



**TAFE NSW HIGHER EDUCATION  
STUDENT PROGRESSION, EXCLUSION  
AND GRADUATION PROCEDURES**

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## 1. Document history and details

Version 5: 24 August 2017

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.

## 3. Audience and applicability

3.1 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.

## 4. Definitions

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Academic Board</b>	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.
<b>Academic staff</b>	Dean, Course Coordinators, Teachers
<b>Course completion and graduation eligibility requirements</b>	Minimum academic achievement required of a student to complete a course and be eligible to graduate.
<b>Course Coordinator</b>	The program manager of a higher education course, who has overall responsibility for course and student management at the delivering campus.
<b>CRICOS</b>	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
<b>Deferment</b>	The authorised temporary postponement of commencement of study.
<b>DET</b>	The Commonwealth Department of Education and Training
<b>Governing Council</b>	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.
<b>Interruption of Studies</b>	The authorised temporary postponement of study by an enrolled student.
<b>Intervention strategy</b>	Strategy negotiated between the counsellor and the student to assist the student to meet minimum academic standards.
<b>National Code 2007</b>	The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students

<b>Non-academic staff</b>	International Students Manager, counsellors, and other non-teaching staff.
<b>PRISMS</b>	Provider Registration & International Student Management System The database used to manage and monitor international students.
<b>TAFE NSW Higher Education</b>	Trading name for the Technical and Further Education Commission which is the higher education provider registered with TEQSA.

## 5. Student progression

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

5.2 Unsatisfactory academic progress is defined by:

- failing any given subject more than once; and/or
- failing two or more subjects attempted in a semester.

5.3 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.

5.4 Students who do not meet minimum academic standards or who are otherwise identified as experiencing academic difficulties are deemed to be 'at academic risk' and will be monitored. Appropriate strategies will be put in place as detailed in section 6 below.

## 6. Students deemed 'at academic risk'

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

- 6.1.1 course application processing and selection for admission, e.g. testing; interviews; assessment of written work or portfolios;
- 6.1.2 monitoring of student progress by the relevant subject teacher in the normal course of teaching and assessment and notifying cases to the Course Coordinator;
- 6.1.3 failing to meet minimum academic standards as described in section 5.2 above;
- 6.1.4 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;
- 6.1.5 formal review of student performance in summative assessments by the Results Review Committee;
- 6.1.6 formal review of student academic progress in subjects attempted by the teacher and course Coordinator;

- 6.1.7 advice from student support and counselling services.
- 6.2 The Course Coordinator will contact the student at risk in writing to arrange an academic counselling session.
- 6.3 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 Course Coordinator, the student and where appropriate a Counsellor.
- 6.4 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 programs;
  - 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.
- 6.5 At risk students may have conditions placed on their enrolment.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 The Course Coordinator will ensure that academic staff responsibilities relating to the strategy are carried out appropriately.
- 6.8 A record of the academic counselling session will be signed by the counsellor and the student and placed on the student's file.
- 6.9 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.
- 6.10 The outcomes of the student strategy will be recorded and reported to the Dean via the Teaching and Learning Committee.
- 6.11 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 warning them that their enrolment may be terminated.
- 7.2 The student is required to provide a written response to the Course Coordinator outlining reasons why he/she should be permitted to continue enrolment in the course. The student must submit the response within 4 weeks of the date of the notification from the Course Coordinator.
- 7.3 A student who does not submit a written response by the due date will be advised that their enrolment will be terminated.
- 7.4 On receipt of the student's response, the Course Coordinator may:
  - 7.4.1 permit the student to continue with or without specific conditions; or
  - 7.4.2 recommend to the Dean termination of the student's enrolment.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 Any decision to terminate the student's enrolment will be communicated in writing to the student by the Dean of TAFE NSW Higher Education.
- 7.7 A student who is advised that their enrolment will be terminated 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 who wish to undertake further study, in the same or a different course, 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**. Conditions may be placed on the student's new enrolment.

