Academic Progress - Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) This Procedure outlines the process by which academic progress decisions of the University are made. This Procedure is governed by the Academic Progress Regulations 2016 and should be read in conjunction with that document.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This Procedure applies to:

a. All students of Victoria University enrolled in higher education coursework courses, onshore and offshore.

(3) This Procedure does not apply to:

a. Students enrolled in higher degrees by research courses.
b. Vocational Education students.
c. Further Education students, including English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) students.
d. Study Abroad and Exchange students.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Notice in writing: Notice in writing is considered to be discharged by an email sent to a student's VU email address. Letters may be sent as inline text within the body of an email, or as an attachment to an email.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(5) Refer to Academic Progress - Student Retention and Success Policy.

Section 5 - Procedures

Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Student Services (Assessments and Completions)	Identifying students who are making unsatisfactory progress and issuing notifications to students.
Student Services (international enrolments team)	Reporting unsatisfactory progress in accordance with The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS) requirements.

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Roles	Responsibilities
* Show Cause Panel (SCP) * NB - the Show Cause Panel, is referred to as the 'Unsatisfactory Progress Panel' in the Academic Progress Regulations.	Where a student elects to show cause, the SCP will consider whether the student has made unsatisfactory progress in their course and, if so, decide whether they should be excluded from it. Members are nominated by the college Dean.
Student Services (Data Management Services)	Processing any changes to individual student's enrolments as determined by the Procedure or the Show Cause Panel.
Support person	Provides support to the student but does not actively participate in the process.
Student Advocate	Provides advocacy, advice and assistance to the student throughout the process.
Student advisor	A professional or academic staff member who provides advice and referrals to support student success.

Part B - Assessing academic progress

(6) The University will regularly assess students' academic results to determine whether they are making satisfactory progress.

(7) Academic progress will be assessed at the end of each compulsory teaching period (i.e. at the end of semester one and semester two, or at the end of each trimester). For Onshore students, units undertaken in summer (Semester 3) will be included in the Semester 1 progress period, and those undertaken in winter (Semester 4) will be included in the Semester 2 progress period.

Maintaining satisfactory progress

(8) In order to maintain satisfactory academic progress, students must not:

a. fail 50% or more of the units they were enrolled in for the study period; and/or
b. fail the same unit more than once.

What happens if satisfactory progress is not maintained?

(9) Where a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress for the first time, they will be considered to be "at risk" of unsatisfactory course progress.

(10) Where a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress for the second time, they will be advised in writing of the pre-defined outcomes (set out below), which will automatically apply.

(11) Where a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress for the third time, they will be considered to have made unsatisfactory progress in their course and may be excluded from it. The student will be given an opportunity to be heard (i.e. "show cause") as to why this should not occur.

(12) These steps are described in more detail below.

Part C - First time - notification of being at risk of unsatisfactory progress

(13) Where a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress for the first time, they will be advised in writing that they are at risk of making unsatisfactory progress in their course. See Part G for categories and outcomes.

(14) The letter will contain information about:

a. why they have received the letter;
b. the variety of learning and other support services available to students;
c. the requirement that they arrange a time to meet with a student advisor so that they can develop an academic intervention plan to help improve their academic performance;
d. what will happen if they fail to meet the satisfactory progress requirements for a second or subsequent time; and
e. who to contact if they have queries.

(15) The purpose of the letter is to:

a. ensure that students are provided with information about learning supports, resources and assistance;
b. inform students of their responsibility to take the required action;
c. notify the student of what action the University will be taking and what this will mean for the student; and
d. comply with all requisite components of the ESOS Act for International students.

Academic intervention plan

(16) The aim of an academic intervention plan is to ensure that students are aware of the learning and other supports that are available, how these can be accessed, and of any other measures which can assist students in improving their academic performance.

(17) Students are expected to arrange a time to meet with a student advisor so that a personalised academic intervention plan can be developed. The academic intervention plan will identify actions intended to help the student make satisfactory academic progress in the next study period. The academic intervention plan will be agreed to by both parties and a copy placed on the student's file.

Where a personalised academic intervention plan is not developed (e.g. where a student does not engage with a student advisor), a student will be deemed to have been provided with an intervention plan by virtue of the instructions and academic support options detailed in the notification letter.

(18) The academic progress status of each student will be recorded in the student management system.

Part D - Second time - failure to maintain satisfactory progress.

(19) Where a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress for a second time, they will be advised in writing of the consequences for each type of unsatisfactory progress. For example:

(20) Unsatisfactory Unit 2 (USU2) - where a student fails the same unit on three occasions, they will be prevented from re-enrolling in the unit until they have met and discussed support and other options with a student advisor.

(21) Unsatisfactory Load 2 (USL2) - where a student fails 50% of more of the units they were enrolled for the study period, they will be directed to meet a student advisor to discuss support and other options.

(22) The student will also be advised of:

a. what will happen if they fail to meet the satisfactory progress requirements for a third time; and
b. who to contact if they have queries.

Part E - Third time failure to maintain satisfactory progress -

exclusion from course

(23) Where a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress for the third time, students will be considered to have made unsatisfactory progress in their course and will notified in writing that they will likely be excluded. International students will receive information about the implications for their visa.

(24) The student will be given an opportunity to be heard (i.e. "show cause") as to why such an outcome should not apply. If students do not elect to show cause within the required time period, they will be notified that they have been deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress in their course, that they will be excluded from it and when the exclusion will take effect.

