TAFE NSW HIGHER EDUCATION
STUDENT PROGRESSION, EXCLUSION
AND
GRADUATION PROCEDURES
1. Introduction

1.1 These procedures outline the TAFE NSW Higher Education rules for meeting course completion requirements, exclusion related to unsatisfactory progress, and processes for student course completion and graduation eligibility.

1.2 TAFE NSW Higher Education requires that academic progress of all students is monitored. Students who are determined to be ‘at risk’ may be provided with advice and assistance to support successful course completion.

2. Audience and applicability

2.1 These procedures apply to:
- all TAFE NSW Higher Education staff responsible for the management of students enrolled in higher education courses including academic, counselling and student administration staff; and
- all students enrolled in TAFE NSW Higher Education courses.

3. Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td>Responsible for academic policy making, academic administration, oversight of the educational process and control over the administration of higher education curriculum to allow educational objectives to be achieved.</td>
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<td>Academic staff</td>
<td>Dean, Course Coordinators, Teachers</td>
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<td>Course completion and graduation eligibility requirements</td>
<td>Minimum academic achievement required to complete course and be eligible to graduate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Coordinator</td>
<td>Head teacher of a higher education course</td>
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<td>CRICOS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferment</td>
<td>The authorised temporary postponement of study by an enrolled student.</td>
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<td>DoE</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governing Council</td>
<td>Governing Council provides advice to the TAFE NSW Commission to ensure that TAFE NSW Higher Education fulfils its responsibilities as detailed in its Mission and Goals, and continues to meet its obligations and responsibilities as a higher education institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention strategy</td>
<td>Strategy negotiated between the counsellor and the student to assist the student to meet minimum academic standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Code 2007</td>
<td>The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students</td>
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<td>PRISMS</td>
<td>Provider Registration &amp; International Student Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE NSW Higher Education</td>
<td>Trading name for the Technical and Further Education Commission which is the higher education provider registered with TEQSA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning Committee</td>
<td>Committee responsible for monitoring and reporting on quality assurance processes for teaching and learning ensuring day-to-day academic operations meet quality educational standards</td>
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5. Student progression

5.1 Students are required to attain the following minimum academic standards to be deemed to be maintaining satisfactory academic progress in a course of study:

- no more than one failure in a particular subject; and
- not fail more than 50% of the subjects attempted in a semester.

5.2 Student progress is monitored during study and at the end of each semester. The Course Coordinator reviews the academic performance of all students enrolled in a course against the minimum academic standards of that course.

5.2 Students with difficulties are identified and appropriate strategies are put in place to address them, as detailed in section 6 below.

6. Students deemed ‘at academic risk’

6.1 Students are deemed at academic risk when they fail to meet the minimum academic standards for progression specified in section 5 of this procedure.

6.2 TAFE NSW Higher Education uses the following methods to identify students at academic risk:

6.2.1 course application processing and selection for admission, e.g. testing; interviews; assessment of written work or portfolios;

6.2.2 monitoring of student progress by the relevant subject teacher in the normal course of teaching and assessment and notifying cases to the Course Coordinator;

6.2.3 early and ongoing diagnostic review of student performance in learning activities and assessments to gauge progress indicating lack of proficiency in areas such as academic skills, English, Maths, etc;

6.2.4 formal review of student performance in summative assessments by the Results Review Committee;

6.2.6 formal review of student academic progress in subjects attempted by the teacher and course Coordinator;

6.2.6 advice from student support and counselling services.
6.3 Where a student has failed to meet the minimum academic standards, the Course Coordinator will deem that student as being ‘at risk’ of unsatisfactory academic progress.

6.4 The Course Coordinator will contact the student at risk in writing to arrange an academic counselling session.

6.5 The purpose of an academic counselling session is to determine an appropriate intervention strategy and to develop an individual plan for assistance. The intervention strategy will be negotiated between the Counsellor, Course Coordinator and the student.

6.6 The intervention strategy will be activated once agreement is reached with the student. The strategy will include, but is not limited to, the student:

- attending academic skills programmes;
- attending tutorial or study groups;
- receiving individual case management;
- attending counselling;
- having their study load reduced;
- receiving assistance with personal issues which are influencing progress;
- receiving mentoring; or
- a combination of the above.

6.7 The student will be advised that conditions may be placed on their enrolment.

6.8 Students will be made aware in writing of the availability of support processes and services at the various points at which they are identified to be at risk, for example:

- after course admission processes;
- during their study as a result of unsatisfactory performance in formative learning and assessment activities; and
- at the end of semester and before commencement of the next semester.

6.9 The Course Coordinator will ensure that academic staff responsibilities relating to the strategy are carried out appropriately.

6.10 A record of the academic counselling session will be signed by the counsellor and the student and placed on the student’s file.

6.11 Student participation and progress in undertaking their intervention strategy will be monitored, reviewed and adjusted as needed by the relevant academic and/or support staff providing the support or service.

6.12 The outcomes of the student strategy will be recorded and reported to the Dean via the Teaching and Learning Committee.

