



University of  
St Andrews

## Early academic intervention

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<b>Purpose</b>	This policy relates to academic interventions at overall degree programme level which aims to help students recognise when their academic progress may be at risk.

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3.5	2.2 updated to include paragraph reflecting the University's position on announcing bad news on a Friday	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught)	Sept 2024

**UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS**  
**POLICY ON EARLY ACADEMIC INTERVENTION**

**1. Principles**

- 1.1. As specified in Senate Regulations, a student may have their studies at the University terminated, and be required to leave the University, if their academic performance is unsatisfactory over an extended period. Termination of studies is considered a last resort, and is normally only applied in cases where it is no longer possible for a student to complete their programme within that programme's specified time limits, or where a student's performance has not improved sufficiently following an earlier intervention.
- 1.2. To complement the Academic Alerts process, which is applied at a module level, the University operates an academic intervention process at an overall degree programme level. The principle is to help students recognise when their academic progress may be at risk, at a sufficiently early stage that they have opportunities to take action to address any underlying problems. Risks to studies include module results below those consistent with satisfactory academic progress; failure to progress on a student's degree programme of choice, and in the most severe cases, termination of studies.
- 1.3. The academic intervention process involves issuing a student at risk with a series of warnings of increasing severity<sup>1</sup>.
  - **PERFORMANCE WARNING:** Students whose academic performance in a semester is below a threshold defined for their programme, but are not at any immediate risk of failing to meet Senate Regulations, will be contacted to explain the sources of advice and support available.
  - **PROGRESSION WARNING:** Students who are at risk of failing to meet Senate Regulations, depending on the outcome of assessments to be taken later in the current academic year, will be contacted to explain this risk and its potential consequences.
  - **PROBATION WARNING:** Students who have not passed the minimum amount of credit required by Senate Regulations will have their studies placed under probation<sup>2</sup>. Conditions will be attached to the continuation of their studies.
- 1.4. The final level of academic intervention, when a student has not succeeded in addressing unsatisfactory performance identified in lower-level interventions, or is unable to complete their programme within specified time limits, is termination of studies. The student will be given clear guidance as to the procedures for appeal against such a decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on circumstances, it is possible that a student will receive a progression or probation warning without having previously received a lesser warning.

<sup>2</sup> There are additional circumstances under which a probation warning may be issued in the Faculty of Medicine.

## 2. Procedure

### Early Academic Intervention Procedure: Warnings

- 2.1. Following the publication of module results, Registry will identify students who should be sent an Early Academic Intervention warning letter from the relevant Associate Dean (Students)/ Associate Provost Students. Students due to receive performance and progression warning letters will do so by e-mail only, whereas students due to receive probation warning letters will do so by both hard copy and e-mail. This list will be cross-checked against a list supplied by Student Services of all students currently engaging with Student Services due to personal circumstances, to identify any for whom a standard warning letter would be inappropriate.

- 2.2. Early Academic Intervention warning letters will be sent after the publication of module results following each examination diet. Where a student meets the criteria for more than one category of warning, they will receive a single letter combining all the relevant information. Letters will be copied to relevant Advisers of Studies and Directors of Teaching.

The University will be mindful of when communications are sent to students, especially when the content is unfavourable, potentially distressing, and/ or sensitive. To ensure students can access the support they need, the University will try to avoid sending such messages on Fridays or late in the day, when immediate help may not be available. If sending a message at these times is unavoidable, information about when and how students can access appropriate support must be included.

#### Undergraduate Students

##### *Procedure in the Faculties of Arts, Divinity and Science<sup>3</sup>*

- 2.3. A **performance warning** may be issued to any General degree programme student or Honours degree programme student who fails any module.

The performance warning will refer the student to the advice and support available from Student Services and IELLI, and recommend that they arrange to meet their Adviser of Studies or the relevant Associate Dean (Students) if they wish to discuss any aspects. The student will be required to submit a written statement to their Adviser of Studies reflecting on the reasons for their under-performance<sup>4</sup>.

- 2.4. A **progression warning** will be issued to any student who is at risk of not gaining enough credits in the current academic year to meet Senate Regulations on minimum progression rates. The letter will explain this risk and its potential consequences. The student may be required to meet their Adviser of Studies, the relevant Associate Dean (Students), Student Services and/or IELLI.

- 2.5. A **probation warning** will be issued to any student who is not already studying under probation conditions, and cannot now gain enough credits in the current academic year to meet Senate Regulations on minimum progression rates. The student will be permitted to continue their studies under probation for the next two semesters, on condition that they take and pass at least 80 credits. Gaining these credits is a minimum requirement to avoid subsequent termination of studies. In most cases the student will need to take additional

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<sup>3</sup> The Early Academic Intervention Process for Students for the BA (International Honours) Joint Degree Programme is distinct from the processes outlined in this policy. The intervention procedures for this programme is outlined in the Policy and Regulations of the programme

<sup>4</sup> Support in writing this statement will be available from Student Services if the student wishes.

credits in order to meet the expectations for progress in their studies, and will be advised accordingly. The student will also be required to engage with the Associate Dean (Students) and their Adviser of Studies (to confirm the appropriate programme of studies for the academic year) and Student Services, and may be advised to engage with study skills programme(s) provided by IELLI.

### *Procedure in the Faculty of Medicine*

2.6. A **progression warning** will be issued to any student:

- who fails a sub-Honours module in their first semester of study; or
- who is at risk of not gaining enough credits in the current academic year to meet Senate Regulations on minimum progression rates.

The letter will outline the implications of progression concerns and will refer the student to the various sources of advice and support available. The student may be required to meet the Director of Teaching, the Pro Dean (Medicine), Student Services and/or IELLI.

