



University of Essex

Progress Procedures for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students 2019-20

University of Essex, Student Progress,
Student Services

Authors: Rebecca Funnell /
Kirstie Sceats

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Progress procedures for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students 2019-20

1. To Whom do these Procedures apply?

- 1.1 These procedures apply to all students on taught programmes of study, including the following: students on undergraduate courses; students on University of Essex foundation-year courses taught on campus or away; students on postgraduate taught courses.

2. Immigration Status

- 2.1 These procedures focus exclusively on Academic progress; staff involved in consideration of progress matters should not consider immigration status. However, all outcomes offered that require a student's continued registration at the University are subject to their ability to maintain a valid UK immigration status and provide proof of their right to study with the University for the duration of their course. The immigration status is a secondary decision but may mean that a student cannot progress with the academic decision that has been confirmed as part of the Progress Procedures for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students.
- 2.2 If the evidence being considered in relation to this procedure brings a student's continued UK immigration status into question, a referral will be made to our International Services team by the student's Department/School, or the Secretary to the Committee or meeting with the Executive Dean or their deputy for consideration in accordance with paragraphs 7.22-7.28 of the *University's General Regulations* and the relevant UK Immigration rules and guidance.

3. Monitoring of Student Progress and Attendance

- 3.1 Student engagement with their programme of study is primarily measured by attendance and completion of coursework and other assessed work, which are monitored in and by departments. As appropriate and where available, departments will take into account performance in assessed work and overall engagement when considering the impact of unsatisfactory attendance on a student's academic progress.
- 3.2 Unsatisfactory attendance is determined on the basis of unauthorised absence from timetabled teaching event(s).
- 3.3 Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that an effective means of monitoring students' attendance, overall engagement and completion of assessments is established and maintained in each department in accordance with the requirements set out below.
- 3.4 Departmental procedures including any formally approved variation to this procedure should be communicated to all students taking modules in the Department. This should include what level of non-submission/non-completion of coursework and other assessed work would be addressed at the Preliminary Stage (see [4.2 below](#)) and what would be addressed by a

meeting with a departmental Progress Officer as the first action (see [Secondary Stage 4.3](#)) below.

- 3.5 There may be professional, regulatory or statutory requirements regarding attendance that have consequences for students beyond those outlined in this procedure.

4. Progress Procedures for Taught Students

- 4.1 For all taught students, departments should:
- Record and monitor the attendance of students at all timetabled teaching events and their overall engagement.
 - Review regularly the data for all students on their degrees (including joint courses for which they are responsible) including the data for outside options which the student is taking and any compulsory in-session English module, and any available information on assessment due to be completed.
 - Monitor the submission of all coursework and other assessed work.
 - Keep a record of communications with students when undertaking progress procedures.

Preliminary Stage

- 4.2 Where attendance and/or completion of assessments is unsatisfactory:
- for all taught students, where there has been no attendance in the monitoring period the student will receive an invitation to a meeting normally with their Personal Tutor.
 - For undergraduate students, where the level of attendance is unsatisfactory in the monitoring period, the student will receive a communication from their department in the first instance. If, following a further monitoring period, the level of attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, the student will receive an invitation to a meeting, either a group meeting or an individual meeting normally with their Personal Tutor. Discretion may be applied in accordance with the approved guidance, except where the student holds a Tier 4 visa.
 - For all taught students, as determined by the department ([see 3.4 above](#)) in the case of some instances of non-submission of assessed work the student will receive an invitation to a meeting normally with their Personal Tutor.

Secondary stage

- 4.3 In the following instances of unsatisfactory attendance and/or completion of assessed work the student will receive an invitation to a meeting with either their Personal Tutor or equivalent or a departmental Progress Officer. Discretion may be applied in accordance with the approved guidance in case of a–c below, except where a student holds a Tier 4 visa:
- failure to attend either a group meeting or an individual meeting with a Personal Tutor or equivalent
 - continued non-attendance following a further one-week monitoring period
 - continued unsatisfactory level of attendance following a further monitoring period
 - as determined by the department (see 3.4 above) some instances of non-submission of assessed work will be referred directly to the Progress Officer

Referral to the Executive Dean or their deputy

- 4.4 Where a department'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, the Progress Officer should refer the student to the relevant Executive Dean or their deputy in the following circumstances:

- a. continued non-attendance or unsatisfactory level of attendance, where this suggests the student is unlikely to complete the year successfully
- b. unsatisfactory submission of assessed work to an extent that suggests the student is unlikely to complete the year successfully.

