

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION AND STUDENT AT RISK POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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1. Purpose

It is essential that students complete their course of study within acceptable time limits. The Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) requires institutions to measure, record and report on the academic progress of students as well as implement policies and procedures to identify and provide support for students identified as being at academic risk.

The purpose of the Academic Progression and Student at Risk Policy and Procedures is to provide a framework for institutional oversight and monitoring of students recording different levels of academic performance to ensure that students who are at risk of not achieving satisfactory progress receive appropriate learning support and assistance as well as a broader range of wellness support where necessary. Furthermore, MHE aims to create a supportive student-centred learning environment that facilitates the opportunity for students to succeed in their studies and achieve satisfactory academic progress. If a student's progress remains unsatisfactory, the institution may impose conditions on the student's continued enrolment or the student may be excluded from continuing their studies.

2. Principles

MHE aims to provide a quality environment where students receive the highest quality learning experience and learning outcomes and in which barriers to learning are overcome wherever possible. Our staff will always seek to identify those barriers and work with students to foster students' potential.

The principles upon which this policy is based are that:

- students are primarily responsible for their own academic performance;
- MHE will ensure that students have the necessary tools to evaluate their progress, including timely feedback on all assessment tasks;
- MHE recognises there are different levels and stages of academic risk, and it is essential to identify those students at academic risk as soon as is practicable;
- students identified as being at academic risk will be advised of their status in a timely manner;
- MHE recognises that there can be extenuating circumstances for poor performance and students who are deemed to be not making satisfactory academic progress have a right to appeal; and,
- appropriate information, learning and other support relevant to the level/category of risk will be provided to students identified as being at academic risk.

3. Context

Higher Education in Australia is characterised by high levels of regulatory oversight and a focus on ensuring that higher education institutions meet the current and emerging needs of students and industry. Consequently, MHE has established the Academic Progression and Student at Risk Policy and Procedures in the context of an integral and sustained commitment to quality, especially related to achieving excellence in the student experience and student outcomes.

4. Scope

The Academic Progression and Student at Risk Policy and Procedures applies to all students.

5. Definitions

Academic Progression: the progress made by a student towards completion of their course. Academic progression will be assessed on the final results achieved in units studied in each trimester by the Board of Examiners.

Board of Examiners: the committee designated to review all students' academic results and progression status according to the institutional Governance Charter.

Domestic Applicant / Student: Any applicant who legally does not require a Student Visa to enrol at an Australian higher education provider or university.

Exclusion: the cancellation of a student's enrolment in their course and the termination of their rights and privileges as an institutional student including the right to re-enrol in their course or be admitted to another course, for a defined period (two consecutive trimesters). An excluded student may apply for re-admission to any courses according to the Admissions Policy at the expiration of the exclusion period.

International Applicant / Student: In Australia you are considered to be an overseas student if you're not an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident, New Zealand citizen, or holder of an Australian permanent resident humanitarian visa.

Intervention strategy: a plan of action adopted and communicated to the student to address and reduce the causes of academic failure of that student identified as academically at risk.

Student at Risk: a student whose behaviour and/or circumstances render them vulnerable to not achieving satisfactory academic progress. A student may also be deemed to be a student at risk if the Student Support Officer (SSO) becomes aware of non-academic factors impacting on that student.

Non-academic factors: factors unrelated to a student's study which nonetheless hamper or impede their ability to achieve satisfactory academic progress (e.g., illness, disability or financial hardship).

Study mentor: a student selected because of their strong academic performance who volunteers to provide advice, support and encouragement to students at risk.

6. Policy Details

6.1 Defining academic progression

The following policy will be applied to each UG and PG student's trimester results to determine their academic standing/progression status. Appropriate interventions will be approved by Board of Examiners and then communicated to, and discussed with, students to support their successful progression within their course.

At the end of each trimester, students who pass or meet the requirements of at least 50% of their enrolled units within a trimester will be deemed as achieving satisfactory academic progress.

Students who:

- do not achieve at least a pass grade in 50% of their enrolled units, including those who withdraw or discontinue; and/or,
- who fail a unit for the second time,

will be deemed to be at risk of not progressing satisfactorily.

In addition, students may be deemed to be not progressing satisfactorily if they:

- fail to comply with the previous instructions of the Board of Examiners where they were warned that non-compliance with the instruction may result in cancellation of their enrolment; or,
- fail to complete the course in maximum time; or,
- fail to meet attendance or other engagement/participation requirements where specified.

