

University Centre Colchester

Attendance, Engagement and Progress Policy

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ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESS POLICY

Students' academic progress is reviewed at the end of each academic year by a Board of Examiners and on at least one further occasion during the year by a mid-cycle Progress Board.

Further information on the academic progress at end of year Progress Boards can be found in the appropriate Academic Progress and Conferment of Awards Policy. The policy below refers to in-year monitoring of student attendance, engagement and progress.

1 MONITORING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

- 1.1 A student's 'progress' shall be judged primarily in terms of his/her academic performance. However, attendance may also be taken into consideration. This applies in particular to the mid-cycle Progress Board.

2 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

2.1 Capturing of Student Attendance

- 2.1.1 Programme Leaders (even if they do not teach all the timetabled sessions for their programme) are responsible for the accurate and timely completion of attendance registers on their course. The academic member of staff delivering the teaching session (module tutor) must complete the attendance register during the delivery of the session (using the online e-register, or a paper-based substitute if the former is not available). The Programme Leader will retain responsibility to ensure that the records are complete and that e-registers for all timetabled sessions are completed within 2 working days of the teaching event.
- 2.1.2 Attendance either physically on campus or remote attendance via virtual sessions at timetabled sessions is taken as a core indicator of engagement with the learning opportunities provided. As such physical attendance is used to trigger liability payments as per guidance in the UCC Fee Policy. The definition of 'engagement' within the UCC fee policy does not automatically determine that a student is 'fully committed to their programme' as per the requirements of this policy.
- 2.1.3 As outlined in the Student Charter, University Centre Colchester expects students to:
- Be fully committed to their programme, its content and schedule;
 - Attend classes and keep appointments.
- 2.1.4 University Centre Colchester expects students to attempt to attend 100% of their timetabled sessions, whether physically on campus or via virtual sessions. It is expected that all absences due to illness should be reported via the absence line (01206) 712160.
- 2.1.5 Where students choose to not attend sessions, whether for explained or unexplained reasons, this will impact on their learning experience, and potential to succeed. University Centre Colchester will attempt to support learners where possible, but will not provide additional tuition to students who do not attend timetabled sessions. Students should be aware that non-attendance of timetabled sessions may impact on their level of achievement on their programme of study.
- 2.1.6 As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, UCC has equipped some of its lecturing rooms with cameras and microphones, thus enabling students who may have to, or wish to, self-isolate take part in the synchronous delivery of lectures. Students wishing to

continue to dial into a synchronously delivered lecture may do so after September 2021, if the following circumstances apply:

- The student needs to self-isolate for no more than two weeks due to a pandemic-related concern;
- The lecture is scheduled to take place in a room that offers dial-in participation for the taught element;
- The lecturer concerned has been notified in writing, and copied to the Head of School, no less than 24 hours in advance.

2.1.7 Any student wishing to take part in a lecture on the basis of the criteria set out above must accept that their experience of a session designed for in-person and on campus delivery may differ that that of those present on site. Staff cannot be expected to change the delivery and activity formats of a lesson at short notice, but will make every effort to include those dialing in wherever practical.

2.2 Monitoring of Student Attendance

2.2.1 University Centre Colchester will monitor students' attendance in the following ways:

- Any student who has two consecutive weeks of unexplained absences will be contacted and requested to contact their Programme Leader to discuss their situation;
- Any student who has four consecutive weeks of unexplained absences on an individual module will be contacted and requested to contact their Programme Leader to discuss their situation;
- Any student who has four consecutive weeks of unexplained absences for all timetables activities will be automatically referred to the Dean of Higher Education as per paragraph 3.4.

2.2.2 In all of the above circumstances the consecutive weeks must be contained to within an individual semester.

2.2.3 Students whose attendance is monitored as being below 50% at a School Progress Board will be referred to the Dean of Higher Education as per paragraph 3.4.

2.2.4 Where overall attendance falls below 50%, or a student has four consecutive weeks of unexplained absence, it is the responsibility of the student to evidence how they are continuing to 'fully commit' to their studies.

2.3 Ongoing 'Explained Absence'

2.3.1 Even if absences are 'explained' if a programme team has concerns about a student's attendance record and/or his/her ability to engage or catch up with studies, the Head of School shall invite the student to an initial meeting to discuss their situation. The initial meeting should be offered so that the School can provide appropriate guidance and support. The initial meeting is an opportunity for the School to explore any reasons that may be affecting a student's attendance, engagement and/or progress.

