



University of
St Andrews

Academic alerts

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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON ACADEMIC ALERTS

1. Principles

- 1.1. The Academic Alerts system provides a mechanism for alerting all students to deficiencies in their studies, and also directs them to sources of possible help and support where appropriate.
- 1.2. In addition, the Academic Alerts system gives Schools/Departments a way of warning students (undergraduate and taught postgraduate) of the penalties for non-attendance, or non-completion of compulsory learning elements, and warns them of the consequences at an early stage.
- 1.3. During dual mode delivery in Academic Year 2020-21, where 'attendance' or 'presence' are used in this policy, the terms should be interpreted broadly to include online participation in classes as well as in-person physical presence.

2. Types and Status of Academic Alerts

2.1. Types of Academic Alert

Academic Alerts can be issued for a number of reasons when highlighting issues with the progress of a student's studies. The six types of Alert used are outlined below:

- **CHECKPOINT:** Issued when a student misses a *required point of contact that does not lead to a module level academic sanction if left unresolved*. For Tier 4 students this could ultimately lead to withdrawal of visa sponsorship. It encourages students to contact the School/Department concerned in regard to why they may have missed this "checkpoint" and also directs students to areas of support if missing this point of contact may be linked to any underlying problems or concerns.
- **ENGAGEMENT:** Issued for lack of academic engagement or poor performance and outlines the potential consequences of this. Typical examples include: a student regularly misses non-compulsory teaching sessions; a student's grades for coursework are repeatedly below the expected level; a student fails to submit work for non-compulsory formative assessment; a student fails to prepare for a class or fully participate in that class.

- **ABSENCE:** Issued when a student does not fulfil compulsory elements of attendance and is at risk of contravening the School/Department's absence policy and outlines the potential consequences of this. ABSENCE Alerts differ to CHECKPOINT alerts, as they are issued for missing a required point of contact that *could ultimately lead to an academic sanction if left unresolved.*
- In Academic Year 2020-21, ENGAGEMENT alerts may also be used in this context, since the definition of 'absence' may be confusing in some modules for students studying online.
- **ASSESSMENT (Late submission):** Issued when a student submits a piece of summative (assessed) work late and makes students aware of late penalties they will be incurring and the consequences if they fail to submit the work at all.
- **ASSESSMENT (Failure to complete assessment):** Issued when a student fails to attend a compulsory assessment such as a class test or oral presentation without the required notifications of non-attendance being sent to the relevant School/Department and outlines the consequences of this. If a student fails to act on this Alert or does not provide good reasons as to why they failed to complete the assessment, then an Academic Alert FINAL will be issued.
- **FINAL:** Issued to inform a student that they have missed, or failed to submit work for, too many compulsory elements of a module and as such, they will receive a grade of 0X for the module. This type of Alert will only be issued after a student has received and not acted upon an Academic Alert ABSENCE, Academic Alert ASSESSMENT (Late submission), or Academic Alert ASSESSMENT (Failure to complete assessment). An Academic Alert FINAL cannot be changed to a 'Resolved' status. There may however be a route of appeal for the student as outlined in the text of the alert, and an Alert FINAL can be revoked when appropriate.

2.2. Status of Academic Alerts

A newly issued Alert is flagged as status 'In Progress'. Depending on the subsequent actions of the student, the status will change to 'Unresolved' or 'Resolved', which are outlined below:

- **Unresolved:** After a period of four calendar days has elapsed with no satisfactory response from the student, the status of the Alert will change to 'Unresolved.' Appropriate follow-up actions will be taken in response to 'Unresolved' Alerts.
- **Resolved:** The appropriate action has been taken by the student and the Alert can now be marked as 'Resolved.' If the student's

performance does not improve following a 'Resolved' Alert, they can be issued with a further Alert however. An Academic Alert FINAL cannot be changed to 'Resolved' but may be revoked when appropriate.

