PL_AC_002 Academic Progression Policy

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<td>Pro Vice Chancellor Academic</td>
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**Related Document**
- Enrolment Policy
- Student Complaints Policy
- Domestic Student Fees Policy

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<td>Academic Policies and Appeals Committee Executive Group</td>
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<td>17 December 2018</td>
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1. **Context**

Torrens University Australia is committed to providing a supportive, student-centred learning environment which maximises the potential for its students to succeed in their studies. While students have the primary responsibility for their academic performance, the University places emphasis on the pivotal role of academic and support staff in enabling student success. The University recognises that early identification and support of students at risk of academic non-progression gives them the best chance of success. This policy outlines how academic performance is monitored to ensure that students who are at risk of not achieving satisfactory progress receive appropriate learning support and assistance. If a student’s progress remains unsatisfactory, the University may impose conditions on the student’s continued enrolment or the student may be excluded from continuing their studies.

2. **Definitions**

**Academic Progression Committee**: the committee designated to review all students’ progression according to Torrens University Australia’s Academic Board Charter.

**Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)**: a document issued by Torrens University Australia to student visa holders, which is required for purposes of applying for a student visa. The CoE contains information about the University, the course in which the student has enrolled, and the duration of the course.

**Domestic student**: a student who is an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, or a holder of an Australian permanent visa (holders of all categories of permanent resident visas including Humanitarian Visas).

**Examination Committee**: the committee designated to review all students’ results according to Torrens University Australia’s Academic Board Charter.

**Exclusion due to non-progression**: the cancellation of a student’s enrolment in their course and the termination of their rights and privileges as a Torrens University Australia student including the right to re-enrol in their course or be admitted to another course, for a defined period (two years). An excluded student may apply for re-admission to any Torrens University Australia courses according to the Admissions Policy at the expiration of the exclusion period.

**International student**: a student who studies with Torrens University Australia:
- in Australia who:
o holds or may be granted a temporary visa with study rights, or
o holds or may be granted an Australian student visa as defined by the Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001, or
• offshore (outside of Australia) and is not a domestic student
• online who resides offshore and is not a domestic student

**Intervention strategy:** a plan of action adopted in an attempt to address and reduce the causes of academic failure of a student identified as academically at risk.

**Progression:** the progress made by a student towards completion of their course.

3. **Scope**
This policy applies to domestic and international students enrolled in all Torrens University Australia courses except students enrolled in Higher Degree Research (HDR) courses. The academic progression of HDR students is covered under the Research Higher Degree Course Policy.

4. **Principles**
The principles upon which this policy are based are that:

- students are primarily responsible for their academic performance,
- Torrens University Australia will ensure that students have the necessary tools to evaluate their progress, including timely and informed feedback on all assessment tasks,
- students identified as at risk of not achieving satisfactory academic progress will be advised of this status in a timely manner,
- appropriate learning and other support will be provided to students identified as at risk of not achieving satisfactory academic progress.

5. **Defining academic progression**
Assessment for academic progression will be based on the final results achieved in courses studied in each study period by the Academic Progression Committee.

5.1 **Students “at risk”**

Students who pass or meet the requirements of at least 50% of their enrolled subjects within a study period will be deemed as achieving satisfactory academic progress.

Students who:
- do not achieve at least a pass grade or competency outcome in 50% of their enrolled subjects, including those who withdraw with academic penalty or discontinue, or
- who fail a subject for the second time,
will be deemed to be at risk of not progressing satisfactorily.

Students deemed to be at risk will be provided with intervention strategies specific to their needs. Students will be responsible for acting on intervention strategies to ensure continued success in their course.

5.2 Unsatisfactory academic progress

Students who have been at risk of not progressing satisfactorily for two or more consecutive study periods will be deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress and may be excluded from the course.

6. Monitoring academic progression

6.1 Mid study period review

During each study period, lecturers will monitor the attendance, participation and progress of the students in their class, enabling early intervention for success. This includes keeping class attendance records in Blackboard (or equivalent) and tracking log-in records for online students.