2.3.2 Following the initial meeting, the Head of School may decide the following action(s):

- i. take no further action. As it is important for students not to miss teaching events, however, the programme team should continue to monitor the student's attendance, engagement and/or progress;

- ii. refer the student to appropriate student support services;
- iii. invoke the Fitness to Study procedure in respect of a student whom the Head of School has identified as potentially being unfit.

2.3.3 If a student does not attend the initial meeting nor provides an explanation for the absence nor seeks an appropriate alternative time to meet, the Head of School shall refer the case to the Dean of Higher Education as per paragraph 3.4

2.3.4 **Note:** Where physical attendance is not evidenced, submission of assessed work and interaction with on-line learning resources may be considered as evidence of on-going commitment in some circumstances. University Centre Colchester reserves the right to determine if such remote engagement constitutes full commitment to the programme at both the initial review and after the student has been referred to the Dean of Higher Education.

3 PROGRESS BOARDS

3.1 Overview of Progress Boards

3.1.1 The purpose of monitoring students' progress mid-year is to ensure appropriate interventions may be made, and appropriate guidance may be provided, to assist the academic progress of potentially faltering students. Progress Boards are a key element of University Centre Colchester strategy to increase retention and achievement. The mid-year point allows time for information on progress to be gathered, whilst leaving sufficient time for supporting strategies to take effect.

3.1.2 Students considered by the Progress Boards may be subject to the **University Centre Colchester Student Academic Disciplinary Procedure** and if so, will be positioned in the two stages of the monitoring process. The two stages are:

Stage 1: Supportive Action

Stage 2: Referral to the Dean of Higher Education and/or University Centre Colchester Progress Board.

3.1.3 The Student Academic Disciplinary Procedure can be invoked by a Programme Leader at any time in the academic year and is designed to address unsatisfactory academic performance by means of a range of measures.

3.1.4 The Progress Board must be informed of any students subject to the Student Academic Disciplinary Procedure and provided with all relevant correspondence and associated documentation.

3.2 School and University Centre Colchester Progress Boards

3.2.1 There are two levels of progress board: **School Progress Board (SPB)** and a **University Centre Colchester Progress Board (UCCPB)**.

3.2.2 The progress of each student shall normally be reviewed by the relevant **School Progress Board** at the end of semester one, but a Board may be convened at any time if required. The School Progress Board will be chaired by the Head of School (or his/her deputy). The Head of Academic Services (and/or his/her deputy) and the Senior UCC Academic Services Officer (and/or his/her deputy) will also be present. The minutes will be recorded by the UCC office. It is required that the leader of each programme under consideration is present. Other members of the School are welcome. The quorum for a progress board is three.

3.2.3 **The University Centre Colchester Progress Board** will meet following the completion of the School Progress Boards, but can be convened at other times, as necessary. The University Centre Colchester Progress Board will consider students referred to it by the School Progress Board, whose progress is deemed 'unsatisfactory' (see paragraphs 8.1.3.1). The University Centre Colchester Progress Board will be chaired by the Dean of UCC or his/her deputy: and membership will normally consist of the Head of Academic Services, (and/or his/her deputy) and a member of academic staff. A secretary will be provided by the UCC Academic Services Office. The quorum for the University Centre Colchester Progress Board is three.

3.3 **School Progress Boards: Composition, procedure and powers**

3.3.1 The School Progress Board requires strong evidence to support the 'categorisation' of students' progress. Completed ATS2 grids and up to date attendance reports should be brought to the Board. No decisions should be taken by the Board without there being a firm evidential foundation.

3.3.2 Prior to the meeting of a School Progress Board, Programme Leaders will consult with their programme teams and, with due consideration of module results (as recorded within ATS2) and attendance (as recorded on college registers), appraise the progress of students on their HE programmes. The progress of all students will be classified in one of the following three categories:

- i. **Satisfactory progress.** This category applies when the student's profile is satisfactory. Suggests the student is likely on course to meet the requirements for 'progression' or 'award' at the end of the academic year.
- ii. **Cause for concern.** This category should be applied where the student's profile is less than satisfactory and suggests a risk that the student might not be able to meet the requirements for 'progression' or 'award' at the end of the academic year. (Note that the failure of one, or perhaps two, modules should not necessarily lead to the categorisation of 'cause for concern'. The programme leader should consider all aspects of a student's progress before judging the appropriate category.)
- iii. **Unsatisfactory progress.** This category should be applied in circumstances where the performance of a student is highly unsatisfactory and strongly suggests that the student is unlikely to meet the requirements for 'progression' or 'award' at the end of the year. With respect to this categorisation, a student's attendance should also be considered. Where absence has been extensive, without an acceptable cause, and is likely to have a detrimental effect on class and group activities, this may also require the categorisation of a student's progress as 'unsatisfactory'. Students deemed to demonstrate unsatisfactory progress will be referred to the Dean of Higher Education and/or a University Centre Colchester Progress Board as per paragraph 3.4.