3. Attendance Monitoring and Academic Alerts

- 3.1. Academic Alerts are of central importance to the institution's attendance monitoring process for both pastoral and UKVI compliance purposes. The Academic Alerts system supports Schools/Departments in highlighting to students their responsibilities with regards to attendance and academic engagement when they are in danger of failing to meet these requirements and outlines the potential consequences to the progression of their studies.
- 3.2. Schools/Departments may exercise some flexibility in implementing attendance monitoring and the use of Academic Alerts as part of this process, so long as the chosen scheme fulfils the requirement of ensuring that academic engagement by every student is checked through participation in activities related to their academic programme.
- 3.3. Attendance monitoring models need to include the following considerations:
 - the number and type of modules for which monitoring is carried out;
 - the number of compulsory attendance elements within a module;
 - whether each such element is individually compulsory, or instead attendance at a certain proportion of the elements is compulsory;
 - the mechanism for recording attendance;
 - the penalty (if any) for failing to comply with a compulsory element.
- 3.4. All sub-honours modules must include attendance monitoring such that there are at least two occasions in each semester, in separate weeks, in which a non-engaging student would receive a CHECKPOINT, ENGAGEMENT or ABSENCE Alert. The most appropriate alert type will depend on the attendance monitoring model developed by the School/Department.
- 3.5. At 3000 level and above, each School/Department must carry out monitoring such that it can be demonstrated that every Honours and PGT student in the School/Department is subject to monitoring. The minimum level of monitoring is defined as there being at least four occasions in each

semester¹, in separate weeks, in which a non-attending student would receive a CHECKPOINT or ABSENCE Alert depending on which alert will be most appropriate given the attendance monitoring model developed by the School/Department.

- 3.6. If a School/Department chooses not to carry out monitoring in all modules at 3000 level and above, it must check, in each semester, for any General Degree or non-graduating students taking any of its modules at 3000 level and above and ensure that all such students are included in monitoring as above.
- 3.7. A School/Department may specify that attendance at a certain proportion of relevant events or classes is compulsory, without any single event being compulsory, so long as conditions 3.4. and 3.5. of this policy are met.

4. Procedure for Issuing and Managing Academic Alerts

- 4.1. When cases of significant poor performance, non-completion or non-attendance at compulsory module elements are identified, a Module Coordinator or other appropriate staff member (e.g., Sub-Honours Coordinator) will issue a student with an Academic Alert, specifying the problem area using a pro-forma operated through the Module Management System (MMS).
- 4.2. An Alert will not appear on any externally visible records (e.g., transcripts). Records will however be kept internally on MMS as part of the Academic Alerts process and for internal monitoring purposes. There is therefore no need for it to be withdrawn later if circumstances change or acceptable reasons are given for the problem that has arisen. The Alert will describe the situation, the action required from the student, the support available where appropriate, and the consequences of not taking any action. Academic staff can, if required, issue Academic Alerts more than once to a student in a given module.
- 4.3. Academic Alerts must be issued separately for each concern that arises. One Alert should not combine several absences or several issues such as lack of engagement, absence, or assessment. As such, a separate Alert should be issued for every absence, and separate Alerts should be issued for students with several issues in a given situation, (e.g., a student who is absent as well as failing to hand in assessment would be issued an ABSENCE Alert, as well as a relevant ASSESSMENT Alert). Academic Alerts should not be issued after the end of the revision period.
- 4.4. Whilst Alerts can be issued by staff in MMS when required both within and outwith standard office hours, students will only receive these Alerts during

¹ And also the summer dissertation period, for PGT students who have not been granted permission to study outwith St Andrews.

standard office hours (eg 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri) so that they can seek immediate support from either their School/Department or Student Services at the time the Alert is issued. MMS will therefore delay the release of an Alert when issued by staff at certain times:

