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## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS POLICY – VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & FURTHER EDUCATION (TAFE) FAQ'S**

Prepared by the Student Advocacy Service  
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### **1. What is the University's Student Assessment and Progress Policy?**

The University's Student Assessment and Progress Policy is an official policy of the University. As a student, it aims to provide support for your academic progress and ensure that you successfully complete your studies.

### **2. I've heard about Student Progress Levels. What are they and what do they mean?**

#### **Progress Level 1**

This is if you have been identified as making unsatisfactory progress for the first time as established through a review by the Program Team. A Program Team is a group formed by the Education Manager of your course who reviews student assessment and progress. You will be sent a letter by registered post asking you to attend a **Progress Meeting** with the Education Manager or nominee and the Teacher in the relevant course. You will also be advised that you have the opportunity to submit an outline of your case in writing within 5 University working days.

#### **Progress Level 2**

This is if you have been identified as making unsatisfactory progress for the second time in the same program as established through a review by the Program Team. You will be sent a letter by registered post asking you to attend a **Progress Hearing** with the Director of Teaching and Learning or nominee the Teacher in the relevant course and one other person nominated by the Director of Teaching and Learning. You will also be advised that you have the opportunity to submit an outline of your case in writing within 5 University working days.

It is recommended that if you have any issues that are affecting your ability to study that you make them known to your Teacher or Education Manager in your College as soon as possible and take the opportunity to raise these issues when you are called to discuss your progress.

An **Information Guide** will have been handed out to you at the start of semester which details the assessment requirements of your unit or program. This guide may be in the form of a course or program manual, a handbook or a student induction manual, a unit guide or outline. If you are familiar with the assessment requirements you may develop a fuller understanding of why you have not been making satisfactory progress.

### **3. What does unsatisfactory progress mean?**

Academic progress may be considered unsatisfactory if:

- a) the student is deemed not competent in the same unit of study for the second successive enrolment; and/or
- b) fails 25% or more of the enrolled course load for the relevant teaching period; and/or
- c) the student has withdrawn (or has been withdrawn) from the same Unit of Study on more than two (2) occasions without good reason; and/or
- d) the student breaches the professional or ethical framework of the profession or displays critically dangerous practice whilst on practical placements; and/or
- e) the student fails to meet the academic conditions previously imposed by the Education Manager, Program Team or Progress Meeting.

[see Page 3: 'Guide to Writing a Letter to the Progress Committee']

#### 4. Preparation of the written response

In the written response you should outline the factors that have impacted upon your academic studies. At this stage of the academic progress review the reasons that are normally provided are those that were beyond the student's control or unforeseen events. These are listed below:

- **Health issues** - It is a good idea to provide a medical certificate or medical report confirming how your health issues prevented you from studying effectively.
- **Financial issues** – If your work commitments impacted on your study it is a good idea to provide an outline of your work commitments from your employer. If you have financial issues in the form of debts, it is advisable to provide evidence of those.
- **Relationship** – At times we experience relationship breakdowns or tensions, so it is a good idea to submit a counselling report or doctor's letter if possible.
- **Academic** – If you have had problems with your unit of study and sought help from external sources, like tutoring, then provide evidence of the help you have received.
- **Other (disability, cultural, home circumstances)** – If you have a disability or your progress has been hampered by cultural or home circumstances, list these with supporting documentation, for example, a letter from the University's Disability Liaison Unit.

#### **The more written evidence you can provide with your written response the better.**

It is important to include in your written submission how you plan to overcome the events that have hampered your studies. You also need to stress that you wish to continue with your course and outline to the College how you plan to continue, for example seek counselling, receive extra tutoring and so on.

#### 5. What happens if I get a letter about my academic progress and don't respond?

The policy states that once formally notified it is mandatory for a student to attend the scheduled meeting with the appropriate authority (be it individual or committee) to discuss his/her progress. You will be informed in writing. Failure to attend a mandatory meeting may be interpreted by the University that you have 'unofficially discontinued' with your course and may result in you being given a 12 months Leave of Absence. **Therefore, do not ignore any correspondence you receive from your College about your unsatisfactory progress.**

#### 6. If I am called to discuss my progress with my Education Manager or at a Progress Meeting or Progress Hearing, can I bring someone with me to the meeting?

At any time a student may be accompanied by a Student Advocate from the Student Wellbeing Department and/or any other person you nominate.

#### 7. I am an international student; does the Student Assessment and Progress Policy apply to me?

The Student Assessment and Progress Policy applies to all enrolled students at Victoria University including international and offshore students.

#### 8. What type of outcomes can I expect to receive from a Progress Meeting or Hearing?

Once again it depends on what progress level you are on, and your particular academic or personal circumstances. But the types of outcomes that would normally be recommended are as follows:

- recommendation that you reduce your enrolment load;
- recommended program of study over a specified period of time to assist your progress (called conditional enrolment);
- recommendation/ permission that you take a leave of absence;
- recommendation that you enrol in a more suitable course, deemed a 'better fit';
- identification of support strategies to enhance your progress;
- recommendation that you seek appropriate personal or academic support from within or outside of the College;

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- suspension from the course; (Progress Hearing only)
- exclusion from the course. (Progress Hearing only)

## Guide to Writing a Letter to the Progress Meeting or Hearing

### Date

### Address to

Chairperson or Education Manager  
College  
Victoria University  
PO Box 14428  
Melbourne City MC, VIC 8001

### Introduction

Student Name: ... ID No.: ...

*To Whom It May Concern / Dear Chairperson,*

*In reference to your recent letter dated...concerning my unsatisfactory progress, I am writing to ask that I be allowed to continue with my course.*

### Reasons

*My academic performance during the semester was affected by the following factors...*

- List the reasons for your unsatisfactory progress in dot points with a few sentences to describe each.
- Keep them clear and brief.

### Solutions

- Next write what you are (and will be) doing to resolve the issues contributing to your unsatisfactory progress.
- Make sure you formulate solutions to all the problems you've identified at the beginning of your letter. eg If work hours are a problem, will you be suggesting becoming a part-time student or reducing your work hours?
- Possible solutions are meeting your lecturers on a regular basis. You might also arrange to pay for tutoring assistance (refer document *How to Find a Tutor?*) Some students need to improve their language and learning skills. VU provides a free language and study skills support service Student Learning Unit at <http://tfs.vu.edu.au/students.cfm> or on 9919 4744.
- Overall, this section should be detailed and specific and demonstrate study and life style changes that will assist you to manage your work and study balance.
- Note: You will be expected at the meeting to speak and answer questions in regards to the letter above. Therefore, don't leave any discrepancies or things you can't justify – you will be expected to speak about your progress in an informed and systematic manner using your substantiating documents to back you up. Also, you can use your letter as a checklist to talk and refer to.

### Conclusion

- Finally, sign the letter and include your contact details.
- You will have a chance to explain the problems in detail at the **Progress Meeting or Progress Hearing**.
- Attach your substantiating documents to your letter.
- Keep a copy of all your documentation.

*Yours sincerely,*