Swinburne University of Technology
Higher Education

Service Standards and Principles for General Staff

SWINBURNE

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Foreword

The University is grateful to the many General Staff within Higher Education who provided significant input in to the development of Client Services Charter, and this associated Service Standards and Procedures.

This client-focused initiative is a critical element in the University's pursuit of service excellence. It is especially significant in ensuring an exceptional **Student Experience**, which has a major influence on the delivery of the *Swinburne in 2015* vision.

Please note that many government organisations including VicRoads and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship have over recent years implemented similar schemes. These schemes have had a profoundly positive effect on those organisations by enhancing the quality of the service they deliver. I strongly encourage you to embrace these standards and the Client Services Charter.

Professor Dale Murphy
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
June 2008

Contents

Swinburne University of Technology
Higher Education

Service Standards and Principles for General Staff

The General staff of Higher Education are composed of various groups and teams with a range of roles; each team will work cooperatively to ensure the effectiveness and the efficiency of the service provided by Swinburne's Higher Education. The term 'General Staff' is an official EBA term typically used to describe staff who have administrative or technical roles across the organisation.

Our Team Values

To be responsive to the needs of all stakeholders (internal and external) including the general public; to provide reliable, accurate and timely information, to offer appropriate services, and to aspire to make the Swinburne experience client focussed and professional for both staff and clients.

The Team values:

- Teamwork
- Courteousness
- Initiative
- Reliability
- Accuracy
- Sustainability
- Responsiveness

Strategies to Success

Implementation of the underlying principles are to ensure continuous excellence in service delivery in support of the Client Service Charter:

- Maintain a positive, friendly attitude.
- Aim to resolve problems in a timely manner; apply lateral approaches where applicable.
- Be proactive in seeking out information. Don't guess, ask questions

- Be helpful, responsive and empathetic to all clients, both internal and external.
- Embrace diversity and difference; be culturally sensitive.
- Be accountable – take responsibility.
- Maintain an efficient and effective environment.
- Respect the ideas and opinions of your colleagues; listen to, share information and support each other.
- Be constructive in your feedback in order to strive to continually improve your performance and that of your team/ department.
- Embrace sustainable and environmental principles and practices.

And if you have a problem:

- Go directly to the person you have the problem with and try to resolve the issue between yourselves.
- If you can't sort it out, then go to your Manager or seek the relevant staff services representative.
- *Be discreet about how you share your concerns*.

1.0 Guidelines to Implementation

The following key service standards and principles will guide the team in daily work ethics and be a base to measure performance.

1.1 Being helpful and responsive

This means willingness to help all clients (both internal and external) and to provide prompt service.

- Priority is given to clients presenting in person (face-to-face).
- Written enquiries (other than application forms), eg emails, faxes, are acknowledged within two business days of receipt and where possible solved and closed.
- Telephone messages are returned within one business day where possible.
- Response times for specialist services (eg exemptions) are well advertised and regularly monitored to ensure service is delivered within the advertised timeframe.
- Deadlines for work or information requested by colleagues or managers are met.
- Where requests cannot be responded to within the above timeframes, advise the person of this within one business day and provide a reasonable estimation of the time required to be able to respond appropriately based on the complexity of the enquiry.
- Take responsibility for all queries that come your way and actively seek solutions – don't pass the buck!

1.2 Providing reliable information

This means a commitment to performing your work accurately and in a timely manner.

- Communicate details of services and information accurately and clearly. **Do not guess at information.**
- Source knowledge from specialist staff in the event that the level of service/skill/knowledge is beyond your expertise.
- Check that forms are completed accurately providing all necessary information at the time that you take possession of them. If necessary you should assist the client to complete the forms to avoid delays in service.
- Regularly communicate with university faculties and departments to ensure you are kept up to date with developments which could affect the delivery of services.
- Develop, document, and regularly update all major work procedures to ensure currency. Ensure liaison with relevant stakeholders and that you are aware of any changes which may affect your work.
- Ensure that work is completed within designated timeframes and with a high level of accuracy.
- Seek additional training where required to ensure appropriate and current information.

1.3 Showing empathy and understanding of client needs

This means providing a caring environment and individualised attention to clients.

- Listen fully to client requests/comments before providing assistance.
- Call the client by their preferred name where possible.
- Where appropriate offer additional information or services that may assist the client eg/ clients with special needs.

1.4 Are courteous

This means being polite and considerate.

- Introduce yourself to your client when dealing with them either on the telephone or in person.
- Treat others with consideration and courteousness at all times.
- Interact with others in a friendly and informative tone. Avoid raising your voice or openly showing frustration or anger with a client.

1.5 Maintaining an efficient, effective and safe environment

This refers to physical facilities, equipment, communication materials and staff.