2.7. A **probation warning** will be issued to any student who is not already studying under probation conditions, and:

- who cannot now gain enough credits in the current academic year to meet Senate Regulations on minimum progression rates; or
- who is admitted to Honours under the conditional entry process.

The student will be permitted to continue their studies under probation, with conditions that certain modules must be passed within a specified time limit. The student will be required to meet the Pro Dean (Medicine), the Director of Teaching and Student Services, and may also be required to meet IELLI.

Where the student is eligible to request change of Faculty and has submitted a request within the time limit for doing so, the probation warning will be delayed until a decision is reached, since the outcome will affect the probation conditions.

A student studying under probation who is permitted to change Faculty may have new probation conditions attached.

### Postgraduate Taught Students

2.8. A **performance warning** will be issued to any student who has failed modules with the right to reassessment, but has gained enough credits to meet Senate Regulations on minimum progression rates<sup>5</sup> in the current semester of studies.

The letter will outline the implications of not achieving passes in the failed modules at reassessment, refer the student to the various sources of advice and support available, and recommend that they arrange to meet their Adviser of Studies if they wish to discuss any aspects.

2.9. A **progression warning** will be issued to any student who has failed modules with the right to reassessment, but who prior to taking reassessment in the affected modules has not gained enough credits to meet Senate Regulations on minimum progression rates in the current semester of studies.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Students must earn 40 credits in one semester of full-time study, 15 credits in one semester of part-time study, or 15 credits in one academic year of flexible study.'

The letter will be sent by the Associate Provost Students outlining the implications of not achieving passes in the failed modules at reassessment and meeting the Senate Regulations minimum progression requirements, and will also refer the student to the various sources of advice and support available. The student may be required to meet their Adviser of Studies, the Associate Provost Students, Student Services and/or IELLI.

- 2.10. A **probation warning** may be issued to a student who has not gained enough credits in a given semester to meet Senate Regulations on minimum progression rates, and who has experienced extenuating circumstances affecting the progression of their studies during that semester. Following the publication of results, the Associate Provost Students can recommend a set period of probation to resolve issues with the progression of a student's studies, rather than moving directly to termination of studies. Conditions will be attached to the continuation of studies, and the student may be required to meet with their Adviser of Studies, the Associate Provost Students, Student Services, and/or IELLI to monitor progress.

### **Academic Intervention Procedure: Termination of Studies**

- 2.11. Following the publication of module results, Registry will identify students who have failed to meet current probation conditions, and any other students who as a consequence of results are unable to complete their degree programme in compliance with Senate Regulations. The relevant Pro Dean/Associate Dean (Students) will write to each student notifying them that their studies are to be terminated. Students wishing to appeal against the decision may submit a Stage 1 appeal, as specified in the University's Policy on Student Academic Appeals.

#### Undergraduate Students

- 2.12. Registry will request comments on each case from the student's Adviser(s) of Studies, Head(s) of School, Director(s) of Teaching, and Student Services.
- 2.13. Each student's case will be considered by a Cross-Faculty Termination of Studies Board, (the ToS Board), comprising the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching), Associate Dean (Students), and Pro Dean (Medicine), supported by Registry staff. The Board will consider comments received, and any Stage 1 appeal submitted, and reach a decision on whether the student's studies should be terminated. When the decision is that studies should not be terminated, additional conditions on continuation of studies may be imposed.
- 2.14. Following the meeting of the ToS Board, the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) will write to each student who submitted a Stage 1 appeal, informing them of the decision and its rationale, and giving advice on their right to submit a final Stage 2 appeal to Senate if their studies have been terminated. The relevant Associate Dean (Students)/Pro Dean (Medicine) will write to each student who did not appeal, confirming the termination of their studies.

#### Postgraduate Taught Students

- 2.15. Registry will request comments on each case from the student's Adviser of Studies, Head of School, Director of Postgraduate Studies, and Student Services.
- 2.16. Each student's case will be considered by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost). The Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) will consider comments received, and any appeal, and reach a decision on whether the student's studies should be terminated. When the decision is that studies should not be terminated, additional conditions on continuation of studies may be imposed.

- 2.17. The Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) will write to each student who submitted a Stage 1 appeal, informing them of the decision and its rationale, and giving advice on their right to submit a final Stage 2 appeal to Senate if their studies have been terminated. The Associate Provost Students will write to each student who did not appeal, confirming the termination of their studies.

For All Students:

- 2.18. Registry will update all relevant internal student records, ensure that outcomes are communicated to the relevant Units and Schools, and will keep a record of students who have conditions attached to their further studies.
- 2.19. The record for a student whose studies are terminated will remain open until expiry of the deadline for submission of a final Stage 2 Senate appeal, or until delivery of the result of such an appeal. They may continue to attend classes in the interim.
- 2.20. A student on a Student Visa who has had their studies terminated will be reported to UKVI as no longer fulfilling the sponsorship criteria.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
01	Revisions to Medicine and PGT regulations	Updated	-	Dec 2017
02	Revisions to probation effective	Updated	-	March 2018
03	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated	-	February 2021
3.1	Changes to Associate Provost titles	Updated	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principals Office	August 2021
3.2	Update to footnote 5 to reflect changes in Senate Regulations	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	July 2023
3.3	Change to 2.5 probation warning following Senate approval.	Updated	Administrative Officer	December 23
3.4	2.3 updated to reflect changes to entry to honours threshold changes: fail is now the threshold for performance warning across General &	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught)	August 2024

	Honours on any module. 2.6 is removed since Medicine's progression to Honours threshold is no longer at 11. In the current 2.20, 'Tier 4' is replaced with 'Student Visa'.			
3.5	2.2 updated to include paragraph reflecting the University's position on announcing bad news on a Friday	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught)	Sept 2024