- An Alert issued between 16:00 and 08:00 in the evening before, or on the morning of a weekday, will be delayed for delivery until 08:00 on that day.
 - An Alert issued between 13:00 on a Friday and 08:00 on the following Monday will be delayed for delivery until 08:00 on that Monday.
- 4.5. Once an Alert has been issued, it will be flagged as 'In Progress'. The onus is then on the student to take the action that is required of them to avoid the specified consequences, which are explicit in the Academic Alert issued. The student has four calendar days to respond to the Academic Alert once it has been issued. When an Academic Alert has been issued and the required action has been taken by the student, then no further action by the student is necessary.
- 4.6. When an Academic Alert has been issued and a student has responded to it to the satisfaction of the staff member who issued the Alert, then its status can be changed to 'Resolved'. The status can only be changed to 'Resolved' if the student has responded to the Alert, and if following their response subsequent performance does not improve, another Alert may be issued, and further guidance suggested and/or actions required.
- 4.7. When an Academic Alert has been issued and four calendar days have passed with no response from the student, then the Alert will automatically change to 'Unresolved.' Student Services will monitor all 'Unresolved' Academic Alerts for pastoral purposes, and Registry will monitor all 'Unresolved' Academic Alerts for cohort trend monitoring, as well as for all Tier 4 students for the purposes of UKVI compliance.
- 4.8. Schools/Departments will always check whether any relevant self-certificates have been submitted before issuing an Alert. Completion of a self-certificate of absence does not exempt a student from fulfilling compulsory elements of a module. A student missing a compulsory element of a module can therefore lead to an Academic Alert being issued regardless of whether the absence has been self-certified or not. An Academic Alert would not normally be issued if a student has self-certificated for a compulsory element and subsequently contacted the School/Department² to determine what action is required of them in relation to the missed compulsory element.

² In person, if the situation is such that an Academic Alert ABSENCE would otherwise be issued.

- 4.9. If an Academic Alert of the ABSENCE and/or ASSESSMENT type has been issued, and the required action has not been taken, then an Academic Alert FINAL may be issued without further warning, and the student is thereby told they will automatically receive a grade of 0X at the module boards. An Academic Alert FINAL should only be issued after a preceding Academic Alert ABSENCE and/or ASSESSMENT has been issued and should only be given to students who are in a situation where they cannot meet the compulsory elements of the module.
- 4.10. Where an Academic Alert FINAL is issued, the student may then cease to attend the module entirely, though they are not forced to do so. If such a student believes they have good reasons for not acting upon an earlier issued Academic Alert, their explanation can be presented to the appropriate staff member identified on the Academic Alert FINAL, within the specified time limit, and may be accepted (and the impending penalty rescinded). If not accepted, students who still believe they have a reasonable justification may take their case to the Director of Teaching, who will consider all available evidence before making a decision. Students have a right of appeal against this decision, on specified grounds, as outlined in the [University's Policy on Student Academic Appeals](#).
- 4.11. Students who appeal the decision to send an Academic Alert FINAL must continue to submit work by the published deadlines and attended class tests and examinations. Schools/Departments do not need to mark any work or examination papers submitted by a student after the issuing of an Academic Alert FINAL, but they should retain all such work on file in case of a subsequent successful appeal.

Academic Alerts Table for Undergraduates and Taught Postgraduates

(This table summarises the categories for the Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Academic Alerts)