6.2 Board of Examiner Responsibilities

The Board of Examiners will also consider the current students' results when determining the level of risk and considering the appropriate intervention:

- Good standing – student making satisfactory progress. Student is passing all units.
- At Stage One Risk – student identified as making unsatisfactory academic progress (Student has failed at least one, but less than 50% of units in that trimester).
- At Stage Two Risk – student identified as bordering on conditional enrolment (Student has failed more than 50% of enrolled units in the trimester, and/or has failed a unit for a second time).
- Conditional Enrolment – student placed on Conditional Enrolment based on overall academic performance by Dean.
- Academic Exclusion – unsatisfactory academic progress - student excluded from the course (Student not passing at least 50% of units taken in consecutive study periods and/or has failed an individual unit for a third time).

6.3 Dean Responsibilities

Student progression will be assessed by the Dean who will take the following matters into consideration:

- A student who fails to complete their course of study within the maximum timeframe for their course will not be permitted to re-enrol until they have met with Dean and agreed a timeline of up to one additional year for completion. Where the Dean determines that there are exceptional circumstances the Dean may approve a longer period.
- The Dean may require the student to attend an interview with relevant support and/or academic staff to discuss the student's past academic progress and the steps intended to be taken to assist them towards achieving academic success. After considering progression issues and any other relevant matters, the Dean may decide to:
 - Permit enrolment (with or without conditions); or,
 - Refuse enrolment (with or without conditions), which means the student's enrolment will be cancelled.
- The Dean will advise the student in writing of the decision and any conditions imposed with respect to academic progression or other conditions deemed necessary in the circumstances, which may be in the form of an agreed learning plan. The decision notice must specify a time within which, and/or a duration during which, the student must comply with the conditions.
- A student who is unable to reach an agreement with the Dean on a timeline for completion, who does not meet the agreed timeline for completion, or who has not been granted an extension by the Dean will have their enrolment in the course terminated.
- Students will have the right to appeal their termination to the appropriate authority.

6.4 Student Support Officer Responsibilities

- Identify students making unsatisfactory progress through the trimester using the Student Progress Monitoring Report.
- Identify students making (or at risk of) unsatisfactory progress and issue notifications to students.
- Coordinate scheduling and bookings for support meetings.

Table 1: Intervention Strategies and Consequences of Different Levels of Academic Progression

Academic standing	Academic Standing characterized by: Grade	Action required
Early Detection of Risk	Not Applicable	Refer to the 'Student At-Risk Identification and Monitoring; Staff Guide'.
Good Standing	100% academic record and pass all enrolled units.	Progressing with no intervention required.
At Stage One Risk	Failed unit for the first time but 50% or less than 50% of enrolled units in term Noticeably low attendance	Recommend repeating unit/s immediately and refer to Academic Skills Advisor (ASA) Informal discussion with student about possible causes of absenteeism and working with the student to address underlying issues.
At Stage Two Risk	Failed more than 50% of enrolled units in the trimester. And/or Failed a unit for the second time	Recommend repeating units immediately and refer to ASO for assessment of additional support requirements e.g., reduced study load And/or Recommend repeating unit immediately. Refer to ASA for assessment of additional support requirements. Consider reduced study load while on 3 rd attempt.
Conditional Enrolment (CE)	Fail all enrolled units in any one trimester	Referral to ASA for a program of academic support which will include: Mandatory consultation with ASA and placed on a personalised support strategy with regular follow up.
Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress (FMSAP)	Failed 50% or more of enrolled units in consecutive study periods And/or Failed same unit three times	Exclusion from course unless documented/evidenced circumstances or personal situation/s e.g., Medical

Students at risk of not progressing satisfactorily will be advised of their level of academic risk status and provided with targeted information concerning the intervention strategies and processes specific to their level of academic risk and associated needs. Students will be responsible for acting on intervention strategies to ensure continued success in the course.

Credit overload

In certain circumstances, a student may be permitted to exceed the normal study load. The typical maximum allowable Higher Education study load at MHE in one trimester is:

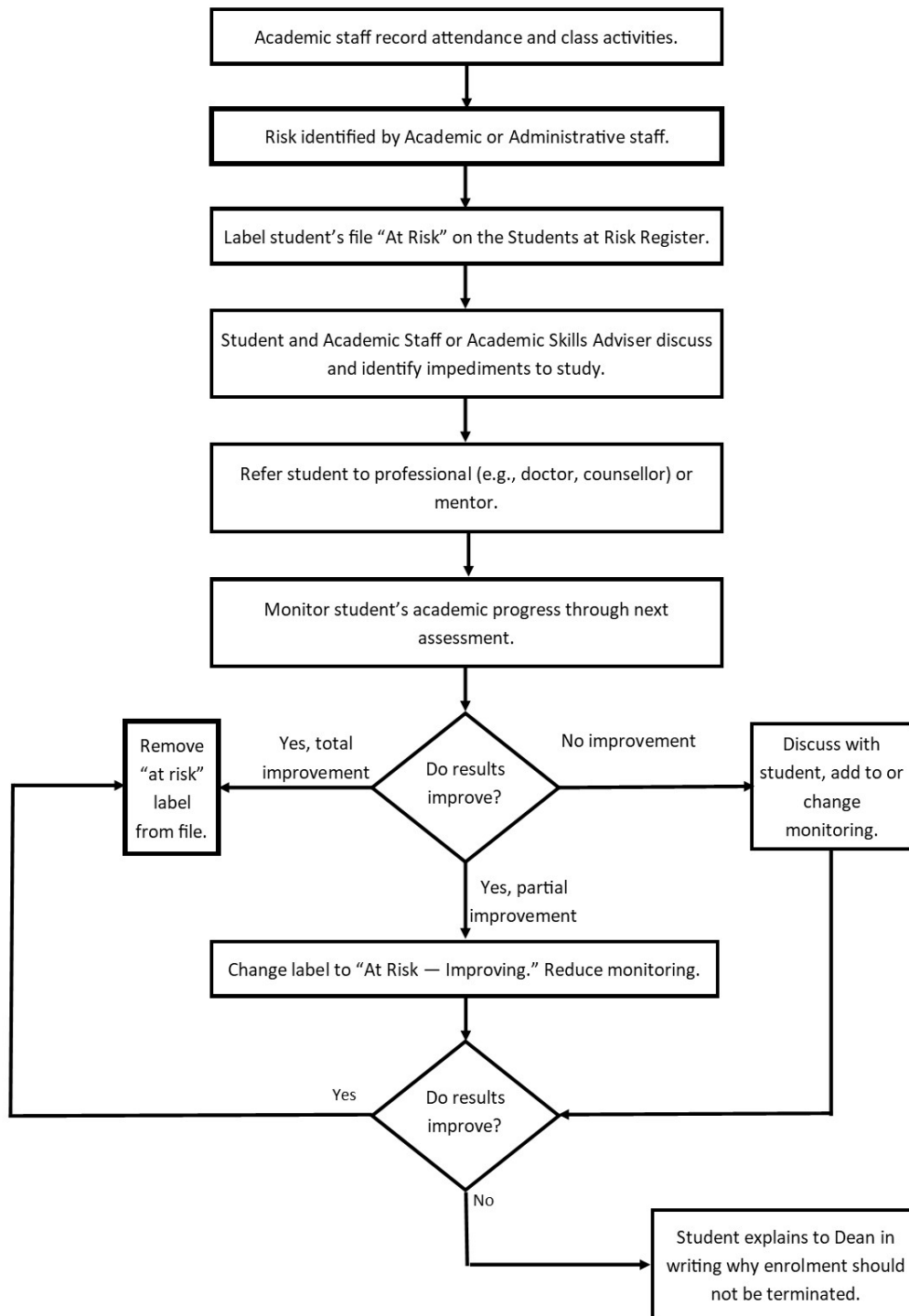
- Undergraduate: 24 credit points or four units
- Postgraduate: 24 credit points or four units.

In normal circumstances, an application for credit overload higher than the levels specified above cannot be made in the first two enrolled trimesters. Furthermore, a student cannot request to “overload” by enrolling in a unit previously attempted unsuccessfully. Enrolments must not exceed a total of 5 units in any trimester.

The above rules may be waived if the student is within 6 units of completion of their qualification.

Student at Risk Identification Process flowchart

STUDENTS AT RISK PROCESS



7. Procedure

7.1 Monitoring academic progression

MHE recognises the importance of students at risk being identified as early as possible and will therefore implement a staged approach to monitoring, intervening and supporting students who may struggle to meet the demands of their study requirements. Consequently, students will be monitored at different points within and across trimesters and the nature of monitoring, intervention and support will become more formal and structured as the nature and severity of the risk faced by the student escalates.

7.2 Early and mid-trimester review

During each trimester, lecturers will monitor the participation and progress of the students in their class, ensuring early intervention, if necessary, to achieve academic success.

Early Detections of Student at Risk:

At the time of Application, Enrolment, Orientation or in any enrolment stage, if any of the academic through conversation or correspondence, identify any student with poor or inadequate English language level, they will be referred to the ASA; if any of the non-academic staff identified student who deem to be need support will be referred to the ASA for an informal assessment of the student's English proficiency.