6.13 The flowchart at Appendix A summarises the process to manage students at academic risk.
7. **Students who continue to fail to meet minimum academic standards**

7.1 A student who fails to meet minimum academic standards after an intervention strategy has been put in place will be advised by the Course Coordinator in writing. The student is required to provide a written statement to the Course Coordinator outlining reasons why he/she should be permitted to continue enrolment in the course.

7.2 The student must submit the response within 20 working days of the date of the notification from the Course Coordinator.

7.3 A student who does not submit a written statement by the due date shall have their enrolment terminated.

7.4 The Course Coordinator shall consider the written statement and may:

   7.4.1 permit the student to continue with or without specific conditions; or

   7.4.2 recommend to the Dean (or delegate) termination of the student’s enrolment.

7.5 The decision of the Dean (or delegate) will be communicated in writing to the student within 20 working days.

7.6 A student who is permitted to continue their enrolment in the course with specific conditions, and who again fails to attain the minimum academic standards or breaches the conditions will have their enrolment terminated due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

7.7 In the case of 7.4.2 and 7.6, the student will be informed of their right to appeal the decision.

8. **Consequences of termination of enrolment**

8.1 Students whose enrolment is terminated due to unsatisfactory academic progress or exceeding the period of candidature, but wish to undertake further study, in the same or a different line of study, must apply to TAFE NSW Higher Education for re-admission in line with the *TAFE NSW Higher Education Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure*.

9. **Failing a prerequisite subject**

9.1 Course progression rules require that a student who has not successfully completed a required prerequisite(s) for progression to a subsequent subject may not be enrolled in the subsequent subject.

9.2 Where a student believes their course progress may be adversely affected, the student may seek a review of this rule by writing to the Dean.

9.3 The Dean will assess the student’s academic record. The Dean may allow the student to repeat the prerequisite subject concurrently with the subject that it is a prerequisite, based on advice from the Course Coordinator and his/her own assessment that the student may reasonably be expected to be successful.
10. **International students**

10.1 Under the National Code 2007, providers must (i) monitor the course progress of international students, (ii) intervene in the case of students not making satisfactory progress to provide them with appropriate learning strategies (iii) report students who fail to meet satisfactory progress over two consecutive semesters despite intervention strategies and, (iv) provide students with documentation regarding these processes.

10.2 An intervention strategy must be activated for international students who do not meet minimum satisfactory progress standards as per sections 6 and 7 above.

10.3 After an intervention strategy has been put in place, an international student who fails to meet the minimum academic standards in a second consecutive semester must be notified in writing by the International student Coordinator/Manager that he/she has not achieved satisfactory academic progress. The international student coordinator or international student manager will issue an Intention to Report letter to students who have failed in two consecutive semesters and advise students about the internal appeal process.

10.4 A student has the right to appeal a decision. The process is as follows:

10.4.1 If the student does not lodge an appeal within 20 working days, the campus advises the International Students Centre of DEC International. Provided the process has been followed as in section 10, the Centre will report the student for unsatisfactory progress through the PRISMS system.

10.4.2 If the student appeals and the internal appeal is not upheld, the International Students Centre is advised and provided with relevant documentation. The Centre advises the student about the external appeal process, including the timeframe to access this appeal.

10.4.3 If the student does not access the external appeal process or if the external appeal is not successful, and then the International Students Centre of DEC International will report the student for unsatisfactory progress through the PRISMS system.

10.4.4 If the student accesses the appeals processes, then their enrolment must be maintained while the appeals process is ongoing. The National Code does not require providers to continue to offer learning opportunities throughout the complaints or appeals process. This is a Provider decision. Providers may exclude a student from attending classes, but offer and accept student work done in their own time, off-class. Providers should consider that denying students learning opportunities during the appeals process may disadvantage them in their subsequent studies, should the appeals process find in their favour.
11. **Period of candidature**

11.1 Students must meet the requirements of a course of study within a prescribed number of years from the date of first enrolment. A defined period of maximum candidature is to ensure that the qualification awarded reflects currency of knowledge and skill and relevance to professional and/or occupational outcomes.

11.2 The number of years permitted to complete the requirements of a course, not counting periods of exclusions and lapsed candidature, will be within the period prescribed in this procedure, except where a different period has been prescribed for a course and approved by the Academic Board.

11.3 Subject to this procedure, a student must meet all the course requirements for an award within the period as set out in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Maximum period for meeting completion requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>6 calendar years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>4 calendar years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>3 calendar years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree (including 4 year professional degree)</td>
<td>10 calendar years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>6 calendar years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma (HE)</td>
<td>6 calendar years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma (HE)</td>
<td>4 calendar years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.4 For international students the maximum period is the duration of the course registered on CRICOS. This is the period for which a student visa is granted. Extensions beyond this period would depend on extensions of the student visa.

11.5 The time elapsed will be calculated from the date that the student commenced their first semester of study.

12. **Deferment**

12.1 Students enrolled in a course, can defer their studies for a period of time that will still allow them to complete course requirements within the maximum period allowed (11.3).