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

- a. refer the case to a Progress Committee
- b. decide to take no further action/refer the case back to the department
- c. arrange to meet the student

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

- a. refer the case to a Progress Committee
- b. permit the student to proceed with or without certain conditions, breach of which would automatically result in the student being referred to a Progress Committee
- c. decide to take no further action

4.7 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 in 4.2 and 4.3 above where a department decides that the case should be considered at the next stage in the procedures. A department may take into consideration the previous year's attendance record when advising a student and when deciding whether to call a student to a meeting with the departmental progress officer, however, this information shall not be used to accelerate the steps as set out in the Progress Procedures.

4.8 If a student does not attend a meeting with the Executive Dean or their deputy, and their attendance and/or submission of coursework has been unsatisfactory, then it will be assumed that they are no longer engaged in the course and they will normally be withdrawn.

4.9 Departments operating joint degrees should liaise with the other departments involved to ensure that there is full co-ordination on the monitoring of progress. In the case of multidisciplinary courses the Director of the degree course should liaise with contributing departments.

4.10 Students may request reasonable adjustments to these procedures in line with the rights that students retain under the Equality Act 2010. Requests will be considered individually, and students will be notified of the adjustments that have been agreed to in writing and at the earliest opportunity.

5. Referral to Progress Committee

5.1 If an Executive Dean or their deputy refers the case to a Progress Committee the student will be notified in writing and the letter copied to the student's department.

5.2 The student should be given adequate time to seek advice and prepare their case before the meeting of the Progress Committee. The letter to the student will indicate the reason for the referral to the Progress Committee.

5.3 The student will be invited to attend the meeting and may be accompanied by a fellow student, a member of staff or a representative of SU Advice or the Students' Union.

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- 5.4 The student may not normally bring anyone to the meeting that is not a member of the University unless this has been agreed as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments should be requested at the earliest opportunity through the Student Progress Team.
- 5.5 A meeting may proceed in the absence of the student (and their representative) provided that the Chair of the Progress Committee is satisfied that due notice has been given to the student.
- 5.6 A student who is unable to attend the meeting can ask a fellow student, a member of staff or a representative of SU Advice or the Students' Union to attend on their behalf. No person can represent the student in their absence unless they have expressly been asked to do so by the student.
- 5.7 The student will be invited to submit in advance the following documents:
- a written statement giving any facts or extenuating circumstances which the student thinks may have affected their engagement
 - documentary evidence to support any extenuating circumstances put forward. If no such documentation is provided, the Progress Committee may place lesser weight on the extenuating circumstances.

6. Composition and Form of Progress Committees

- 6.1 A Progress Committee shall be convened and chaired by an Executive Dean or their deputy. The quorum for a Progress Committee is three.
- 6.2 A Progress Committee, for each student considered by that Committee, will normally consist of an Executive Dean or their deputy and one other member from outside the student's department, selected by the Executive Dean or their deputy together with:
- for undergraduates, normally the Course Director or their nominee or
 - for graduates, the Director of Graduate Studies or their nominee.
- 6.3 The member of staff from the student's department should have no previous experience of hearing the progress issue.

7. Conduct of Progress Committees

- 7.1 The Progress Committee will consider each case referred by an Executive Dean or their deputy.
- 7.2 The Progress Committee should receive papers fully setting out the case. The Head of Department or their nominee should be responsible for gathering the required information.
- 7.3 The Progress Committee may take into account performance in any remedial work and tests prescribed for overseas students following a test of proficiency in written and spoken English taken on arrival at the University; the Progress Committee may also take into account failure to attend the module or take the test.
- 7.4 The student should receive copies of all the papers that are presented to Progress Committee, unless the confidentiality of a document precludes showing it to the student, in

which case the Executive Dean or their deputy may inform the Committee 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 Committee, normally in advance of the meeting.

7.5 When the student is accompanied by a fellow student, a member of staff or a representative of SU Advice or the Students' Union, it must be noted that the person is present to act as the student's advocate and for no other reason.

7.6 Meetings of Progress Committees will be conducted in accordance with the Order of Proceedings.

7.7 The decision of the Progress Committee 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.

Progress Committee: Order of Proceedings

7.8 The order of proceedings for a Progress Committee will normally be as follows:

- a. The Chair opens the meeting by introducing themselves and establishing the names and functions of those in the room.
- b. Check that the student has received the details of the case and any supporting documentation.
- c. Explain the order of proceedings to the student.
- d. Outline the case for referral to Progress Committee.
- e. Invite the student to put forward a case orally, if they wish to do so.
- f. Invite the members of the committee to put questions to the student.
- g. Invite the student's representative to put forward any additional statement.
- h. Invite the student to respond and state what their preferred outcome would be.
- i. The student and their representative will then be asked to leave the room. The decision of the Progress Committee 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 Committee.

Adjournment

7.9 The Committee may adjourn:

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

7.10 The Committee 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 Executive 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. If there is one new member, the student may request that the meeting proceed as a new hearing.