Part F - Show cause hearings

(25) A student may elect to 'show cause' as to why they should not excluded from a course by providing supporting documentation and attending a Show Cause Panel hearing (which is referred to as the Unsatisfactory Progress Panel in the Academic Progress Regulations 2016).

(26) A student will be given ten working days to advise the University that they intend to 'show cause.'

(27) Allowable documentation will be defined on a form specifically designed to support the process, and will be assessed by the Show Cause Panel.

(28) If the student has indicated that they intend to show cause they will be required to attend the SCP. The student may have a support person and/or be assisted with the preparation and presentation of their case by a student advocate. If the student has a compelling reason for being unable to attend in person an alternative arrangement can be requested (for example, participation via telephone or video link).

(29) Having heard from the student, the SCP must determine whether the student has made unsatisfactory progress in their course. Where a student is found to have made unsatisfactory progress in their course, the SCP must satisfy themselves that the proposed exclusion decision is warranted in the circumstances.

(30) Where the SCP does not consider exclusion to be appropriate, the SCP may:

a. allow the student to continue without conditions if this is justified in all of the circumstances;
b. impose a condition or conditions on the student's continued enrolment; or
c. require the student to transfer into a different course.

(31) The condition or conditions on enrolment that the SCP may impose include, but are not limited to:

a. A direction for the student to reduce their enrolment load or take intermission, subject to ESOS and other requirements; or
b. A direction to undertake a specific study program for a specified period of time to assist a student's progress (conditional enrolment) or
c. A direction that the students enrol in a more suitable course, stream or major, or
d. A direction that the student engages in appropriate support strategies to enhance the student's progress.

Composition of Show Cause Panel (SCP)

(32) College Deans will nominate a pool of senior academic staff from which the SCP can be selected.

Onshore Show Cause Panel:

(33) A senior academic who must not be directly involved in delivering the student's course, and

(34) Another academic staff member involved in the course (this may be the Course Chair or equivalent, or a staff member involved in teaching the course).

(35) In the case of a student studying a double degree, the Panel must have representation from both Colleges.

Offshore Show Cause Panel:

(36) The Discipline Leader or the equivalent person in the offshore institution nominated by the Dean of the relevant VU College, and

(37) The VU Site Coordinator or a member of the VU teaching staff who teaches in the course.

Show Cause Notification

(38) Students will be notified in writing of the outcome of their review by the SPC.

(39) The student will be notified of the SCP decision in writing, with a clear statement of any conditions on ongoing enrolment imposed by the SCP.

(40) The notification will be provided to the student's VU email address and will be kept on the student's file within the student system.

(41) Where the student being excluded is an international student, the international enrolment team and VU College must be provided with a copy of the letter of notification.

(42) Any Academic encumbrances placed on the students' record must not be enforced until the end of the University appeal process. A student's enrolment record must also remain active as enrolled during this time.

(43) If the outcome of the SCP process is not finalised before the census date of the subsequent teaching period, the student is granted a "grace" semester or trimester to improve performance (that is, the outcome of the SPC is not implemented until after the end of that teaching period and, depending on the student's performance in that teaching period, may not be implemented). In these circumstances the college Dean will determine whether or not the SCP's decision should be implemented.

(44) Where the college confirms a decision of exclusion, Assessments and Completions will be informed to enact the changes to the student's enrolment.

(45) Where exclusion is the final decision, a student will be informed that, should they wish to return to study at VU, they will need to re-apply and that their exclusion may be taken into account in future selection decisions.

Appeals

(46) Students who wish to appeal an exclusion decision or an alternative outcome determined by the SCP may do so in accordance with the Student Appeals Regulations 2014.

(47) Decisions to exclude the student will come into effect after the allowable period for lodging an appeal (20 University business days) has lapsed, or after the conclusion of the appeal process if an appeal is lodged.

Part G - Summary of Unsatisfactory Progress Classifications and

Outcomes

Unit failure

Classification	Trigger	Outcome / notification to student
USU1	Student fails a unit twice	Advise student they are at USU1. Invitation to meet / talk with student advisor to discuss and agree on an academic intervention plan.
USU2	Student fails a unit three times	Advise student they are at USU2 Student may not re-enrol in that unit. Student required to meet with a student advisor to discuss options. If the student is permitted to enrol in the unit again they are advised that a fourth time failure will lead to course exclusion
USU3	Student fails a unit four times	Advise student that they are at USU3 - Exclusion from course. The student may elect to attend a Show Cause Hearing to provide evidence about why they should not be excluded. (Student is given 10 working days to show cause).

Load failure

Classification	Trigger	Outcome / notification to student
USL1	Student fails 50% or more of units for first time	Advise student they are at USL1 Student required to meet with a student advisor to develop an academic intervention plan.
USL2	Student fails 50% or more of units for second time	Advise student they are at USL2 Student required to meet with a student advisor to develop a second academic intervention plan.
USL3	Student fails 50% or more of units for a third or subsequent time	Advise student they are at USL3 — Exclusion from course. The student may elect to attend a Show Cause Hearing to provide evidence about why they should not be excluded (student is given 10 working days to show cause).

Section 6 - Guidelines

(48) See Academic Progress - Student Retention and Success Guideline.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	22nd August 2017
Review Date	22nd August 2020
Approval Authority	Vice-President, Planning and Registrar
Approval Date	2nd August 2017
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Responsible Officer	Darrel Caufield Chief Student Officer and Registrar darrel.caulfield@vu.edu.au
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