Early indications of unsatisfactory academic progress include:

- failure to attend classes in two of the first three weeks of the study period, or
- failure to participate online by logging on and accessing their class materials during the first three weeks of the study period, or
- failure to participate in the first assessment item.

Responsibility for early interventions aimed at supporting students and assisting in their academic progress rests with the lecturer/learning facilitator, who will actively guide students to improve and succeed. Where needed, the lecturer/learning facilitator may also refer students to specialist support services such as:

- the Learning Support team for information and academic literacy,
- the student’s Success Coach for motivation and career guidance,
- the Campus Counsellor for personal issues impacting their study.

For students using VET Student Loan, failure to attend, participate and progress may also result in cancellation of their VET Student Loan, at which point they will be liable to pay their fees or be withdrawn from the course.

6.2 End of study period review

At the end of each study period, after the Examination Committee finalises the grades, students considered at risk of making unsatisfactory academic progress will be referred to the Academic Progression Committee.

Each case will be considered individually, and appropriate interventions will be determined to support the student to succeed in their ongoing enrolment. The Program Director (or delegate) may also recommend additional forms of intervention.
Interventions include, but are not limited to:

- referral for specialist service provisions such as Learning Support, Success Coaching, Counselling for support or assessment,
- creation of, or amendment to, a Disability Access Plan, where disabilities or medical conditions are impacting on the student’s ability to participate or progress,
- referral to an academic staff member for additional instruction,
- restriction in the number of subjects studied simultaneously (i.e. a lower subject load),
- specifying attendance or participation requirements,
- the specification of the subject(s) the student must undertake in the subsequent enrolment period,
- the creation of a study plan, describing the order of subjects to be completed over the duration of the course,
- other interventions appropriate to the case, including cancellation of the student’s enrolment, and where applicable, reporting the student to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for unsatisfactory course progression (student visa holders).

These interventions may either be recommended or required. If required, the student must follow them in order to remain enrolled.

The University will send the outcomes of the Academic Progression Committee to the student by email within three to six weeks of the end of the relevant study period. The notification includes:

- advice that the Committee identified the student to be at risk of not meeting the University’s progression requirements
- information regarding support services available to the student, and
- a warning that if the student fails to meet the University’s progression requirements a second time, the University will issue the student with a notification of its intention to cancel the student’s enrolment (intention to cancel for domestic students and intention to report for international students).

Moreover, the University will remind international students that maintaining satisfactory academic progress is a condition of holding a student visa and that the University has an obligation to notify the Department of Education and Training (DET) and Department of Home Affairs (DHA) of students who have made unsatisfactory academic progress, which could result in the cancellation of their student visa.

### 6.2.1 Unsatisfactory academic progress

Students who have been at risk of making unsatisfactory progress in two or more consecutive study periods will be deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress. These students will be referred to the Academic Progression Committee for a decision about their enrolment.

In addition to the interventions listed in section 6.2, the Committee may decide to cancel the student’s enrolment, and where applicable, report the student to DHA for unsatisfactory course progression (international students).
Notification of the intention to cancel a student’s enrolment will be made by email within three to six weeks of the end of the relevant study period. Students will have 20 working days to appeal the decision.

International student visa holders will be reported to DET and DHA via PRISMS for academic non-progression, depending on the outcome of an appeal lodged under section 8.

Any student visa holder at-risk of unsatisfactory progression will also be reviewed to assess if they can complete the course within the expected duration as stated on their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) (National Code 2018, Part B, Standard 8.3). If the international student has made conditional academic progress, the University may extend the duration of their study where it is clear that they will not complete the course within the expected duration, as specified on their CoE, as the result of failure to achieve competency or a Pass grade. However, evidence of a genuine attempt having being made to engage in recommended intervention strategies will also be taken into consideration when reviewing CoE extensions.

NOTE: In addition to meeting the academic progression requirements, international student visa holders must also maintain a full-time load (one EFTSL per year) as prescribed under the Enrolment Policy. This is to ensure they can complete the course within the expected duration as specified in their COE.

7. Attendance and participation

7.1 Students in Vocational Education and Training (VET), Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses

It is strongly recommended that students participate in at least 80% of their classes, whether online or on-campus, to maximise their chances of success.