Name	Description	Action Required	Consequences	Follow-up
<p>Academic Alert: CHECKPOINT</p>	<p>I am concerned to note that you have missed an academic checkpoint for this module. The details are...</p>	<p>In order to address this academic alert you should contact the <Module Co-ordinator/Director of Teaching/Other staff member> within 4 days of receipt of this Alert to reassure them of your presence and engagement with your studies. An email is one acceptable way of making the contact that can lead to this happening.</p> <p>It may be that your absence from this “checkpoint” teaching session does not indicate any underlying problems. However, it may be that your absence is a symptom of some difficulties that you are experiencing, and in such cases you are encouraged to seek support from staff. It may be helpful to contact Student Services and/or your Adviser of Studies and/or a member of staff in this School. It may be that you have already done this. If so, please let us know.</p> <p>If you would like to arrange a meeting with Student Services, please book an appointment here.</p>	<p>Potential consequences of continuing to miss classes may include those shown below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may not perform as you wish in assessments in this module. This may have consequences for your progression to subsequent years or may affect your degree outcome. • Absence from University for more than two consecutive weeks, more than 10 consecutive teaching days, or a total of 15 non-consecutive teaching days contravenes University regulations on absence see here. <p>For more information about Academic Alerts, please see here.</p>	<p>Onus on the student</p>
<p><i>Extra consequences text for Tier 4 students in the above situation.</i></p>	<p><i>Students with a Tier 4 visa are required to demonstrate successful progression throughout their studies as part of the conditions of their visa. Failure to demonstrate this may mean you are unable to obtain an extension to your visa should you require additional time to complete your degree programme.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the conditions of a Tier 4 visa, if you are absent without explanation Registry will follow-up with you in order to ascertain the reason for your absence. If you do not provide a satisfactory explanation for your absence then there is a risk of you being reported to the UKVI as not attending, at which point the University will withdraw its sponsorship, and you will be required to leave the UK. Should you be required to take a leave of absence the University will report this to the UKVI and you will be required to leave the UK for the duration of the leave of absence. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p>		<p>+Registry</p>	

<p>Academic Alert: ENGAGEMENT</p>	<p>I am concerned to note an apparent lack of academic engagement, and/or poor performance in this module. The details are ...</p> <p>If you are experiencing health or other difficulties, it may be that the University can provide you with advice and/or allowances associated with those difficulties.</p>	<p>In order to address this academic alert you must complete the following action(s):</p> <p>Contact the <Module Co-ordinator/Other staff member> within 4 days of receipt of this Alert to discuss the risk to your academic studies. It can be helpful to all concerned if you make contact so that you can get some advice and the alert can be set to 'Resolved'. An e-mail is an acceptable way of starting that contact.</p> <p>Please let them know if you have already contacted a member of staff within the School/Department or Student Services with information relevant to this Alert. They may put you in touch with Student Services for further support or advice. If you would like to arrange a meeting with Student Services, please book an appointment here.</p>	<p>The consequences of not taking action to address the situation are shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your module grade may be lower than would be the case if you were fully engaged with the module's work. This may have consequences for progression into subsequent years, it may hinder your preparedness for future modules, and/or this may affect your degree outcomes. <p>This consequence may follow without further notification, so it is important that you take action now.</p> <p>For more information about Academic Alerts, please see here.</p>	<p>Onus on the student</p>
<p><i>Extra consequences text for Tier 4 students in the above situation.</i></p>	<p><i>Students with a Tier 4 visa are required to demonstrate successful progression throughout their studies as part of the conditions of their visa. Failure to demonstrate this may mean you are unable to obtain an extension to your visa should you require additional time to complete your degree programme. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the conditions of a Tier 4 visa, if you are absent without explanation Registry will follow-up with you in order to ascertain the reason for your absence. If you do not provide a satisfactory explanation for your absence then there is a risk of you being reported to the UKVI as not attending, at which point the University will withdraw its sponsorship, and you will be required to leave the UK. Should you be required to take a leave of absence the University will report this to the UKVI and you will be required to leave the UK for the duration of the leave of absence. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p>		<p>+Registry</p>	