3.3.3 The Board must take into account any evidence to support the recording of Unsatisfactory Progress. The Board must consider the academic performance, attendance and tutorial evidence available.

3.3.4 The School Progress Board should, where appropriate, identify relevant students under the category of **commendation**. This category applies where a student's performance is outstanding¹ and deserves commendation (in writing) by the Head of School at the mid cycle board and by the Dean of Higher Education at the end of year Board.

3.3.5 It is vital that Programme Leaders and Heads of Schools monitor and address issues of 'cause for concern' or 'unsatisfactory progress' prior to the meeting of the School Progress Board. Students at risk of falling within these categories should already have

received notification of the School's concerns, unless the development has been very recent. On the basis of information gained from academic performance, electronic registers and personal tutorials, students who raise 'cause for concern' or whose progress is deemed to be 'unsatisfactory' should be notified of this prior to the date of the Progress Board, and the matter addressed in a progress tutorial.

3.3.6 The School Progress Board will consider the progress of students under the categories stated in 3.3.2 and, where appropriate, under the 'commendation' category stated in 3.3.3'.

3.3.7 Decisions and actions to be taken by the School Progress Board are as follows:

- i. Where the School Progress Board agrees there is 'cause for concern', recommendations should be provided regarding the type of advice, support, counselling or remedial work that should be provided for the student concerned. (These recommendations should have a 'timeline': stating the dates when actions should be taken and period after which their effectiveness is reviewed.) Following the Board, students will subsequently receive a letter from the Chair of the Board (Head of School) detailing the cause for concern and detailing the recommendation(s) of the Board.
- ii. Where the School Progress Board deems that particular students' progress is 'unsatisfactory', the students will be referred to the Dean of Higher Education and/or a University Centre Colchester Progress Board. Unsatisfactory progress may be determined by either continued non-attendance or unsatisfactory level of attendance, where this suggests the student is unlikely to complete the year successfully, or unsatisfactory submission of assessed work to an extent that suggests the student is unlikely to complete the year successfully.
- iii. Students will subsequently receive a letter from the UCC Academic Services Office informing them of the decision and advising them of next steps.
- iv. Where the School Progress Board agrees that a student's achievement is worthy of commendation, this will be recorded and a letter of commendation will be sent to the student from the Chair of the Board (Head of School) at the mid-cycle board or by the Dean of Higher Education at the of year board

3.3.8 Minutes of the School Progress Boards are taken by a UCC Academic Services officer and a record of decisions made will be lodged in the UCC Academic Services office.

3.3.9 Actions agreed and implemented by School Progress Boards will be monitored and reviewed by the Dean of Higher Education. Schools are required to notify the Head of UCC Academic Services of the actions they have taken and the subsequent progress of students who have raised cause for concern or whose attendance has been unsatisfactory.

3.4 Referral to Dean of Higher Education or their deputy

3.4.1 Where a School's efforts to encourage a student to engage with their studies have been unsuccessful and/or where progress measured by the completion of the required assessments is such that the student is unlikely to complete the stage successfully and their progress status deemed as 'unsatisfactory', the Head of School should refer the student to the Dean or their deputy.

¹ It is the responsibility of the programme team to decide what level of performance should be deemed 'outstanding'. As a team broad rule, the classification of 'outstanding performance' would require all or most of a student's modular grades to be 70% or above ('distinction' or above for Higher National Awards.)

3.4.2 Where a case is referred to the Dean or their deputy, they may:

- i. refer the case to a UCC Progress Board;
- ii. decide to take no further action/refer the case back to the School;
- iii. arrange to meet the student.

3.4.3 The Dean or their deputy may invite the student to a meeting to discuss their progress. Following this meeting the Dean or their deputy may:

- i. refer the case to a Progress Board;
- ii. permit the student to proceed with or without certain conditions, breach of which would automatically result in the student being referred to a Progress Board;
- iii. decide to take no further action.

3.4.4 Subsequent occurrences of unsatisfactory attendance/non-submission in the same stage of study, where a student has previously been considered under these procedures, may result in an accelerated route through the stages set out above where a department decides that the case should be considered at the next stage in the procedures.

