Students at Risk of Academic Failure Policy and Procedures

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1. Purpose

1.1 This policy provides a framework to support students to succeed within a supportive, inclusive, and digitally accessible learning environment. It outlines ECT's approach to the routine monitoring of academic progress, the early identification of students who may be at risk of academic failure, and the implementation of appropriate intervention strategies designed to promote progression, retention, and successful completion of studies.

1.2 ECT encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and academic engagement, while ensuring that timely, proportionate, and effective support is provided to help students overcome challenges, improve their academic performance, and achieve success. These procedures describe how ECT monitors academic progress, identifies concerns, implements support measures, and manages cases where academic performance remains unsatisfactory.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy and its associated procedures apply to all undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled on programmes delivered by ECT, regardless of mode or place of study.. They also apply to academic and professional staff involved in monitoring, identifying, and supporting students who may be at risk of academic failure.

2.2 This policy should be read alongside related ECT documents, including:

- Student Support Policy and Procedures
- Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedures
- Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedures

2.3 All processes described in this policy will be implemented in compliance with relevant UK legislation and regulatory requirements, including (but not limited to):

- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 for secure handling of personal and special category data
- Equality Act 2010, ensuring reasonable adjustments and inclusive practices for students with disabilities or long-term health conditions
- Consumer Rights Act 2015 and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance on transparency and durable information for students
- Office for Students (OfS) regulatory expectations
- Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework, ensuring fairness, accessibility, and proportionality in decision-making
- Safeguarding and Prevent obligations, including appropriate escalation routes for wellbeing or safety concerns

2.4 Processes will be delivered in accessible digital formats and adapted, where appropriate, to accommodate remote engagement, time-zone differences, international referral pathways, and digital accessibility needs. ECT is committed to continuous improvement and will review these processes regularly, taking account of student feedback, emerging best practice, and updates to regulatory requirements.

3. Objectives

3.1 This policy seeks to proactively minimise the risk of student underachievement, recognising that sustained underperformance may lead to academic failure or, ultimately, the termination of a student's enrolment.

3.2 ECT staff and students share responsibility for ensuring satisfactory academic

progress and will apply this policy in a manner that is equitable, consistent, procedurally fair, respectful of privacy and confidentiality, timely and effective.

3.3 In implementing this policy, ECT is committed to:

- Identifying students at risk of academic failure or unsatisfactory academic progress as early as possible.
- Clearly communicating academic continuation and progression requirements to students.
- Monitoring student progress to enable timely and appropriate intervention strategies.
- Alerting students when they are not meeting academic continuation requirements.
- Providing appropriate academic and pastoral support to enable students to achieve learning outcomes and progress through their programme to completion.
- Adapting intervention processes for remote and international learners, including digital accessibility and time zone considerations.
- Escalating wellbeing concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where necessary.
- Using feedback and monitoring data to confirm continuous improvement of intervention strategies.

3.4 Students are responsible for:

- Attending scheduled teaching sessions and other required activities, including laboratories and collaborative learning sessions.
- Making a positive and constructive contribution to learning sessions, laboratories and group activities.
- Submitting assessments by published deadlines.
- Working respectfully and cooperatively with other students where group work is required.
- Notifying relevant staff and seeking support where mitigating or extenuating circumstances arise.
- Maintaining regular contact with their LSO and Programme Leader and reviewing their academic progress as required.

4. Implementation

4.1 ECT will undertake the following procedures to identify, monitor, and support students who are at risk of academic failure. These procedures ensure that intervention is timely, proportionate and consistent with the Student Support Policy and Procedures.

4.2 Processes will be suitable for remote and international students, using digital platforms for monitoring, communication and support delivery. Roles, timelines and escalation routes are detailed in the sub-sections that follow.

4.3 Where a student's engagement falls below 70% (live attendance and/or interaction with recorded/VLE content), Learning Support Officers will initiate informal outreach. This may include check-ins, offers of academic skills support and signposting to wellbeing or other services.

4.4 If a student's attendance falls below 30% of scheduled sessions by the end of the semester, or if sustained disengagement persists despite informal outreach, the case will be referred under this policy for formal intervention.

Progression and Triggers for Identifying Students at Risk of Academic Failure

4.3 To progress through an award programme, students must meet the minimum

academic and engagement requirements specified for their programme, as set out in ECT's academic regulations, policies, and programme documentation. This information is communicated to students prior to the commencement of their programme.

