



University of  
St Andrews

## Academic alerts (student guidance)

<b>Document type</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
<b>Scope (applies to)</b>	UG and PGT students
<b>Applicability date</b>	30/03/2016
<b>Review / Expiry date</b>	31/07/2024
<b>Approved date</b>	15/12/2023
<b>Approver</b>	Senate Policies
<b>Document owner</b>	Administrative Officer
<b>School / unit</b>	Education and Student Experience
<b>Document status</b>	Published
<b>Information classification</b>	Public
<b>Equality impact assessment</b>	None
<b>Key terms</b>	Academic policies/Student progression/Academic alerts
<b>Purpose</b>	This guidance outlines the issues and support available to students in relation to academic alerts and should be read in conjunction with the Policy on Academic Alerts.

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Purpose / changes</b>	<b>Document status</b>	<b>Author of changes, role and school / unit</b>	<b>Date</b>
2	Update to link to Academic Alert policy	approved	Administrative Officer	15/12/2023

STUDENT GUIDANCE ON THE POLICY ON ACADEMIC ALERTS

**Introduction**

This guidance document is to be used in conjunction with the Policy on Academic Alerts which can be found on the University's Academic Policy webpages [here](#).

The Policy on Academic Alerts should be consulted and read thoroughly before consulting this guidance document; the purpose of this guidance is to give supplementary contextual information to students on the use of the Academic Alerts system.

**What key information can I find in the Policy on Academic Alerts?**

The policy outlines the principles of the Academic Alerts system, but also outlines the type and status of Academic Alerts, the role of Academic Alerts in attendance monitoring, how and when Academic Alerts are issued to students, how those Alerts are then managed and the student's role in responding to them, and a matrix of Academic Alerts which give you an idea of what an Alert will look like if you receive one.

It is really important that you read the policy alongside this guidance document, as the policy explains the different types of Alert and when you would receive those Alerts.

**Whom is the Policy on Academic Alerts for?**

The policy applies to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students and has been effective from the academic year 2016/17. Changes were made to the policy in 2018 to improve the effectiveness of the Academic Alerts system in highlighting issues to students and the support available in response to those issues.

**What is the Academic Alert system?**

- It is a mechanism for alerting students to deficiencies in their studies;
- If appropriate, it directs students to the people or services that can help them;
- It is a way for Schools/Departments to warn students of some of the various penalties they might receive (e.g., for non-engagement or non-completion of compulsory learning elements).

**Why am I getting an Academic Alert?**

The Module Coordinator or any other appropriate member of staff can issue you with an Academic Alert via e-mail when your academic performance is below the standard expected at University, or you do not complete assessments on time, or you do not complete compulsory elements of your studies. The Alert also tells you what the problem is, what you need to do (if applicable), where you can find support (if appropriate), and the consequences you will face if you do not take appropriate action.

**How do I know what the compulsory components of a module are, and how many I can miss?**

It is the School/Department's responsibility to specify which parts of a module are compulsory and how many (if any) of these you can miss. See your School and Module Handbooks for information

on compulsory module components. Further to this, the University guidelines for Schools/Departments on determining their attendance monitoring models are outlined in the policy, to give you an idea of how those guidelines are set and how they relate to Academic Alerts.

Note however that these guidelines for Schools/Departments are advisory. Schools/Departments have discretion to determine what is and is not compulsory, and also their expectations of what classes you should be attending and what assessments you should be submitting.

You should always consult your School/Department and Module Handbooks regarding the expectations on compulsory components, and contact the module co-ordinator if you are unsure.

### **Will an Academic Alert appear on my final record?**

No, don't worry! No Academic Alert will appear on your transcript. The purpose of the system is to highlight potential issues that could affect the progress of your studies. It's designed to help you get back on track.

If you do not respond to an Alert however, this may have consequences for your academic progression, which may then appear on your transcript (e.g., such as getting 0X for a module). Alerts are intended to help you avoid this! So please read and follow the instructions given in them.

### **What do I have to do after receiving an Alert?**

It is your responsibility to take the action required of you, which is detailed in the Alert, to avoid the specified consequences. You have 4 calendar days upon receiving an Alert to respond to it, so please ensure that you do so to assist in rectifying the issues associated with the alert being issued.

### **Is it possible for the School to send me another Alert?**

Yes, you might get another Academic Alert if you do not take the action required of you.

You might also get another Alert if you have taken the required action, but your performance has not improved.

### **Is a self-certificate enough, if I am not able to fulfil a compulsory element of a module?**

No, completion of a self-certificate does not exempt you from fulfilling a compulsory element of your module, and you might still get an Academic Alert.

Normally, in order to avoid an Academic Alert after completing a self-certificate, it is your responsibility to contact the School/Department to ask what is required of you in relation to the missed compulsory element.

### **What is an Academic Alert: FINAL?**

If you do not take the required action after you have received an Academic Alert, you may receive an Academic Alert FINAL without further warning, where you are told that you will receive a grade of 0X at the module board. You will never receive an Academic Alert FINAL before receiving an initial Academic Alert ENGAGEMENT or ASSESSMENT explaining what the problem is.

### **What should I do after receiving an Academic Alert FINAL?**

You can cease to attend that module entirely, but you are not forced to do so. If you do continue with the module (e.g., in the hope of a successful appeal), you must continue to submit work by the published deadlines, and attend 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.

### **What if I believe I have good reasons for not acting upon an earlier issued Academic Alert?**

If this is the case, present your explanation to the appropriate member of staff identified on the Academic Alert FINAL within the specified deadline. If your explanation is accepted, the Alert will be revoked.

### **And what if my explanation is not accepted?**

If you still believe you have a reasonable justification, discuss it with the Director of Teaching, who will consider all available evidence before making a decision.

### **The Director of Teaching did not accept my explanation, but I still think I am right. What should I do?**

Students have the right to request a formal review of an academic decision, as long as you have appropriate grounds for an appeal. Find out details of the appeals process by reading the [Policy on Student Academic Appeals](#)

### **Are you a Tier 4 student?**

If you are a student with a Tier 4 visa, please be aware that the consequences of not acting upon Academic Alerts might include the refusal of extensions to your visa, or you might have to leave the UK if you are required to take Leave of Absence. The potential implications for your Tier 4 visa will be explained in the alert. Further to this, regular engagement with your classes is of especial importance, and failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of your Tier 4 sponsorship.

### **To sum up**

If you get an Academic Alert, take the action that is required of you and that is detailed on the Alert. If you do not take this action, you may receive an Academic Alert FINAL warning that you will receive a grade of 0X for the module. If you have good reasons for not taking the action required by your first Academic Alert, discuss these with the staff members detailed in the Academic Alert FINAL or, if not satisfied, with your Director of Teaching. If they do not accept your excuses, but you believe you had good reasons, you can appeal this decision. If you do not do what the Academic Alert asks you to do, your grades might be affected, which might have consequences on your progression to subsequent years, (e.g. you might receive a grade of 0X on the module with no right to reassessment).

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