All young people to participate in schooling (meaning in school or an approved equivalent) until they complete Year 10; and
- All young people who have completed Year 10, to participate full-time (defined as at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until age 17.

4. Overview and principles

The Gordon is committed to the provision of quality vocational education and training programs which enhance the potential of youth to achieve their educational and career goals. This policy and procedure shall be implemented based on the following principles:

- The Gordon believes that parents, guardians and carers play a valuable role in a young person's learning and wellbeing through being actively informed about the enrolment and engaged in relevant decisions.
- The Gordon will seek consent for any young person's enrolment and information relating to the young person's specific needs and situation through the use of the *Consent to Admit Underage Student* form RISK FO 18.01.
- The intention of the Consent form is to identify the specific circumstances of the young person to allow reasonable adjustments to be made. It does not replace the need to ensure that students are registered, where applicable, with the Gordon's Disability Support Service, or in the case of VDSS students, their home school's support service.
- The Gordon's student counselling service may authorise enrolment in a Gordon course without parental consent where the young person is determined to be a mature minor. This decision must be documented on the *Consent to Admit Underage Student Form* form by the student counsellor.
- The Gordon is committed to the Child Safe Standards and has established processes for mandatory reporting of reported or suspected child abuse.
- The Gordon learning environment is an adult environment that recognises and values mutual rights and responsibilities of staff and students.
- Any young person admitted to the Gordon must meet the prescribed entry requirements of the course consistent with admission, student selection and access and equity policies.
- A young person will only be admitted to a Gordon course which has been determined to be suitable and appropriate to their specific employment or learning outcomes through a documented pre-training review.
- Parents/guardians of young persons seeking enrolment shall be informed of:
 - The shared duty of care for under-age students
 - The National Youth Participation Requirement
 - The attendance standards and timetable for the course
 - The behavioural standards expected of a young person during their enrolment
 - The responsibility to engage in their child's education through attendance at any meetings relating to behaviour, attendance or academic progress
 - The need to inform the Department of Education if their child withdraws from full time education prior to the age of 17
 - The need to provide parental consent for activities
 - The need to provide accurate records of their child's medical or disability support needs
 - Refer *Consent to Admit Underage Student RISK FO 18.01*
- Following documented acceptance of a young person, all usual Gordon admission and enrolment processes apply to the student.
- All enrolment records of compulsory school age students, including Department of Education transition forms, parental consents and medical records shall be retained as secure documents on the student's file, in The Gordon's student management system attached to the enrolment.

4.1 Student Loans and Payment Plans

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Parental/guardian consent must be received on the appropriate paperwork for any youth enrolment which involves a Payment Plan or a VET Student Loan prior to the initiation of the loan / payment plan.

4.2 Young Persons of Compulsory School Age

- The Gordon recognises that the intention of compulsory school age is to enable every young person going through the education system to find a pathway which suits their interests, aims and abilities, and allows them to gain skills to help them in their future.
- The Gordon is not obliged to admit youths under 15 years of age or of compulsory school age (15-17 years) who have not completed Year 10.
- Youths who are 15 and have not completed year 10 will only be accepted at the discretion of the Vocational Education Manager into a course which provides a full-time learning pathway through until 17 years of age. Courses which may comply with this principle include:
 - VCE/VCAL/GTEC
 - General Education/Work Education
 - Youth Access
- Youths under 17 years of age will only be admitted where the Gordon has received written confirmation from the relevant authority via a *Transition from Education* form or equivalent letter that this has been signed.
 - Student 15 or under and has not completed Year 10, must be authorised by the Regional Manager
 - Student under 17 and has completed Year 10, must be authorised by their School Principal
- Young persons of 15 to 17 who have completed Year 10 may be accepted at the discretion of the Vocational Education Manager into a full-time course which provides a learning or employment pathway, or combination thereof, through until 17 years of age.
- Young persons of 15 to 17 will be accepted into registered training schemes (apprenticeships and traineeships) upon receipt of a DELTA notification and upon completion of a pre-training review which establishes that the learning and employment pathway is both appropriate and suitable to their desired outcomes.
- Youths of compulsory school age will only be enrolled as a part-time admission where the combined Program and work obligations equate to a full time load. The grounds for admission of youths in this category shall be based on provision of their appropriate educational pathway.

5. Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Chief Executive Officer	For ensuring that this policy and procedure complies with The Gordon's obligations under the <i>Education and Training Reform Act (Vic)</i> in respect to accepting underage youths and its obligations under duty of care principles once those youths are enrolled.
Executive Director Education	For verifying that any underage enrolment accepted by The Gordon within their Centres meets legislative criteria for admission of underage students and that the process documented in this policy and procedure is followed.
Student Services Coordinator	For ensuring that The Gordon meets its duty of care obligations to provide pastoral support programs for underage students enrolled at The Gordon.
Head of Centre, Culinary, Education and Teaching CET	For ensuring that The Gordon meets its duty of care obligations to provide in program youth support for underage students enrolled at The Gordon in their specialist youth Program Areas.
Head of Student Administration	For ensuring that potential underage applicants are identified and this admission process is initiated.
All Gordon staff	To have a legal responsibility under the Child Safe Standards to report any suspected abuse of a young person enrolled at The Gordon



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6. Key aligned internal documents

Consent to Admit Underage Student (Under 18) RISK FO 18.01

Consent to Admit Underage Student – Short Courses RISK FO 18.02

Duty of Care – Vulnerable People Policy RISK PO 15

Admission and Selection Policy STS PO 22

7. Key aligned external documents

VET Funding Contract (TAFE) Victorian Training Guarantee Program

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

8. Review and approval

	POSITION	AREA
Business Process Owner	Manager	Risk, Safety and Wellness
Endorsed by (if applicable):	Nil	
Ratified by (if applicable):	Nil	
Review schedule:	This policy will be reviewed every 3 years (or earlier as required)	
Last reviewed / updated:	1 June 2021	