If the Academic Skills Advisor judges that a student's English proficiency seems inadequate for study at the level of the course for which the student is applying, but the student is otherwise acceptable for enrolment, academic staff will advise the student that attendance in English language support sessions will be compulsory and will note the student's file accordingly.

Up to week 3

- If a student is showing indications of unsatisfactory academic engagement and/or progress in the first three weeks of the trimester, such as in the areas listed below the lecturer will advise, encourage and support the student to improve and succeed:
 - poor attendance;
 - difficulties with English language proficiency;
 - lack of engagement such as not regularly logging onto Moodle/Library or downloading lecture recordings;
 - lack of class participation; and/or
 - low scores and/or failure on an early low-risk assessment item.

Additionally, students who have enrolled and commenced classes late will automatically be considered at-risk.

Mid of Trimester Review

Weeks 3/4 and Week 8

- Lecturers will complete and return the Student Progress Monitoring Report to the Student Support Officer (normally in Weeks 3 or 4 and 8), indicating those students that appear to be at risk of not progressing satisfactorily due to those reasons listed above. The Student Support Officer will consequently communicate with those students. This process also enables any existing interventions that are in place to be monitored at this time.
- Depending on the nature of the lack of progression, advice from the Student Support Officer may include referring students to specialist support areas such as the:
 - ASA for assistance with academic literacy, English and study skills
 - Relevant academic staff member for progression and academic advice

- Student Support Officer for personal issues impacting on study; and/or,
- The Peer Mentoring Program for less formal unit specific support.

End of trimester review

- At the end of each trimester, after grades are finalised by the Board of Examiners, students considered at risk of unsatisfactory academic progress will be further considered by the Board of Examiners.
- The Board of Examiners will consider each case individually and determine appropriate interventions to support the student to succeed in their future enrolment.
- Interventions include, but are not limited to:
 - specialist support from the Academic Skills Advisor
 - support from the Student Support Officer, where disabilities, wellbeing or medical conditions are impacting on the student's ability to participate or progress (in these cases referral to other types of external support may be required)
 - referral to an academic staff member for additional instruction/advice
 - restriction in the number of units studied in a trimester (i.e., a lower unit load)
 - specifying attendance or participation requirements
 - specifying the unit(s) the student must undertake in the next enrolment period (e.g., repeating a specific unit)
 - creating a study plan describing the order of units to be completed over the course duration or,
 - other interventions appropriate to the case.
- Recommendations and actions will be emailed to the students by Student Administration and recorded on the student's file.
- International students will also be reminded that maintaining satisfactory academic progress is a condition of holding a student visa and that MHE has an obligation to notify the relevant government departments of students who have made unsatisfactory academic progress, which could result in the cancellation of their student visa.
 - MHE will always consider, and whenever necessary explain clearly to overseas students, that the expected duration of study specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment must not exceed the CRICOS registered duration. If the course duration exceeds the CRICOS registered period, MHE will provide a CoE only up to the CRICOS registration period. Upon successful completion of the CRICOS extension, an extended CoE will be issued to allow the student to extend their visa and complete the course. If the CRICOS extension is unsuccessful, MHE will follow the Transfer Between Providers Policy and Procedure.
- Any international student at risk of unsatisfactory progression will be reviewed to assess if they can complete the course within the expected duration as stated on their Confirmation of Enrolment. If the international student has made conditional academic progress, MHE may extend the duration of their study where it is clear that the student will not complete the course within the expected duration, as specified on their Confirmation of Enrolment, as long as it does not exceed the CRICOS registered duration.

Extensions

MHE will only extend the duration of an overseas student's enrolment if:

- There are compassionate or compelling circumstances (the student must give MHE demonstrable evidence of those circumstances) or
- MHE has implemented, or is implementing, intervention for the student because he or she is at risk of not meeting course progress requirements, or

- MHE has granted an approved deferral or suspension of the overseas student's enrolment under the Admission Policy and Admission Procedures.

When MHE extends the duration of the student's enrolment, MHE will advise the student to contact the Department of Home Affairs to discuss potential impacts on their visa, including the possible need to obtain a new visa.

Reporting Unsatisfactory Course Progress

If MHE assesses that an overseas student is not meeting the required course progress standards, MHE will provide the student with a written notice as soon as practicable. This notice will:

- Notify the student of MHE's intention to report them for unsatisfactory course progress.
- Inform the student of the reasons for the intended report.
- Advise the student of their right to access MHE's complaints and appeals process, in accordance with Student Grievances and Complaints Procedures, within 20 working days.