3.5 University Centre Colchester Progress Board: Composition, procedure and powers

3.5.1 A student who is referred to the University Centre Colchester Progress Board for unsatisfactory progress will be informed in writing of his/her referral and a copy of the letter will be kept on record. The letter to the student will indicate the reason for the referral to the University Centre Colchester Progress Board.

3.5.2 The University Centre Colchester Progress Board will consider recommendations from the School Progress Boards.

3.6 Conduct of the Progress Boards

3.6.1 The University Centre Colchester Progress Board will follow the following procedures:

- i. The Progress Board will consider each case referred by the Dean or their deputy;
- ii. The Board should receive papers fully setting out the case. The Head of School or their nominee should be responsible for gathering the required information;
- iii. The student should receive copies of all the papers that are presented to Progress Board, unless the confidentiality of a document precludes showing it to the student, in which case the Dean or their deputy may inform the Board and the student of the existence and general import of the document without divulging the details. The papers will be available to the student when they are available to members of the Progress Board, normally in advance of the meeting;
- iv. When the student is accompanied by a student of the University, a member of staff of the University or an employee of the Students' Union, it must be noted that the person is present to act as the student's advocate and for no other reason;
- v. Meetings of Progress Boards will be conducted in accordance with the Order of Proceedings;

- vi. The decision of the Progress Board may be communicated orally to the student at the conclusion of the meeting. Formal notification of the outcome will be sent to the student in every case.

3.7 Progress Board: Order of Proceedings

3.7.1 Pre Meeting – A presenting officer presents the case to panel members then leaves. A presenting officer will usually be the Programme Leader or Head of School.

3.7.2 The proceedings are then likely to follow the pattern outlined below, although there may be some variation at the discretion of the Chair.

- i. The Chair opens the meeting by introducing themselves and establishing the names and functions of those in the room;
- ii. Check that the student has received the details of the case and any supporting documentation;
- iii. Explain the order of proceedings to the student;
- iv. Outline the case for referral to Progress Board;
- v. Invite the student to put forward a case orally, if they wish to do so;
- vi. Invite the members of the committee to put questions to the student;
- vii. Invite the student's representative to put forward any additional statement;
- viii. Invite the student to respond and state what their preferred outcome would be;
- ix. The student and their representative will then be asked to leave the room. The decision of the Progress Board will be communicated to the student orally either immediately after the meeting, or at another pre-arranged time. Students will be sent written confirmation of the decision of the Progress Board.

3.8 Adjournment

3.8.1 The Board may adjourn:

- i. In order to enable the student or the student's representative to be present;
- ii. Where this is necessary to obtain further information.

3.8.2 The Board shall meet to consider an adjourned case as soon as it is feasible and not later than two months after the adjournment, although the case need not be determined at the resumed meeting. If necessary, the Dean or their deputy may co-opt additional members to replace any member not able to attend the reconvened meeting, including a new Chair. If there are two new members, the reconvened meeting shall proceed as a new hearing.

3.8.3 If there is one new member, the student may request that the meeting proceed as a new hearing.

3.9 Powers of University Centre Colchester Progress Boards

3.9.1 After consideration of the case, the Progress Board will make one of the following decisions:

- i. that the student be permitted to proceed, with or without specific conditions;
- ii. ~~that the student be permitted to proceed with a suspended withdrawal, with~~

the withdrawal taking effect if the student's engagement continues to be unsatisfactory within a specified period;

iii. that the student be required to withdraw permanently.

3.9.2 In certain circumstances the Progress Committee may deem it appropriate to:

- i. permit the student to transfer to another appropriate degree course;
- ii. require the student to intermit for a period of time before proceeding.

3.9.3 Progress Board may also attach such conditions as seem likely to assist the future progress of the student.

3.9.4 Minutes of the University Centre Colchester Progress Board and a record of decisions made will be kept in the UCC Academic Services Office.

3.9.5 Students who are referred to the University Centre Colchester Progress Board will be informed in writing of the recommendations made and/or actions taken by the Board.

4 APPEALS

4.1 A student who wishes to appeal against the decision of the Dean of Higher Education or their deputy or a UCC Progress Board must do by submitting a Progress Appeal Form to UCC Academic Services, stating fully the grounds of the appeal, within ten working days of the date in which it was confirmed to the student in writing. Students are strongly encouraged to contact the Student Union for advice and guidance before submitting an appeal. If the student can show that circumstances beyond their control prevented this time limit being adhered to and that injustice would result from adhering to it, UCC Academic Services may extend the time limit in which an appeal may be lodged normally up to the period of twenty working days from the date on which the final decision was confirmed to the student in writing.