- Present in a professional and friendly manner at all times including wearing appropriate attire for your role.
- Activate auto-reply on your email during busy periods or when on leave indicating an alternative contact and when you will return. Ensure the alternate contact will be available.
- Ensure voicemail messages are kept current; detail when you are on leave or away from the office for any extended period, indicating when you will return and/or providing an alternative telephone contact. Ensure your alternative contact will be available during your absence.
- Ensure your practices are aligned with OH and S principles and practices for a safe work environment.
  - Ensure your work area is OH and S compliant and be mindful of creating hazards.
  - Check equipment regularly to ensure it is in good running order. Immediately report breakdowns and unsafe items to the appropriate area, eg. IT Service Desk.

2.0 Improve performance through managing Client Feedback

Client feedback and the strategies staff develop to deal with the complaint/feedback is seen as very important.

- Actively listen to the client's feedback.
- Acknowledge the client's feelings and attempt to build rapport.
- Analyse the problem for possible solutions and convey the most appropriate to the client.
- Ensure all positive feedback is passed on to other team members.
- Convey negative feedback to your manager.

2.1 If you can solve the problem

- Act quickly.
- Take responsibility for the problem. Don't place blame on another staff member or department in front of the client; even when it is obvious where the error has been made.
- Focus on a solution.
- Devise an action plan; ensure the actions are followed through. Let the client know what steps are needed to solve the problem.
- If the client is not responding or accepting your explanation, ask another staff member or supervisor to become involved.
- At the end of the interaction, thank the client.

2.2 If you cannot solve the problem because the complaint is outside your area

- Summarise the complaint so that the client does not have to repeat his/her story again. Then contact the relevant faculty or department to refer the complaint.
- Advise the client of the next course of action and ensure they are provided with a referral name and contact details.

2.3 If the problem cannot be resolved to the client's satisfaction

- Ask the client to lodge a written complaint if applicable.
- Determine where the complaint is to be lodged. Provide contact details.

2.4 Prevention Plan

Consider whether the complaint requires development of a prevention plan to ensure the risk of it happening again is minimised or eradicated. Discuss this with your team members, supervisor and/or manager. It is always better to be proactive rather than reactive.

3.0 University Policy and Procedures

The Higher Education Division presents information to clients in a manner which empowers them to make their own decisions about educational choices and administrative issues in relation to their studies at Swinburne. Each client's right to privacy and confidentiality is recognised and respected.

You should:

- Ensure clients are informed about University policy and procedures that relate to a decision they are making. The full student information and services policies and procedures are available at:
  http://ppd.swin.edu.au/stuinf/default.htm
- Ensure that clients are fully advised of the processes of University decision-making in relation to their education (assessment, appeals, grievances) and are aware of the areas within the University that can offer them support and advice (**http://ppd.swin.edu.au/stuinf/default.htm**)
- In a situation where it is inappropriate for you to convey the reason for a decision being made about a client, they should then be referred to the appropriate senior person or professional
  (**www.swin.edu.au/corporate/hr/privstmt_final.htm**)
- Refer clients to the relevant policies and procedures that were the basis of decisions about their educational pathway (admission, progress review, exclusion).
- Adhere to University policy in relation to client privacy and confidentiality, with particular reference to collection, use, storage, release and disposal of information (**www.swin.edu.au/corporate/hr/privstmt_final.htm**)

4.0 Operating Guidelines

4.1 Operating Hours / Hours of Work

The general core operating hours reflect the needs and expectations of the client population to be serviced.

- The general core operating hours are 9am-5.06pm. At the discretion of line managers, some staff might be permitted to work flexi time and record hours on flex sheets. These arrangements should be discussed and agreed to by the appropriate Line Manager and will be governed by Faculty policy. Some staff may work to a roster arrangement which will be at the discretion of the line manager or as determined by the relevant Faculty.
- If your departments operating hours are publicised as 9am-5pm a representative of your team must be in the office/or contactable between the published operating times. Exceptions may be planning days etc planned well in advance and the staff of the Faculty must be notified by the appropriate Line Manager.
- However, at peak periods (eg before the start of each semester) operating hours may vary to accommodate Swinburne departments who are enrolling students, etc. Any extended hours are by negotiation with the Line Manager and Faculty Manager and generally organised in advance. The appropriate Line Manager will notify all staff of the Faculty with any change of hours.
- **Staff must ensure that they complete their required 7 hours and 21 minutes of working time per day**. The mandatory 7 hours and 21 minutes does not include lunch or tea breaks. A staff member shall not work more than 5 consecutive hours without a break for a meal. This break shall be at least 30 minutes but not exceeding 45 minutes and must be recorded on their timesheet or where appropriate. Lunch will normally be taken between the hours of 12 and 2pm.

- Formal tea breaks are not incorporated in our EBA and are not a condition of employment. There may be some exceptions for special occasions where an extended morning tea break or afternoon break is supported. This will be at the discretion of the appropriate Line Manager or Faculty Manager.
- ‘Smoke’ breaks are to be kept to a minimum and staff are to take such breaks in the designated areas.
- If you need to take time off for appointments etc during the day, please speak to your Manager as far ahead of time as you possibly can (preferably at least a few days in advance). It is important for staff to ensure adequate staff coverage for their area wherever possible. Any sick leave taken needs to be applied for through EWSS.
- Where possible, all personal appointments need to be made outside work hours.