MHE will only report unsatisfactory course progress in PRISMS, as required by section 19(2) of the ESOS Act, if:

- The internal and external complaints and appeals processes have been completed and the decision supports MHE, or
- The student chooses not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 20 working day period, or
- The student chooses not to access the external complaints and appeals process, or
- The student withdraws from the internal or external appeals processes by notifying MHE in writing.

MHE may decide not to report an overseas student for poor attendance if the student provides genuine evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances.

7.3 Failing to maintain satisfactory academic progress

- At the end of each trimester, students who have been at risk of not progressing satisfactorily for two or more consecutive trimesters will be deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress.
- Where the student has been deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress, the Board of Examiners may decide to:
 - cancel the student's enrolment, and where applicable report the student to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) via PRISMS for unsatisfactory course progression (international students).
- Students excluded on this basis will be ineligible to enter the institution in another course at the institution for a period of two consecutive trimesters.
- Notification of the intention to cancel a student's enrolment will be emailed to the student by the Student Administration, and students will have 20 working days to request a review of the decision by lodging a formal appeal (see the Academic Appeals Policy).
- International students will be reported to DHA via PRISMS for academic non-progression. Exclusion decisions will not be finalised and a student's enrolment will not be cancelled until:
 - the 20 working days allowed for lodging an appeal has elapsed, or
 - if the student lodges an internal appeal, the appeal resolution process is complete and supports the decision to exclude, or
 - if the student lodges an external appeal, the external review process is complete and supports the decision to exclude.

7.4 Notification

First notification

Students identified as being at risk for the first time will receive a first notification letter via email from the Student Support Officer. The letter will advise students of their 'at risk' status and indicate the course of action (as specified above), including if the intervention is either recommended or required and the next steps (e.g., meeting with the ASA or Lecturer). If the intervention is required, the student must follow that action to stay enrolled.

The student will also be advised of the possible consequences of not improving their academic performance. In particular, international students will be reminded that the institution has an obligation to notify the government of students who have made unsatisfactory academic progress and this could result in the cancellation of their student visa.

Second notification

At the end of each trimester, the enrolment of students identified as having failed to achieve satisfactory academic progress will be cancelled. Students will receive Intention to Cancel (domestic students) / Report (international students) notifications via email from Student Administration. In addition, international students will be reported to DHA via PRISMS for academic non-progression (subject to the provisions in Section 7.3).

8. Appeal Process

Any student subject to compulsory intervention or whose enrolment has been cancelled or reported to DHA may appeal against this decision. The appeal must be made in writing to the Dean within twenty working days of receiving the first or second notification as per section 7.4 above. The student must justify his or her enrolment to the Dean in writing and state clear reasons why the decision is unwarranted and/or how the student's circumstances will lead to improvement in his or her academic performance. The Dean will consider this and give a written decision within five working days. If any student is not satisfied with the internal appeal outcomes, they have rights to go through the external appeal process. Refer to the Student Grievances and Complaints Policy and Procedures for further details. Any student may withdraw from the internal or external appeals processes by notifying MHE in writing at any time.

9. Relevant Legislation and Regulations

MHE acknowledges its legal and regulatory obligations under the following frameworks:

- Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework 2013

10. Policy Administration

Policy category	Academic
Policy owner	Academic Board
Responsible officer	Academic Support Officer
Approving authority	Academic Board
Contact officer	Academic Support Officer
Approval date	11 th March 2022
Commencement date	11 th March 2022

Review date	Three years
Version	1.6
Related documents	Guidance Notes for Academic Staff to Assist Them to Determine Reasonable Adjustment.

11. Version control and change history

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Summary of changes
1.1	10 th December 2021	Academic Board	Major review required
1.2	11 th March 2022	Academic Board	Combine Academic Progression and Student at Risk, Minor review required to add flow Chart.
1.3	13 th April 2022	Academic Board	Approved
1.4	4 th Nov 2022	CEO	Minor modification based on external expert recommendation.
1.5	10 th August 2023	CEO	Minor modification based on TEQSA review
1.6	26 th February 2024	CEO	Minor modification based on TEQSA review

12. Reference /Benchmark

- Sydney College of Divinity
Students at Academic Risk Policy and Procedures - Sydney College of Divinity (scd.edu.au)
- Engineering Institute of Technology
Microsoft Word - Students at Risk Policy.VET.Rev4 (eit.edu.au)
- Endeavour College of Natural Health
DOCID-3-1817.pdf (acnm.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com)
- ICMS – Academic Progression Policy