4.4 Performance criteria used to monitor progression and identify potential academic risk include:

- Attendance and engagement falling below 30% of scheduled learning activities within a study or assessment period (including live sessions and agreed asynchronous alternatives).
- Failure to submit assessments or achieve satisfactory outcomes.
- Failure to pass two or more modules at the first attempt within the same study or assessment period.
- Failure to pass one or more modules following reassessment.
- Module marks within 10% of the pass mark in two or more modules within the same study or assessment period, indicating marginal performance.
- Deferral or non-completion of modules.
- Periods of interruption of studies which, when considered cumulatively, place the student at risk of exceeding the maximum permitted period of registration.

4.5 Meeting one or more of these criteria will normally trigger a review of the student's academic progress and the implementation of appropriate support or intervention measures under these procedures.

Monitoring and Reporting

4.6 ECT monitors student performance throughout each teaching period to identify early signs of academic risk and implement timely support. Monitoring includes:

- Attendance and engagement in scheduled learning activities (live sessions and asynchronous alternatives).
- Interaction with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), including access to recorded sessions and learning resources.
- Assessment submission and outcomes.

4.7 Learning Support Officers, in conjunction with Programme Leaders, review engagement and assessment data at agreed intervals (normally mid-semester and end-of-semester). Students who show signs of risk based on published criteria will be contacted proactively. Particular attention will be given to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with protected characteristics, and students facing additional barriers (including those related to remote or international study) to ensure equitable access to support.

4.8 Where a support need is identified, appropriate academic or pastoral measures will be offered. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their circumstances and contribute to decisions about the most suitable interventions. Outcomes will be documented in the Student Record System, including agreed actions and follow-up steps.

4.9 Records of interventions will be maintained securely and updated as required. These may include academic support measures, referrals to wellbeing or external services, and steps taken by the student to address academic risk. Where wellbeing or safeguarding concerns arise, these will be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with ECT's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Monitoring Student Performance

4.10 Student performance will be monitored throughout each study period using reports generated from the Student Record System (SMS), Virtual Learning Platform (VLE) and the virtual classroom platform, Big Blue Button. This enables ECT to identify students who may be at risk of academic failure and evaluate the effectiveness of support measures. Monitoring processes will consider asynchronous engagement equivalence for students unable to attend live sessions due to time zones or other legitimate reasons. Engagement indicators will include access to recorded content, participation in forums and timely completion of agreed asynchronous tasks.

4.11 Monitoring activities include:

- Ongoing monitoring
  - Monthly reports on attendance, engagement (including asynchronous activity), assessment submission, and outcomes.
  - Lecturer and Learning Support Officer (LSO) observations of student engagement to identify early indicators of academic risk.
- End-of-period analysis
  - Programme-level data on pass/fail rates, first-attempt pass rates, retention, and progression outcomes.
  - Analysis of trends and patterns, including cohort comparisons, historical benchmarking and identification of outliers.

4.12 Early-warning indicators will support timely identification of students who may be falling behind or experiencing difficulties. This analysis informs targeted interventions such as academic support, mentoring, wellbeing referrals and enhanced monitoring. Effectiveness will be reviewed using updated individual student data.

4.13 Monitoring data also informs decisions on resource allocation. For example, where data indicates widespread difficulty in a subject area, additional teaching input or targeted support may be introduced. Persistent or systemic underperformance within a module or programme may trigger a review under relevant ECT policies, including curriculum design and assessment strategies, as part of ECT's quality enhancement processes.

4.14 Where monitoring identifies wellbeing or safeguarding concerns, these will be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with ECT's Safeguarding Policy.

5. Staged Process: Notifying Students at Risk of Academic Failure

5.1 This staged process applies when a student meets one or more risk criteria (engagement/attendance and/or assessment-related). Notifications are issued via the ECT student email account and the VLE, meetings are held virtually, and timelines will take account of time zones where needed.

5.2 Service standards (unless otherwise stated):

- Issue of notification after trigger is detected: within 5 working days
- Student response window: within 5 working days of receipt
- Support meeting: within 5 working days of response (or sooner by agreement)

- Study Plan issued: within 10 working days of the meeting, which will set clear academic targets and expectations for improvement, outline agreed interventions and support measures, and include timelines and review dates to monitor progress

Stage 1 – Initial At Risk Notification & Support Meeting

5.3 This stage is initiated when a defined trigger is reached, for example engagement falling below 30%, repeated non-submission of assessments or marginal performance across multiple modules, or at scheduled review points such as the mid-point or end of the study period.

Process:

a) LSO issues a written notification (within 5 working days of trigger).

b) The notification will include:

   a. The reason(s)/evidence for the at-risk identification.
   b. The support options available (academic skills, wellbeing referral, etc.).
   c. The potential consequences if performance does not improve.
   d. How to respond and next steps.

c) Student responds within 5 working days and is invited to a support meeting (virtual) with the LSO (and Programme Leader as needed).

d) Where sensitive circumstances apply, students may discuss details with the LSO (or appropriate support staff) so they can be considered fairly and sensitively in planning support.

e) Outcome: agree immediate supports and determine whether a Study Plan is required.