12.2 Students enrolled in a TAFE NSW Higher Education course, who wish to defer their studies must advise their Course Coordinator as soon as possible and in line with the TAFE NSW Higher Education Tuition Fees, Payments, FEE-HELP, Refunds & Review Procedures.
12.3 Students returning from a deferment of study must advise the Course Coordinator in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of the semester in which they intend to return to study.

13. **Applications for extension of period of candidature**

13.1 Students who fail to complete within the prescribed period and who can reasonably be expected to meet the course requirements within two additional semesters of study may apply for an extension of time. Each application will be considered on its merits and with reference to the student's academic performance to date.

13.2 Applications for an extension of time to complete the course must be made in writing to the Course Coordinator. The application must be submitted at least one semester prior to the expiry of the student's prescribed period of candidature. The application must include reasons for the student's inability to complete the qualification in the prescribed period of time. The decision of the Course Coordinator will be communicated in writing to the student within 20 working days. The student will be informed of their right to appeal the decision.

14. **Students who fail to complete within the time limit**

14.1 Students who fail to complete course requirements within the prescribed number of years and additional time granted by way of extension will have their enrolment terminated.

14.2 The final academic transcript will be issued to the student informing him/her that the maximum period of candidature has been exceeded. The student will be advised in writing of the decision and their right to appeal within 20 working days of the date shown on the letter.

14.3 Students who discontinue their study or fail to complete within the time limit and have their enrolment terminated are eligible to receive a Statement of Attainment and result notice for any subjects successfully completed.

15. **Graduation**

15.1 The Course Coordinator will monitor student progress and verify that a student has satisfactorily completed all course requirements. The Course Coordinator will recommend to the Teaching and Learning Committee that a student be awarded a qualification. The Teaching and Learning Committee will table at an Academic Board meeting a list of students who are eligible to graduate. Upon advice from the Academic Board, the Governing Council will approve issuing of the awards.

15.2 A student who has an outstanding debt shall be advised that any testamur or result notice will not be issued, nor shall he/she be permitted to graduate until such time as the debt has been paid.

15.3 Students will be advised in writing of their eligibility to graduate. Students can choose to attend a graduation ceremony or graduate *in absentia*.

15.4 Where a graduand receives more than 50 per cent credit on course entry, the testamur received on completion shall be ungraded.
16. Replacement of testamur

16.1 Graduates can apply for a replacement testamur or transcript as a result of damage, loss, theft or change of name.

16.2 The issuance of replacement testamurs and transcripts is governed by the TAFE NSW Replacement of Testamur procedure.

17. Appeals

17.1 A student may appeal any decision made under this policy. The only grounds for appeal are that the decision is inconsistent with this policy.

17.2 Should the student wish to appeal, he/she must follow the processes outlined in TAFE NSW Higher Education grievance procedures.

18. Roles and responsibilities

18.1 The Dean and the Course Coordinator are responsible for the effective management and implementation of these procedures.

18.2 Academic staff are responsible for:

- the implementation of the procedures related to this policy;
- monitoring student academic progress; and
- managing students at academic risk.

18.3 The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law.

19. Related documents

- TAFE NSW Higher Education Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure
- TAFE NSW Higher Education Student Consultation Procedures
- TAFE NSW Higher Education Student Grievance Procedures for Academic Matters
- TAFE NSW Higher Education Student Grievance Procedures for Non-Academic Matters
- TAFE NSW Replacement Testamur Procedure
20. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

20.1 This document will be reviewed and updated regularly in line with the Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework.

21. Responsibility and delegations

21.1 The Academic Board has responsibility for academic policy making, academic administration and oversight of the educational process.

21.2 All staff responsible for course delivery including academic and non-academic (e.g. counsellors),

21.3 The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law.

22. Policy approval

22.1 The TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Board approved amendments to this procedure on 17 September 2014.

23. Publication of this procedure

23.1 The current version of this procedure is published on the TAFE NSW internet. Where appropriate it will be quoted, paraphrased or cited in subject outlines and subject teaching guides.
Appendix A: Students at academic risk flowchart

Student identified as at risk

Student contacted and academic counselling session arranged. Student advised conditions may be placed on their enrolment.

Appropriate intervention strategy negotiated between Counsellor, Course Coordinator & student is activated.

Student undertakes support strategy

As a result student meets academic progress requirements. **No further action.**

Student fails to meet minimum academic standards after intervention. Student advised in writing by the Course Coordinator

Student provides a written statement within 20 working days outlining reasons why he/she should be permitted to continue enrolment in the course

Student does not submit a written statement by due date. **Enrolment terminated**

Decision subject to appeals process on grounds that it is inconsistent with this policy/procedure

Student submits statement Decision made by Dean (or delegate) to: (i) terminate student’s enrolment; or (ii) permit the student to continue with or without specific conditions

Student who is permitted to continue enrolment with/without specific conditions, and again fails to attain minimum academic standards or breaches the conditions will have enrolment terminated