If a subject is designed to be delivered with a minimum attendance requirement, this will be specified in the Subject Outline and will be assessed. Failure to meet the attendance requirement will result in failure to pass the subject unless there are adjustments made possible as a result of special consideration (see section 9 of the Assessment Policy for Higher Education Coursework and ELICOS and Assessment Policy for Vocational Education and Training).

For all other subjects, attendance and participation will be monitored. Interventions will be put in place where:

- a student fails to attend classes in two of the first three weeks of the study period, or
- a student fails to participate online by logging on and accessing their class materials during the first three weeks of the study period, or
- a student fails to participate in their first assessment task.

These interventions are described in section 6.1 of this policy and form part of a broader range of measures designed to help students stay on track and complete their course.

7.1.1 Students applying for a VET Student Loan are also required to meet the attendance and participation requirements defined under the VET Student Loans Rules 2016, which specify that in order to be deemed a genuine student, students must:

- be engaged in the course,
• satisfy course requirements or participate in assessment activities, and
• for online courses, log in regularly.

Therefore failure to meet the requirements specified in section 7.1 may also result in cancellation of a student’s VET Student Loan, at which point they will be liable for payment of their fees, or be withdrawn from the course.

7.1.2 International students who are on a student visa will put their enrolment at risk if they fail to meet the attendance, participation, study load, and progression requirements of the course. This may result in the issuing of a notice of intention to report to DET and DHA.

7.2 Students in ELICOS (English Language) courses

ELICOS students are considered to have achieved satisfactory attendance if they attended 80% or above of scheduled contact hours within the study period.

• Initial action will be taken when an ELICOS student’s attendance falls to 89%.
• Further action will be taken as soon as an ELICOS student’s attendance falls by a further 5% or more.
• If an ELICOS student is unable to achieve at least 80% attendance, the student will be issued with a notice of intention to report to the DET and DHA.

8. Appealing the cancellation of enrolment

A student notified of the University’s intention to cancel their enrolment (and where applicable report them to DHA) will be given 20 working days from receipt of the notification to appeal the decision.

Appeals will only be considered on the following grounds:

• failure of the University to record or calculate the student’s academic results accurately,
• failure of the University to offer intervention strategies covered by this policy,
• the existence of compassionate or compelling circumstances that are beyond the control of the student and have had an impact on the student’s capacity and/or ability to progress through a course. These could include:
  o serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes, or
  o bereavement for the loss of a close family member such as a parent or grandparent (where possible, a death certificate should be provided), or
  o major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student’s home country requiring their emergency travel and where that has impacted on their studies, or
  o a traumatic experience which could include but is not limited to:
• involvement in or witnessing of an accident or crime committed against the student or the student has been a witness to a crime and where this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologist’s reports), or
  o other compassionate or compelling circumstance approved as sufficiently significant by the Program Director (or delegate).

The Dean (or delegate) will determine appeal outcomes based on a student’s academic record and any evidence supplied by the student.

The Dean (or delegate) will decide whether to:

• uphold the cancellation of a student’s enrolment in their course and/or another discipline-related course, or
• approve the re-enrolment of the student without conditions, or
• approve the re-enrolment of the student with conditions which may include, but are not limited to:
  o restricting the number of subjects per study period,
  o specifying the order of subjects to be completed,
  o requiring the student to meet with providers of support services, including coaching or counselling,
  o setting an academic performance standard to be reached in the following study period in order for the student to remain enrolled.

9. Finalisation of exclusion decision
A student’s enrolment will be cancelled when:

• after 20 working days, no internal appeal has been received, or
• the internal and external appeal processes are complete, and the decision to exclude has been upheld, or
• the student has chosen not to access the external appeal process, or
• the student has chosen to withdraw from the internal or appeal process by notifying the University in writing.

A student who is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal may request an external review of the decision. The student must notify the University of their intention to lodge an external appeal within 10 working days from receipt of the internal appeal outcome.

10. Re-admission after exclusion
A student who has been excluded from a course may apply for re-admission to that course or another discipline-related Torrens University Australia course in accordance with the admission criteria of the respective course, after two years.
11. References