<p>Academic Alert: ABSENCE</p>	<p>You have missed compulsory class(es) for this module and may be at risk of contravening the School's and/or University's absence policy. The details are...</p> <p>If you are experiencing health or other difficulties, it may be that the University can provide you with advice and/or allowances associated with those difficulties.</p>	<p>In order to address this academic alert you must complete the following action(s):</p> <p>Contact the <Director of Teaching/Other staff member> within 4 days of receipt of this Alert to discuss the risk to your academic studies. It may be that you are already in contact with Student Services, but the people involved with issuing this alert may not know this.</p> <p>Please let them know if you have already contacted a member of staff within the School/Department or Student Services with information relevant to this Alert. They may put you in touch with Student Services for further support or advice. If you would like to arrange a meeting with Student Services, please book an appointment here.</p>	<p>The consequences of not taking action to address the situation are shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence from the University for more than two consecutive weeks, more than 10 consecutive teaching days, or a total of 15 non-consecutive teaching days contravenes University regulations and you may be required to take a Leave of Absence. For the University's regulations on absences see here. • You may be awarded 0X by the Module Board with no right to reassessment if you do not complete enough of the module to be awarded credit. See the School/Department and/or Module Handbooks for further information. <p>This consequence may follow without further notification, so it is important that you take action now.</p> <p>For more information about Academic Alerts, please see here.</p>	<p>Onus on the student</p>
<p><i>Extra consequences text for Tier 4 students in the above situation.</i></p>	<p><i>Students with a Tier 4 visa are required to demonstrate successful progression throughout their studies as part of the conditions of their visa. Failure to demonstrate this may mean you are unable to obtain an extension to your visa should you require additional time to complete your degree programme. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the conditions of a Tier 4 visa, if you are absent without explanation Registry will follow-up with you in order to ascertain the reason for your absence. If you do not provide a satisfactory</i></p>	<p>+Registry</p>		

	<p><i>explanation for your absence then there is a risk of you being reported to the UKVI as not attending, at which point the University will withdraw its sponsorship, and you will be required to leave the UK. Should you be required to take a leave of absence the University will report this to the UKVI and you will be required to leave the UK for the duration of the leave of absence. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p>			
<p>Academic Alert: ASSESSMENT (Late Submission)</p>	<p>I am concerned to note that you have failed to complete one (or more) assessments on time for this module. The details are ... (need to provide module code and detail of the late assessments).</p> <p>If you are experiencing health or other difficulties, it may be that the University can provide you with advice and/or allowances associated with those difficulties.</p>	<p>In order to address this academic alert you must complete the following action(s):</p> <p>Contact the Module Coordinator/Other member of staff within 4 days of receipt of this alert to confirm submission of the outstanding assignment(s), or to discuss whether an alternative arrangement may be possible. Please let them know if you have already contacted a member of staff within the School/Department or Student Services with information relevant to this alert. Be aware that mark penalties are applied for late submissions. If you believe that you have grounds for requesting an extension, contact the Module Co-ordinator immediately. If you would like to arrange a meeting with Student Services, please book an appointment here.</p>	<p>The consequences of not taking action to address the situation are shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your marks may be reduced for late submission. On some modules, you may receive 0X for the module with no right to reassessment if you fail to submit work and/or do not complete enough of the assessment for the module. See the School/Department and/or Module Handbooks for further information. <p>This consequence may follow without further notification, so it is important that you take action now.</p> <p>For more information about Academic Alerts, please see here.</p>	<p>Onus on the student</p>
<p><i>Extra consequences text for Tier 4 students in the above situation.</i></p>	<p><i>Students with a Tier 4 visa are required to demonstrate successful progression throughout their studies as part of the conditions of their visa. Failure to demonstrate this may mean you are unable to obtain an extension to your visa should you require additional time to complete your degree programme. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the conditions of a Tier 4 visa, if you are absent without explanation Registry will follow-up with you in order to ascertain the reason for your absence. If you do not provide a satisfactory explanation for your absence then there is a risk of you being reported to the UKVI as not attending, at which point the University will withdraw its sponsorship, and you will be required to leave the UK.</i></p>	<p>+Registry</p>		