## **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 for, 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 5, 6 and 7 above
- 10.3 After an intervention strategy has been put in place, an international student who continues to fail to meet the minimum academic standards in a second consecutive semester must be notified in writing by the Course Coordinator that he/she has not achieved satisfactory academic progress and that their enrolment may be terminated. The Course Coordinator also advises the Regional International Student Manager about the student's unsatisfactory progress. The Regional International Student Manager will issue an 'Intention to Report' (to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection) letter to the student and advise the student about the internal appeal process.
- 10.4 An international student has the right to appeal a decision to terminate their enrolment. The process is as follows:
  - 10.4.1 The student must respond in writing to the Course Coordinator within four weeks of the date of the letter from the Course Coordinator giving reasons as to why their enrolment should not be terminated.
  - 10.4.2 On receipt of the student's response, the Course Coordinator may:
    - 10.4.2(i) permit the student to continue with or without specific conditions;  
or
    - 10.4.2(ii) recommend to the Dean termination of the student's enrolment.
- 10.5 An international 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.
- 10.6 Any decision to terminate the student's enrolment will be communicated in writing to the student by the Dean of TAFE NSW Higher Education.
- 10.7 An international student who is advised that their enrolment will be terminated will be informed of their right to appeal the decision.
- 10.8 If the international student does not respond to the letter advising termination within four weeks, the Course Coordinator advises the Regional International Student Manager. The Regional International Student Manager will report the student for unsatisfactory progress through the PRISMS system to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

- 10.9 If the international student does respond to the letter advising termination and the internal appeal is not upheld, the Regional International Student Manager is advised and provided with relevant documentation. The Regional International Student Manager advises the student about the external appeal process, including the timeframe to access this appeal.
- 10.10 If the international student does not access the external appeal process or if the external appeal is not successful, then the Regional International Students Manager will report the student for unsatisfactory progress through the PRISMS system to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and advise the Course Coordinator to recommend to the Dean to terminate the enrolment.
- 10.11 If the student accesses the appeals processes, then their enrolment must be maintained while the appeals process is in progress. The National Code does not require providers to continue to offer learning opportunities during 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, including periods of exclusions and lapsed candidature, will be within the period prescribed in this procedure under Section 11.3, 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:

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Maximum period for meeting completion requirements</b>
Master's degree	6 calendar years
Graduate Diploma	4 calendar years
Graduate Certificate	3 calendar years
Bachelor's degree (including 4 year professional degree)	10 calendar years
Associate Degree	6 calendar years
Advanced Diploma (HE)	6 calendar years
Diploma (HE)	4 calendar years

- 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 who have been offered a place in a TAFE NSW Higher Education course may defer commencement of their studies for a maximum of twelve months.
- 12.2 Students who wish to defer their studies must advise the Course Coordinator in writing as soon as possible and in line with the TAFE NSW Higher Education Tuition Fees, Payments, FEE-HELP, Refunds & Review Procedures.
- 12.3 The deferment only relates to the course the student has received an offer for and cannot be transferred to another TAFE NSW Higher Education course.
- 12.4 Students who wish to delay commencement of their studies for more than twelve months will be required to submit a new application for entry into the course.
- 12.5 Students returning from a deferment must advise the Course Coordinator in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of the semester in which they intend to commence their studies.

## **13. Interruption of Studies**

- 13.1 Students enrolled in a course, can interrupt their studies for a period of time that will still allow them to complete course requirements within the maximum period allowed (Section 11.3 above).
- 13.2 Students enrolled in a TAFE NSW Higher Education course, who wish to interrupt their studies must advise the Course Coordinator in writing as soon as possible and in line with the TAFE NSW Higher Education Tuition Fees, Payments, FEE-HELP, Refunds & Review Procedures.
- 13.3 Students returning from a period of leave 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.
- 13.4 Students who interrupt their studies for more than a total of two years may be required to undertake additional study to ensure currency of their learning.

## **14. Applications for extension of period of candidature**

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 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 four weeks. The student will be informed of their right to appeal the decision.

## **15. Students who fail to complete within the time limit**

15.1 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.

15.2 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 four weeks of the date shown on the letter.

15.3 Students who discontinue their study or fail to complete within the time limit and have their enrolment terminated are eligible to receive a transcript of academic record listing all subjects undertaken.

## **16. Graduation**

16.1 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 Dean that a student be awarded a qualification. The Dean 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.

16.2 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.

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

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

## **17. Embedded qualifications**

17.1 A student who has completed the requirements of an embedded qualification will only be issued with a testamur and transcript of academic record for the embedded qualification if they choose to exit the higher level qualification.

17.2 Students exiting via embedded qualifications will be eligible to graduate in accordance with the provisions under section 16 above.

## **18. Replacement of testamur**

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

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

## **19. Appeals**

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

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

## **20. Roles and responsibilities**

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

20.2 Academic and non-academic staff are responsible for:

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

20.3 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.

## **21. 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
- TAFE NSW Replacement Testamur Procedure
- TAFE NSW Higher Education withdrawal and Interruption application form
- TAFE NSW Higher Education deferment application form

## **22. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements**

22.1 This document will be reviewed and updated regularly in line with the *TAFE NSW Higher Education Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework*.

## **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.

## **24. Policy approval**

24.1 The TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Board approved this version of this procedure on 24 August 2017.

**Appendix A: Students at academic risk flowchart**

