STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS POLICY
HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)
ACADEMIC PROGRESS FAQs

Prepared by the Student Advocacy Service 2014

Student Assessment and Progress Policy
This policy aims to provide support for your academic progress and ensure that you successfully complete your studies. The Student Assessment and Progress Policy applies to all enrolled students at Victoria University.

What is unsatisfactory progress?
A coursework student can be held to be making unsatisfactory progress if, while enrolled in the same course of study:
   a) fails the same unit of study on more than one occasion; and/or
   b) fails 50% or more of the enrolled course load for the relevant teaching period; and/or
   fails to comply with a conditional enrolment agreement set by the Academic Advisor/Course-co-ordinator, Progress Committee or the College Board of Studies

What are Academic Standing Levels?
A four level standard designed to measure your academic progress. The levels assist the University and students in their progress through their course.

Level 1 At Risk
This means that you have been identified as being ‘at risk’ of unsatisfactory progress following an appropriate level of formative assessment. It is important to seek help at this time from your Tutor, Lecturer or Unit Coordinator.

Level 2 Referral One
This means that you are not making satisfactory progress for the first time in the same course. You will be sent official notification via your VU email encouraging you to seek help to get back on track with your studies. If you have any issues that are affecting your ability to study make them known to your College through your Unit Coordinator or Course Coordinator as soon as possible. You can also seek assistance from VU student support services: http://www.vu.edu.au/student-life/getting-help

Level 3 Referral Two
This means that you are not making satisfactory progress in your course for the second time and will be asked to attend a meeting with your Academic Advisor or Course Coordinator. The outcome of this meeting may result in a ‘conditional enrolment’ that you must comply with to continue in your course. Examples are: an undertaking that you pass all enrolled units of study, reduce your study load or seek further advice from academic support and development. You will then create a work plan which is a record of the meeting.

Level 4 Referral Three
At this level you are not making satisfactory progress for the third time and will be asked to attend a formal, mandatory meeting with a Student Progress Committee as constituted by your College. It is very important that you follow the instructions on the official notification from VU sent to you by email. Failure to do so could result in exclusion from your course. We recommend that you prepare a written response as to why you should not be excluded or suspended from your course and include any documentary evidence. (Refer to letter guide page 3). You can influence the outcome/s of this meeting but the committee will make the final decision as to what will happen with respect to your future studies.
What is the purpose of a workplan?
A workplan assists you with completing your course. It documents a list of what you have agreed to do to improve your studies. A workplan is a document that you sign and is a contract with you and your College. It is kept on file and you can ask for a copy. When you commit to do something, make sure you really can complete it. For example, if you agree to seek help with your academic writing ensure that you follow through with this commitment.

I have been called to a progress meeting or hearing, what do I put in my written response?
We recommend that you outline the factors that have impacted on your academic studies and attach any relevant supporting documentation. Factors could include unforeseen events or issues outside your control such as:

- **Health issues** – present evidence such as a medical certificate or report.
- **Financial issues** – consider current work commitments, one option may be to work less hours or reduce your study load next semester.
- **Relationship difficulties** – if possible provide a letter of support from your doctor or counsellor.
- **Academic support** – If you have had problems with a unit of study and sought help from academic support and development at VU or from external sources (for example tutoring), then provide evidence of the help you have received.
- **Other** – some examples may include disability, cultural, home circumstances; explain how external factors have affected your studies.

Once you have outlined the reasons why you have been making unsatisfactory progress you need to offer solutions as to why you wish to continue in your course. This includes outlining to the College how you plan to continue successfully: for example seek counselling, reduce working hours, receive extra tutoring.

Am I able to bring along a support person to my progress meeting or hearing?
You may be accompanied by a Student Advocate and/or a support person of your choice.

What type of outcomes can I expect from a progress hearing?
The committee will make a decision taking into account factors relating to your particular academic or personal circumstances. 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 (conditional enrolment)
- recommendation/ permission that you take an Intermission
- 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
- suspension from your course
- exclusion from your course.

Can I appeal the decision?
If you have new evidence or believe that the proper procedural process was not followed then you can appeal within 10 working days from the date you receive official notification of the decision from your College.

If you have not been able to attend one of the Progress Review Information Seminars
Prepare for your meeting as outlined in these FAQs. If you have any further questions contact the Student Advocacy Service, email: advocacy@vu.edu.au or phone 9919 5400.
Guide to Writing a Letter to your Course Coordinator or Progress Committee

Date

Address to
Chairperson, Progress Committee or Course Coordinator
College of .......
Victoria University

Introduction
Name:
ID:

Dear Chairperson,

I am writing to explain why I have been making unsatisfactory progress in (list course) in Semester ....
I would like to explain the circumstances that led to this result as well as outline what processes I am putting in place so that I can work towards successful completion of my course.

Reasons

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

Solutions

• Outline what you are (and will be) doing to resolve the issues contributing to your unsatisfactory progress.
• Make sure you come up with realistic solutions that work for you and the University to the problems you have identified.
• Explain the study and life style changes that you are making that will assist you to manage your work and study balance.

Conclusion

This is your opportunity to reinforce the points you have made in your letter. Attach any relevant supporting documents and keep a copy of all documentation. Remember to sign the letter and include your contact information.

Note

You will be asked to explain your situation at the meeting so be prepared to speak in an informed manner. It is preferred that you prepare your letter ahead of time and forward via email to the address provided. This gives the panel time to consider your circumstances before the meeting. If this is not possible due to timelines or your personal circumstances, print off four copies, one for each member of the progress committee as well as one for yourself to take along to the meeting.