

# Academic Progress - Foundations Studies Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

- (1) This Procedure is governed by the [Academic Progress Regulations 2016](#).
- (2) The purpose of this Procedure is to provide a framework for the monitoring of course progress for students enrolled in non-award Foundations courses. The Procedure:
- a. provides a process for the identification of students deemed "at risk" of not meeting satisfactory course progress requirements;
  - b. outlines a range of intervention actions/strategies which may be employed to support students deemed "at risk" of not meeting satisfactory course progress;
  - c. details consequences and actions if unsatisfactory course progress impacts on course progression, course completion within the duration specified within the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) or the conditional requirements of a guaranteed pathway.

## Section 2 - Scope / Application

- (3) This Procedure applies to students enrolled in Foundations courses where the course is being assessed by the University.
- (4) This Procedure does not apply to:
- a. Study Abroad and Exchange students
  - b. Vocational Education students
  - c. Courses not assessed by the University (where the University certifies participation only)
  - d. Industry training and professional development course participants
  - e. ELICOS students

## Section 3 - Definitions

- (5) At risk: Student at risk of not completing their course and/or not meeting the entry requirements of their subsequent course, where the subsequent course is part of a packaged pathway offer.
- (6) Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances:
- a. These are circumstances beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course engagement or wellbeing. They could include (without limitation):
    - i. serious illness or injury (where a medical certificate states the student was unable engage with scheduled course requirements);

- ii. death of a close family member;
- iii. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student's home country which requires emergency travel; or
- iv. a traumatic experience (such as involvement in or witnessing a serious accident, involvement in legal proceedings).

(7) Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE): An electronic document issued by the University to international students who have accepted their offer to study at VU. The document must be submitted as part of the student visa application.

(8) Course Progress: The measure of advancement within a course towards the completion of that course, irrespective of whether course completion is identified through academic merit or skill-based competencies.

(9) ESOS Act: [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#).

(10) Foundations Courses:

- a. This refers to VU's foundation studies courses and units, which are non-award courses for students who wish to develop skills and transition into higher education, vocational education courses, or employment.

(11) 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.

(12) International Student:

- a. This means a student on a student visa who is a citizen of another country and is studying in Australia.

(13) Study Period:

- a. This means the discrete period of study within the Foundations Course engaged in by the International Student, such as a term, semester, trimester or a lesser duration, as defined by VU. The study period for each Foundations course or unit is stated in each student's Letter of Offer.

## Section 4 - Policy/Regulation

(14) See [Academic Progress Regulations 2016](#).

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

| Roles    | Responsibilities  |
|----------|---|
| Teachers | Identify students at risk of making unsatisfactory progress<br>Provide academic assistance and advice to students |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Associate Director, Foundations | <p>Notifies Foundations students of their status of being at-risk<br/>Co-ordinates the creation of Academic Improvement Plans</p> <p>Notifies international Foundations students of their unsatisfactory progress and intention to report to the relevant Australian Government department<br/>Notifies domestic Foundations students of their unsatisfactory progress and the University's intention to cancel their enrolment in subsequent courses (where this is a condition of the further courses of study within a pathway)<br/>Considers mitigation raised by the student (compassionate or compelling circumstances) where this is validated by the findings of a Show Cause Panel<br/>Cancels the enrolment of students deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress</p> |
| Show Cause Panels               | <p>Where a student elects to show cause, the SCP will consider whether the student has made unsatisfactory progress in their course, whether compassionate or compelling circumstances exist to mitigate this, and, if so, decide whether they should be excluded and / or reported to the relevant Australian Government department.</p> <p>The Panel will be comprised of:<br/>- the Associate Director, Foundations (Chair)<br/>- two other academic staff members selected by the Associate Director, Foundations</p>   |
| Enrolments Team                 | Notifies the relevant Australian Government department of the failure to make satisfactory progress of an international student   |

## Part B - Identification of students "at risk"

(15) To satisfactorily progress through a foundation course at Victoria University a student should be able to complete the course in the expected course duration.

- a. In the case of international students, the expected course duration is the time specified in the relevant Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).
- b. In the case of domestic students, the advertised course length will be considered the expected course duration time subject to extensions being granted in accordance with University policy.

### Foundation courses that are one study period in length

(16) In the case of a foundation course that only runs for one study period, a Foundation student will be identified as being "at risk" of not meeting course progress when their coursework/assignment grades indicate a likelihood of failing a unit. Such an assessment should be made:

- a. no later than halfway through the study period; or
- b. after no more than two failed assessment tasks.

(17) If a student is showing signs of being "at risk" of not meeting course progress requirements as defined above, teaching staff must counsel the student and monitor course progress through implementation of suitable intervention strategy (possible intervention strategies are discussed in more detail below).

(18) Teachers will report any concerns of students being at risk of failing a unit to the Associate Director, Foundations as soon as identified.

### Foundation courses that are two or more study periods in length

(19) Where a foundation course runs over two or more study periods, a student will be identified as being at risk of not meeting course progress requirements where they have:

- a. failed 25% or more of the units they were enrolled in for the study period; or
- b. failed the same unit more than once; or

c. failed units required for satisfaction of the conditional enrolment of a guaranteed pathway.

(20) At the end of each study period, an assessment of students' progress against the criteria above will be undertaken by the Associate Director, Foundations to identify students who are at "at risk" of not meeting course progress.

## **Part C - Intervention Strategies**

(21) Students will be advised in writing that they are identified as "at risk" of not meeting course progress requirements.