		<p><i>Should you be required to take a leave of absence the University will report this to the UKVI and you will be required to leave the UK for the duration of the leave of absence. You may wish to contact the <u>International Adviser (via The ASC)</u> for further information.</i></p>		
<p>Academic Alert: ASSESSMENT (Failure to complete assessment)</p>	<p>I am concerned to note that you have failed to complete one (or more) assessments for this module. The details are ... <i>(need to provide module code and what assessments have not been completed)</i></p> <p>If you are experiencing health or other difficulties, it may be that the University can provide you with advice and/or allowances associated with those difficulties.</p>	<p>In order to address this academic alert you must complete the following action(s):</p> <p>Contact the <Module Co-ordinator/Other member of staff> within 4 days of receipt of this Alert to discuss your situation and any action required. Please let them know if you have already contacted a member of staff within the School/Department or Student Services with information relevant to this Alert. If you would like to arrange a meeting with Student Services, please book an appointment via here.</p>	<p>Potential consequences of not taking action to address the situation may include those shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On some modules you may receive OX for the module, with no right to reassessment, if you do not complete enough of the assessment for the module. See the School/Department and/or Module Handbooks for further information. <p>This consequence may follow without further notification, so it is important that you take action now.</p> <p>For more information about Academic Alerts, please see here.</p>	<p>Onus on the student</p>
<p><i>Extra consequences text for Tier 4 students in the above situation.</i></p>	<p><i>Students with a Tier 4 visa are required to demonstrate successful progression throughout their studies as part of the conditions of their visa. Failure to demonstrate this may mean you are unable to obtain an extension to your visa should you require additional time to complete your degree programme. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the conditions of a Tier 4 visa, if you are absent without explanation Registry will follow-up with you in order to ascertain the reason for your absence. If you do not provide a satisfactory explanation for your absence then there is a risk of you being reported to the UKVI as not attending, at which point the University will withdraw its sponsorship, and you will be required to leave the UK. Should you be required to take a leave of absence the University will report this to the UKVI and you will be required to leave the UK for the duration of the leave of absence. You may wish to contact the <u>International Adviser (via The ASC)</u> for further information.</i></p>		<p>+Registry</p>	

<p>Academic Alert: FINAL</p>	<p>By now you will have already received one or more academic alerts relating to this module. I regret to inform you that you have now missed too many compulsory module elements, or failed to submit too many assessments, to pass the module. The details are ... <i>(need to provide module code and detail of failure to meet compulsory element(s)).</i></p> <p>As a result you will receive 0X for the module and receive no credits for it, with no right to reassessment.</p>	<p>You should contact the Director of Teaching within 4 days if you believe you have good reasons for your absence(s), and/or missed assessment(s). Please let them know if you have already contacted a member of staff within the School/Department or Student Services with information relevant to this alert. If you would like to arrange a meeting with Student Services, please book an appointment here.</p> <p>You may be able to make an academic appeal against the 0X outcome. The first stage of the process in this direction would normally be to contact the Director of Teaching in the School/Department that runs this module, as noted above. More information about the University's appeals policy may be found here.</p>	<p>As explained above, you will receive 0X for the module and receive no credits for it, with no right to reassessment. See the School and/or Module Handbooks for further information.</p> <p>If you do not plan to appeal and wish to discuss your academic options please contact your Adviser of Studies. If you require non-academic advice and support in relation to this alert, please contact Student Services.</p> <p>For more information about Academic Alerts, please see here.</p>	<p>Onus on the student</p>
<p><i>Extra consequences text for Tier 4 students in the above situation.</i></p>	<p><i>Students with a Tier 4 visa are required to demonstrate successful progression throughout their studies as part of the conditions of their visa. Failure to demonstrate this may mean you are unable to obtain an extension to your visa should you require additional time to complete your degree programme. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the conditions of a Tier 4 visa, if you are absent without explanation Registry will follow-up with you in order to ascertain the reason for your absence. If you do not provide a satisfactory explanation for your absence then there is a risk of you being reported to the UKVI as not attending, at which point the University will withdraw its sponsorship, and you will be required to leave the UK. Should you be required to take a leave of absence the University will report this to the UKVI and you will be required to leave the UK for the duration of the leave of absence. You may wish to contact the International Adviser (via The ASC) for further information.</i></p>	<p>+Registry</p>		

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