8. Powers of a Progress Committee

8.1 After consideration of the case, the Progress Committee will make one of the following decisions:

- a. that the student be permitted to proceed, with or without specific conditions

- b. 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
 - c. that the student be required to withdraw permanently.
- 8.2 In certain circumstances the Progress Committee may deem it appropriate to:
- a. permit the student to repeat an appropriate period of study, including all or part of a period of study abroad
 - b. permit the student to transfer to another appropriate degree course
 - c. require the student to intermit for a period of time before proceeding
- 8.3 Progress Committee may also attach such conditions as seem likely to assist the future progress of the student.

9. Appeals against the decision on an Executive Dean or their Deputy or Progress Committee

- 9.1 A student may appeal against the decision of an Executive Dean or their deputy or a Progress Committee by submitting a *Progress Appeal Form* to the Student Progress Team, stating the grounds for appeal and attaching all supporting evidence. Student must do so within 10 working days of the date of the letter confirming the decision to the student. Students are strongly encouraged to contact SU Advice for advice and guidance before submitting an appeal.
- 9.2 Appeals received after the deadline will only be accepted at the discretion of the Academic Registrar (or nominee). For this to apply, the student must be able to show, to the satisfaction of the Academic Registrar (or nominee), that circumstances beyond their control prevented them from meeting the standard time limit and that unfair treatment would result from not extending the deadline.
- 9.3 The grounds on which a student may appeal are:
- a. There is new evidence, which for good reason was not previously available to the Executive Dean or their deputy or Progress Committee, which might have materially affected the outcome;
 - b. The Executive Dean or their deputy or the Progress Committee did not follow this Procedure in a way which disadvantaged the student's case;
 - c. There is evidence of prejudice and/or bias during the procedures;
 - d. On the balance of probabilities, the facts of the case did not justify the decision;
 - e. The penalty imposed by the Executive Dean or their deputy or Progress Committee was disproportionate with regard to all the circumstances of the case, or not permitted under this Procedure.
- 9.4 The University will endeavour to complete the appeal proceedings within 20 working days from receipt of your appeal form and supporting evidence. During this time you must meet all deadlines set. Occasionally there will be circumstances when, for good reason, the University will need to extend the timeframe. Where this is the case you will be notified and kept regularly informed of progress.
- 9.5 An appeal will be referred to an Executive Dean or their deputy who has no previous involvement with the case, hereafter referred to as the Appointed Dean 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.

- 9.6 If the Appointed Dean 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.
- 9.7 If the Appointed Dean decides that the appeal is well-founded then the case shall be referred to a Progress Appeal Panel consisting of the Appointed Dean and two members of staff from outside the student's department who have no connection with the case.
- 9.8 The student shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Progress Appeals Panel and may be accompanied by a fellow student, a member of staff, or representative of SU Advice or the Students' Union.
- 9.9 A student may not bring anyone to the meeting that is not a member of the University unless this has been agreed as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments should be requested at the earliest opportunity through the Student Progress Team. Legal representatives are not permitted to be present at any stage of the Progress process.
- 9.10 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.
- 9.11 The student and the members of the Progress Appeal Panel will have the papers that were made available to the original Executive Dean or their deputy/Progress Committee, 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 Committee to call such witnesses as it thinks fit. The Executive Dean 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.
- 9.12 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 Committees listed in section 5-8 of this document.
- 9.13 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.

10. Internal Review

- 10.1 Any appeal following the formal conclusion of the Progress Appeal Panel may be made on the grounds of procedural irregularity only, specifically that the Progress Appeal Panel departed from the prescribed procedures. If a student wishes to appeal against the outcome on the grounds of procedural irregularity, they should write to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days of the being sent written confirmation of the decision of the Progress Appeal Committee and send it to the Student Progress Team. The appeal must set out in detail the evidence to support the claim that there were procedural irregularities in the process. Should the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) decide that the appeal does not have valid grounds for appeal, it will be dismissed.
- 10.2 If there is evidence to support your claim then the case will be reviewed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education). If the Pro-Vice-Chancellor decides that there were procedural irregularities in the process then the case will be referred to a new Progress Appeal Panel.

11. External Review

- 11.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. When the University's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 11.2 Students will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter if an appeal against the decision of a Progress Appeal Panel is dismissed because the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) decides there are no valid grounds for appeal.
- 11.3 Students may also request a Completion of Procedures letter within 20 working days of the date of the:
- a. written decision of the Appointed Dean formally dismissing the appeal because it was not well-founded
 - b. written decision of the Progress Appeals Panel
- 11.4 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.

Title	Progress Procedures for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students 2019-20
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Supersedes	Progress and Appeals Procedures for Taught Programmes of Study 2018-19
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Stakeholder role	Not applicable
<p>If you require this document in an alternative format, such as braille, please contact Kirstie Sceats.</p>	