(22) The letter will contain information about:

- a. why they have received the letter;
- b. the requirement that they arrange a time to meet with a nominated staff member so that they can develop/review an academic intervention;
- c. what will happen if they fail/failed to meet the satisfactory progress requirements; and
- d. how to establish a meeting to discuss next steps

(23) Students are expected to arrange a time to meet with the nominated staff member so that an 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.

(24) Academic intervention should be tailored to meet the student's individual needs. The intervention actions/strategies may involve a variety/combination of measures, including but not limited to:

- a. accessing learning support
- b. regular meetings with the teacher or other University support service for study assistance
- c. support with implementing effective study strategies and time management skills
- d. granting of special consideration for circumstances which have affected the student's ability to submit or sit for assessments
- e. additional tutoring or study group
- f. referral to appropriate skills workshops
- g. referral to academic skills support and time management skills
- h. referral for personal counselling
- i. discussion of the suitability of the course with the nominated staff member
- j. assessment of special provision
- k. reduction in study load, approved by the Associate Director, Foundations
- l. applying for approved leave (See Defer, Cancel or Suspend Enrolment Procedure (International))(pending)
- m. for domestic students, discussion of /transfer to alternative study pathways within Victoria University

(25) The academic intervention plan will be agreed to by both parties and a copy placed on the student's file. The plan will also detail consequences of unsatisfactory course progress.

(26) In the event a meeting has failed to eventuate, a student will be deemed to have been provided with an intervention plan by virtue of the instructions detailed in the notification letter.

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

## Part D - Consequences of Unsatisfactory Progress

(28) Unsatisfactory Progress in a Foundations course is deemed to have been made if:

- a. In the case of an international student, unit failures mean that they will not be able complete their course within the expected course duration;
- b. In the case of a domestic student, they have failed a unit of study in a course that is one teaching period in length.

### Domestic Students

(29) Upon identifying that a student has failed a unit of study of a foundations course with only one teaching period, the Associate Director Foundations, will notify the student in writing that:

- a. They have met the criteria for unsatisfactory progress; and
- b. If relevant, they may be excluded from continuing to any further courses of study which were packaged with their foundations course in their initial offer (where passing the foundations course was a condition of the offer).

(30) The letter will provide the student with the opportunity to present evidence to a Show Cause Panel convened by the Associate Director, Foundations that their academic progress has been impeded by compassionate or compelling circumstances. The student must indicate that they wish to do this within 5 University business days of issuing of the letter.

### International Students

(31) Upon identifying that a student cannot complete their course within the expected course duration and maintain satisfactory course progress, the Associate Director, Foundations will notify the student in writing (and their sponsor or carer if the student is under 18) of the intention to report the student to the relevant Australian Government department for not achieving satisfactory course progress.

(32) The letter will provide the student with the opportunity to present evidence to a Show Cause Panel convened by the Associate Director, Foundations that their academic progress has been impeded by compassionate or compelling circumstances. The student must indicate that they wish to do this within 5 University business days of issuing of the letter.

### Show Cause Panels

(33) If the student avails themselves of the opportunity to present evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances:

- a. The Associate Director, Foundations will convene a Show Cause Panel (SCP) comprising themselves as the Chair and two (2) other members.
- b. The two members of the SCP may be any academic staff members of the University, providing they have no conflict of interest in the matter.

(34) If the student has indicated that they intend to show cause, they will be required to attend the SCP.

(35) The student may have a support person and/or be assisted with the preparation and presentation of their case by a student advocate.

(36) 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).

(37) The Panel will:

- a. consider any evidence advanced by the student; and
- b. make a determination as to whether the student has made unsatisfactory progress in light of the circumstances.

(38) This determination will be communicated to the student in writing.

(39) For international students, the letter will also detail the proposed action to be taken to cancel the enrolment and report the student to the relevant Australian Government department as outlined in the Defer, Cancel or Suspend Enrolment Procedure (International)(pending).

(40) The letter specifying the determination will refer the student to the Appeals process and explain the student's rights to be heard, specifying that no action will be taken for a period of 20 days (the appeal lodgement period).

(41) The student will remain enrolled until the conclusion of the Appeals process, if initiated.

### **Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances**

(42) Where an international student's failure to progress is due to compassionate or compelling circumstances, the University may determine that an extension of the course duration is appropriate in line with ESOS Standard 9.

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

- a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
- b. bereavement of close family members such as parents, siblings, or grandparents
- c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel when this has impacted on the student's studies; or
- d. a traumatic experience, which could include:
  - i. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident
  - ii. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime

when this has impacted on the student. (These cases should be supported by appropriate documentation.)

- e. where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit; or
- f. inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.

(44) The Associate Director, Foundations may exercise their discretion, where compassionate or compelling circumstances exist and have been assessed as valid by a Show Cause Panel, to not act to cancel the student's enrolment and to issue a new or extended CoE documenting the new expected course duration.

### **Part E - Appeals**

(45) A student may appeal the decision of a Show Cause Panel to:

- a. report them to the relevant Australian Government department, or
- b. exclude them from their course or the subsequent course of study in their package arrangement or pathway if they meet the grounds for appeal as specified in the [Student Appeals Regulations 2019](#).

(46) The matter will then proceed according to VU's appeals process outlined in the [Student Appeals Regulations](#)

(47) The student's enrolment must be maintained for the duration of the appeal.

## Status and Details

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|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Status</b>              | Historic   |
| <b>Effective Date</b>      | 21st December 2016   |
| <b>Review Date</b>         | 21st December 2019   |
| <b>Approval Authority</b>  | Academic Registrar and Executive Director Student Services                                   |
| <b>Approval Date</b>       | 16th December 2016   |
| <b>Expiry Date</b>         | 22nd March 2021  |
| <b>Accountable Officer</b> | Lisa Line<br>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital<br>Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au            |
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