4.2 Sick Leave

- All staff members need to telephone their Line Manager before 9.30am on the day (or earlier if required by the Line Manager) to notify intention to take sick leave.
- If the Line Manager cannot be reached, staff should telephone and leave a message with another staff member in their area or team. A voicemail message, email or text is acceptable only if agreed by the Line Manager. Where it is likely or possible that the absence will be greater than one day, staff members should contact their Line Manager later in the day, or leave an appropriate message and telephone number where they can be contacted.
- A designated staff member should send an email to relevant team members or others advising them that the staff member will be unavailable on that day.
- Staff members should apply for sick leave via EWSS immediately upon their return to work following a short period of sick leave. A Medical certification or statutory declaration (where medical certification is not available) needs to be supplied to the Line Manager for (1) where the period of sick leave is 3 days or greater, and (2) where the staff member has exceeded 6 single sick leave days in any one year.

4.3 Annual Leave

- Swinburne is as fair and equitable as possible when granting annual leave. However, it may not always be possible for everyone to have the annual leave they desire. It is therefore important that you plan your annual leave as far ahead as you can. In the first instance this should be discussed with your Manager. The Manager assesses demand on services and who else is on leave at that time. There may be ‘blackout periods’ on leave where staff cannot take annual leave because of the high demand on our services e.g. enrolments, census date etc. These may vary from area to area. However annual leave may be granted during these periods only in the case of exceptional circumstances.

  Once the verbal approval is obtained, you will need to apply through Employee Web Self Service (EWSS) for formal approval. This goes through to your Manager and is generally approved immediately.
  www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/hr/ewss_home.htm

4.4 Flex/TOIL

See the appropriate Faculty’s policy and procedure.

5.0 Expected Turnaround Times

Activity	Normal turn-around time
Answering the telephone	**During Office Hours** Within 4 rings (5 rings for the main Faculty line) All team members should program their telephone so that if it is unanswered within 4 rings, the call is forwarded to their voicemail. It is not appropriate for the telephone to ring-out or be unanswered. **Out-of-hours** Recorded messages will be responded to within the first two hours of the next day.
Responding to telephone messages (including voicemail messages)	Calls acknowledged within one working day. When you will be unable to answer calls for more than 1 working day, your telephone should either be forwarded to another team member or your voicemail message altered to advise callers that: • You're unavailable until xx date • Telephone xx if the query requires attention before xx date. Part time staff should state working days in their voicemail message and provide an alternate contact for the days that they are unavailable.

Activity	Normal turn-around time
Responding to emails	Emails read and assessed for urgency within one working day. Response to be sent within 2 working days (earlier response if the matter is urgent). The initial response may be an acknowledgement with an indication as to when a complete response will be possible. During very busy periods, or if staff work part-time, it may be appropriate to set up an automatic email reply that: • acknowledges receipt of the email; • indicates when the email will be read; • provides an alternative contact in case the matter is urgent. When staff are away for more than one working day, the automatic email vacation message is to be used to: • alert people of your absence; • provide an alternative contact in case the matter requires attention before your return to the office. Designated staff member to advise relevant areas if staff are unexpectedly unable to attend work.

Activity	Normal turn-around time
Email etiquette	Email correspondence should contain a greeting, quality response to the enquiry, a closing comment and signature. Example: Dear……. Thank you for your email/enquiry Response Thank you for your query/please let me know if I can provide more information Staff name (in full)
Email signature	Email correspondence should contain a full email signature. Part-time and casual staff should also indicate days and hours of work. Name Title Administrative Unit (if appropriate) Faculty of XXX Mon, Wed, Thu 9.00–4.00 (example if part-time) Swinburne University of Technology XXX Campus Address Victoria 3XXX Australia Telephone: +61 921X XXXX Facsimile: +61 921X XXXX Website: www.swinburne.edu.au/ CRICOS: 00111D

Activity	Normal turn-around time
	Faxes are to be read and assessed for urgency within one working day. Response to be sent within 2 working days (earlier response if the matter is urgent). The initial response may be an acknowledgement with an indication as to when a complete response will be provided.
Responding to standard correspondence/ letters	Written reply sent (or telephone contact made) within 5 working days.
Committee servicing	Circulation of committee agendas and papers: at least 5 working days before the meeting Forwarding of draft minutes to the Chair of the committee: within 5 working days of the meeting.
Delivery of advice, report etc that you've agreed to provide to someone else	By the agreed date. If the agreed date is no longer possible, please contact the person concerned to alert them of the delay and arrange a new delivery date. Advise manager of change.
Complaints/ Grievance	Wherever possible, complaints should be addressed immediately. See 2.1, 2.2 ad 2.3 regarding solving the client's problem.