Stage 2 – Study Plan with Checkpoints (and Formal Warning if needed)

5.4 This stage is applied where Stage 1 has shown that concerns are continuing or escalating, and a formal Study Plan, with checkpoints and if necessary, a warning, is needed.

Process:

a) Programme Leader (with the LSO) drafts a Study Plan with the student (targets, actions, support, timelines, review checkpoints).

b) Plan is issued within 10 working days of the Stage-1 meeting.

c) Checkpoints:

   - Checkpoint 1: normally 4 weeks after plan start (or earlier if the next assessment is sooner).
   - Checkpoint 2: at the end of the study period.

d) Escalation to Formal Warning (by Head of Engineering or nominee):

   - Issued only if the student does not engage with the plan or fails to meet agreed targets by Checkpoint 2.
   - The Formal Warning sets out: reasons/evidence, required remedial actions, deadline(s), and that non-compliance may lead to a recommendation for termination of enrolment.
   - The student must engage with the Head of Engineering within 10 working days to confirm the remedial actions and deadline(s).

Stage 3 – Final Review and Decision

5.5 This stage is applied when concerns about academic performance persist despite the interventions implemented at Stage 2 and, if relevant, the issuance of a Formal Warning.

Process:

a) The Head of Engineering considers all relevant evidence (including any mitigating/contextual information).

b) If good cause is not established, a recommendation is made to the Assessment Board for a decision in line with academic regulations.

c) The student is notified of the outcome within 10 working days of the Board's decision.

d) Right to challenge:

- Academic decision (progression/termination): Academic Appeal route.
- Process/handling concerns: Student Complaints route.

Recording and safeguarding

- The LSO records notifications, meetings, agreed actions, and checkpoint outcomes in the Student Record System.
- Where wellbeing or safeguarding concerns arise at any stage, the case is escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with ECT's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

6. Appeals

6.1 Students who wish to challenge an academic decision made under this policy must do so in accordance with ECT's Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures, which set out the grounds for appeal, the process and the relevant decision-making bodies.

6.2 Concerns about the handling of these procedures or related service issues should be raised under ECT's Student Complaints Policy and Procedures.

6.3 Information about both processes, including timescales and escalation routes, is published in accessible, durable formats on ECT's website and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

6.4 Where an appeal or complaint raises concerns relating to student wellbeing, vulnerability, or safeguarding, the matter will be escalated promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with ECT's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

7. Re-admission after Termination Due to Underachievement and/or Non-Engagement

7.1 A student whose enrolment has been terminated under these procedures may apply for re-admission to the same or an alternative programme in accordance with ECT's Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, which apply equally to all applicants.

7.2 Applications for re-admission will be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering:

- The reasons for the original termination.
- Evidence of changed circumstances or improved academic readiness.
- The applicant's ability to meet programme entry requirements.

7.3 Where appropriate, conditions of re-admission or additional support requirements may be specified to promote future academic success. Applications must be submitted through the standard admissions process.

7.4 Information about re-admission processes and requirements will be published in accessible formats on ECT's website and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

8. Legal rights and obligations

8.1 Nothing in these procedures limits or removes the rights of students or prospective students to take action under UK consumer protection legislation or to pursue any other legal remedies available to them.

8.2 These procedures do not remove or reduce ECT's obligation to comply with all applicable UK consumer protection laws and any other relevant legislation or regulatory requirements relating to the matters covered in this document.

8.3 No provision within these procedures shall supersede, restrict, or override the application of UK consumer protection legislation or any other UK laws or regulations recognised by the UK Government that apply to the implementation of these procedures. These protections apply to all students, including those studying remotely or from overseas.

8.4 Information about student rights and related processes, including complaints and appeals routes, will be published in accessible, formats on ECT's website and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

9. Accountabilities

9.1 The Academic Board is responsible for the review, approval, and ongoing oversight of this policy and procedures. To support quality assurance, enhancement, and effective governance oversight, aggregated data and analysis on academic risk, intervention activity, and student progression trends will be reported to the Academic Board on an annual basis. These reports will inform continuous improvement, policy review, and academic planning.

9.2 These procedures will be implemented through staff induction and ongoing training and made available to students and the wider ECT community via the ECT website and other relevant publications.

9.3 To support transparency, consistency, and understanding, ECT will publish a clear Students at Risk process flowchart outlining the stages of identification, support, intervention, escalation, and outcomes. The flowchart will be made available online and incorporated into staff training and student induction materials.

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