

STUDENTS AT ACADEMIC RISK POLICY AND PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

This policy has three aims

- 1) To assist coursework students to progress smoothly through their studies each semester in order to realise their academic potential and to achieve their academic goals on time
- 2) To enhance retention and academic success through timely intervention
- 3) To reduce avoidable failures that result in failure to graduate or exclusion from studies.

To achieve these aims the SCD must identify

- 1) students at significant risk of academic failure
- 2) students whose academic progress is significantly hampered by impediments that may be ameliorated by early intervention.

The policy and procedures assist the Teaching Bodies to identify areas where the provision of additional support will help students achieve a successful outcome. Being proactive and demonstrating an interest in student success will enhance the student experience, facilitate achievement in their studies, and augment their preparation for future ministry.

SUMMARY

The policy is based on five principles:

- 1) Students who experience difficulties that hamper their progress and prevent them from achieving their full potential are entitled to timely and reasonable academic and personal support from the SCD Teaching Bodies that will assist them to improve their progress.
- 2) Teachers will use the SCD assessment policy requirement of an early diagnostic assessment task to assess learning, to identify difficulties, and to provide support and assistance that will benefit the students before the next assessment task.
- 3) All SCD students, including domestic, international, offshore, internal, external, and students with disabilities or other particular needs, are entitled to the same high standard of support.
- 4) The nature of the support will be flexible and appropriate to the needs of the individual student.
- 5) The SCD is committed to widening access to theological education to include students who previously had limited opportunities. In doing so, we acknowledge three considerations:
 - a) These students might not be as well prepared for higher education studies as others from more traditional backgrounds.
 - b) This lack of preparation might inhibit their success in making the transition to higher education studies.
 - c) These students may need additional support to make the transition and to achieve their full potential as students.

SCOPE

All SCD coursework students, including but not limited to, domestic, international, offshore, internal, external, and students with disabilities or other particular needs.

POLICY

Teachers will identify all coursework students who are encountering serious difficulty in their studies or who are at significant risk of academic failure. Teachers will make additional support available to these students. This support will provide students the opportunity to work towards a successful outcome.

PROCEDURE

- 1) After marking the early diagnostic assessment task to assess learning and identify difficulties, teachers will
 - a) advise students on how to undertake a self-assessment of their academic progress. The advice should be
 - i) flexible and appropriate to the academic level of the students
 - ii) provide opportunity for all students (including those who may be at risk) to contact a designated officer (who may be the teacher) to seek advice and support that might enhance their chances of increased success. (See sample **Student Self Assessment of Academic Progress**. This sample is written for students in the early stages of their academic studies.)
 - b) ensure that they or another designated officer assist students who seek assistance to overcome any impediments to their learning.
- 2) When Teaching Body Academic Boards approve assessment results in the SCD Monitoring of Assessment and Results process they will follow three steps
 - a) **Identify** all students who are at risk using the following seven indicators:
 - i) Receipt of a Fail or Incomplete grade in more than fifty percent of the credit points for which the student was enrolled in the semester just completed;
 - ii) Failure by a student to achieve an average mark of fifty or above in the award course in each semester.
 - iii) Failure twice by a student to pass the same unit of study;
 - iv) An average attendance record across all units of study in the range 80-85%
 - v) Inability of a student to complete their award course within the maximum permitted time while carrying a normal student load.
 - vi) Significant negative variations in a student's academic performance i.e. current performance significantly lower than in previous semesters
 - vii) Being involved in academic misconduct
 - b) **Enter** the details of these students at risk in the Student Progress Alert Report
 - c) **Send** all students listed in the Student Progress Alert Report a letter that addresses four issues
 - i) The student's academic progress is cause for concern;
 - ii) The criteria used to identify them as a student whose academic progress is cause for concern;
 - iii) The need to discuss their progress with the Academic Dean or other designated officer
 - iv) Students whose names appear on the Student Progress Alert Report in any three semesters may be asked to show good cause why they should be permitted to continue in the award course.
- 3) When a student is listed on a third occasion in the Student Progress Alert Report, Teaching Body Academic Boards may write a letter to them. This letter will address three issues
 - i) There is substantial doubt about the student's capacity to successfully complete the course of study.
 - ii) The student is required to show good cause why they should be allowed to continue their studies.
 - iii) The good cause response should
 - (a) Describe the circumstances that have negatively affected the student's performance in their studies,
 - (b) Discuss the specific effects or impacts of those circumstances,
 - (c) Identify the steps the student has undertaken, or will undertake, to address each of these circumstances with a view to ensuring that effect of future circumstances will not be negative
 - (d) Provide documentary evidence (such as medical certification, police reports or statutory declarations), as appropriate to support the Show Good Cause response.

- 4) Teaching Body Academic Boards will consider the following in assessing whether a student has Shown Good Cause:
- a) Good Cause means circumstances beyond the reasonable control of a student, which may include serious ill health or misadventure, but does not include demands of employers, pressure of employment or time devoted to activities outside the Teaching Body, unless these are relevant to serious ill health or misadventure. In all cases, the onus is on the student to provide the Teaching Body with satisfactory evidence to establish good cause.
 - b) The Teaching Body Academic Board may take into account relevant aspects of a student's record in other courses or units of study within the Teaching Body or the SCD and relevant aspects of academic studies at other institutions provided that the student presents this information to the Teaching Body.
 - c) In making the assessment, Teaching Body Academic Boards must carefully and ethically consider the student's ability to complete a course of study and must not accept a Show Good Cause response that does not provide a reasonable expectation that the issues affecting satisfactory academic performance have been identified and a clear pathway to address those issues has been presented.
- 5) Teaching Body Academic Boards will then
- a) permit a student who has shown good cause to re-enrol, or
 - b) exclude the student from the relevant course where good cause has not been established, or
 - c) permit the student to re-enrol in the relevant award course, subject to restrictions on units of study, which may include, but are not restricted to:
 - i) completion of a unit or units of study within a specified time;
 - ii) exclusion from a unit or units of study; and
 - iii) specification of the earliest date upon which a student may re-enrol in a unit or units of study, and
 - d) provide reasons for their decisions relating to students who have been asked to Show Good Cause and record those reasons for permission to re-enrol or to exclude from the course on the Student Progress Alert Report.

Author(s), Latest (Role) and Previous	Neil Holm (Director of Coursework), Peter Bolt (Academic Director)
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