4.2 The grounds on which a student may appeal are:

- i. that there were procedural irregularities in the arrangements for the meeting with the Dean of Higher Education or their deputy or conduct of the Progress Board (including alleged administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had they not occurred;
- ii. that there was evidence of extenuating circumstances which could not reasonably have been made available to the Dean of Higher Education or their deputy or Progress Board, of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred.

4.3 Any appeal will be referred to a member of the UCC Learning and Teaching Committee who has no previous involvement with the case, hereafter referred to as the Appointed Officer who may consult such persons as they think fit, including the appellant, in arriving at a decision as to whether or not the appeal is well-founded.

4.4 If the Appointed Officer decides that the appeal is not well-founded, they shall inform the student in writing, stating their reasons for so deciding. The communication of this decision shall, in such cases, constitute the formal dismissal of the appeal.

- 4.5 If the Appointed Officer decides that the appeal is well-founded then the case shall be referred to a Progress Appeal Panel consisting of the Appointed Officer and two members of staff from outside the student's department who have no connection with the case.
- 4.6 The student shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Progress Appeals Panel and may be accompanied by a student of the UCC, a member of staff of UCC, or an employee of the Students' Union.
- 4.7 If the student is unable to attend the meeting of the Progress Appeal Panel, the meeting will go ahead and the decisions taken will be valid.
- 4.8 The student and the members of the Progress Appeal Panel will have the papers that were made available to the original Dean of Higher Education or their deputy/Progress Board, together with the student's written statement of the appeal, and any documentary evidence to support any extenuating circumstances put forward. It will be open to the Progress Appeal Panel to call such witnesses as it thinks fit. The Dean of Higher Education or their deputy who took the decision or a representative of the original committee (normally the Chair) will normally be required to appear before the Progress Appeal Panel.
- 4.9 After consideration of the case the Progress Appeal Panel shall either dismiss the appeal or decide on one of the courses of action defined under the Powers of Progress Boards listed in section 3.9 of this document.
- 4.10 The decision of the Progress Appeal Panel may be communicated orally to the student at the conclusion of the meeting. Written notification of the outcome will be sent to the student in every case.
- 4.11 Any appeal following the formal conclusion of the appeals procedures set out above may be made on the grounds of procedural irregularities in the appeals process only. A student who wishes to appeal against the outcome of these procedures should write to UCC Academic Services (or their nominee) within twenty working days setting out in detail the nature of the evidence to support the claim that there were procedural irregularities in the appeals process. If *prima facie* there is evidence to support the claim then the case will be reviewed by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning & Quality. If the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning & Quality determines that there were procedural irregularities in the appeals process then the case will be referred to an appeals panel for consideration, and paragraphs 4.5 -4.10 will apply. The panel would be comprised of academic staff with no previous involvement in the case and would be chaired by an appropriate member of senior academic staff.
- 4.12 When University Centre Colchester's internal procedures for dealing with appeals has been exhausted, University Centre Colchester will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within twelve months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the scheme are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures letter.

PROGRESS BOARD APPEAL FORM

This form is to be completed by Undergraduate or Postgraduate students studying at University Centre Colchester, who wish to appeal the outcome of a Progress Board decision.

Before completion of this form, please read Section 8: Academic Progress and Conferment of Awards policy.

Once completed this form should be returned to University Centre Colchester Academic Services in room HE102.

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| Student Name (Capitals) | |
| Student Identification Number | |
| Course Title | |
| Course Code | |
| Correspondence Address | |
| Contact Telephone Number | |
| Contact email address | |

Grounds on which this appeal is made:

| | | Please tick |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Ground (i) | Procedural Irregularities | |
| Ground (ii) | Extenuating Circumstances | |

What is the decision against which you are appealing?

Please detail in full your reasons for this appeal and attach if appropriate supporting evidence

DECLARATION:

By submitting this appeals form I am agreeing to University Centre Colchester holding and processing the information provided within this form and in any documentation I have provided to support my claim. I understand that although the information provided will be used primarily for the purposes of this request. University Centre Colchester reserves the right to utilise the information for any relevant purpose linked to my studies as a UCC student. This information will be retained in line with the University Centre Colchester retention policy which can be found at www.colchester.ac.uk and may be shared with external bodies such as but not limited to, the Office for Students (OFS), Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

Signed:

Date:

| Office use only | Appeal outcome |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| | |
| Signature of Appointed Officer | |
| Date: | |