

Guidance Notes and Template Letters

The following guidance is intended to be read in conjunction with Undergraduate Progress Regulations G. General Provisions Governing Attendance and Progress / Postgraduate Taught Progress Regulations F. Attendance and Progress.

NOTE: If there are broader concerns about a student's ability to study, for example if there are concerns about a student's mental or physical health, the Fitness to Study Procedure may be more applicable. The Fitness to Study Procedure is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm. Further advice can be sought from Student Progress Service Case Team casework@ncl.ac.uk

The reasons for failure to make satisfactory academic progress are provided under G24 (UG) and F17 (PGT). If a student falls within any of these categories, it is important that they are explicitly informed that they are being considered under the progress regulations. It is also important that the student is provided with an opportunity to discuss any problems that they may be experiencing and seek appropriate support. The following template letters and timeline of events table are provided to assist you with this process and to ensure that regulations are followed correctly. Use of the letters will also ensure that the student is kept fully informed at each stage of the process and the timeline of events table will help you to track correspondence and meetings as well as provide clear information to Student Progress Service if the case results in a request to terminate or suspend studies. Please note that the yellow highlighting indicates areas that will need to be completed / changed in accordance with the particular case.

Timeline of Events Table – this should be completed on each occasion that a discussion, meeting or communication takes place. Please also keep a record of all communications with the student and any additional evidence – this will be required by Student Progress Service to close the case (termination/ interruption only). See '*closing the case (interruption or termination)*' below.

Letter 1 – should be sent as soon as the student's academic progress has become an issue. The main purpose of this letter is to invite the student to an interview. In many cases, the interview may be sufficient and you may decide no further action is needed (for example, the student was ill, but did not inform the school and now provides evidence).

Letter 2 –outcome. Following the opportunity for interview, the School will need to write to the student to tell them what, if any action is being taken;

Letter 2a – No action at this time

Letter 2b – Monitoring/ extra work

Letter 2c – Sanction imposed (e.g. deferral of exams, seek interruption or termination of studies)

Closing the case (interruption or termination)

Unless there is a *prima facie* case of procedural irregularity, Student Progress Service will action a request for termination or suspension of studies when the following is provided:

- i) Copies of written correspondence with the student with specific mention of the relevant Progress Regulations (e.g. Letter 1, Letter 2c and any student responses);
- ii) Evidence that the student has been given the opportunity to attend a meeting and provide a written response (e.g. Letter 1);
- iii) Any documentation the student has provided in response to correspondence (e.g. student statement, medical evidence if applicable);
- iv) Timeline of Events.
- v) Confirmation of the School's request to terminate or suspend studies and a summary of the reasons for the request (School Memo, template 3).

The request must normally be signed by the **degree programme director** and countersigned by one of the following people; chair of board of examiners, chair of board of studies, head of school, personal tutor, school administrator. In exceptional circumstances, the signature of another senior academic may be accepted at the discretion of Student Progress Service.

Requests should be sent to Casework Team, Student Progress Service, Level 3, King's Gate (casework@ncl.ac.uk).

Student Progress Service will write to the student and School to confirm the action that is being taken.

In cases where there is a *prima facie* case of procedural irregularity, Student Progress Service will contact the School with advice on how to proceed.

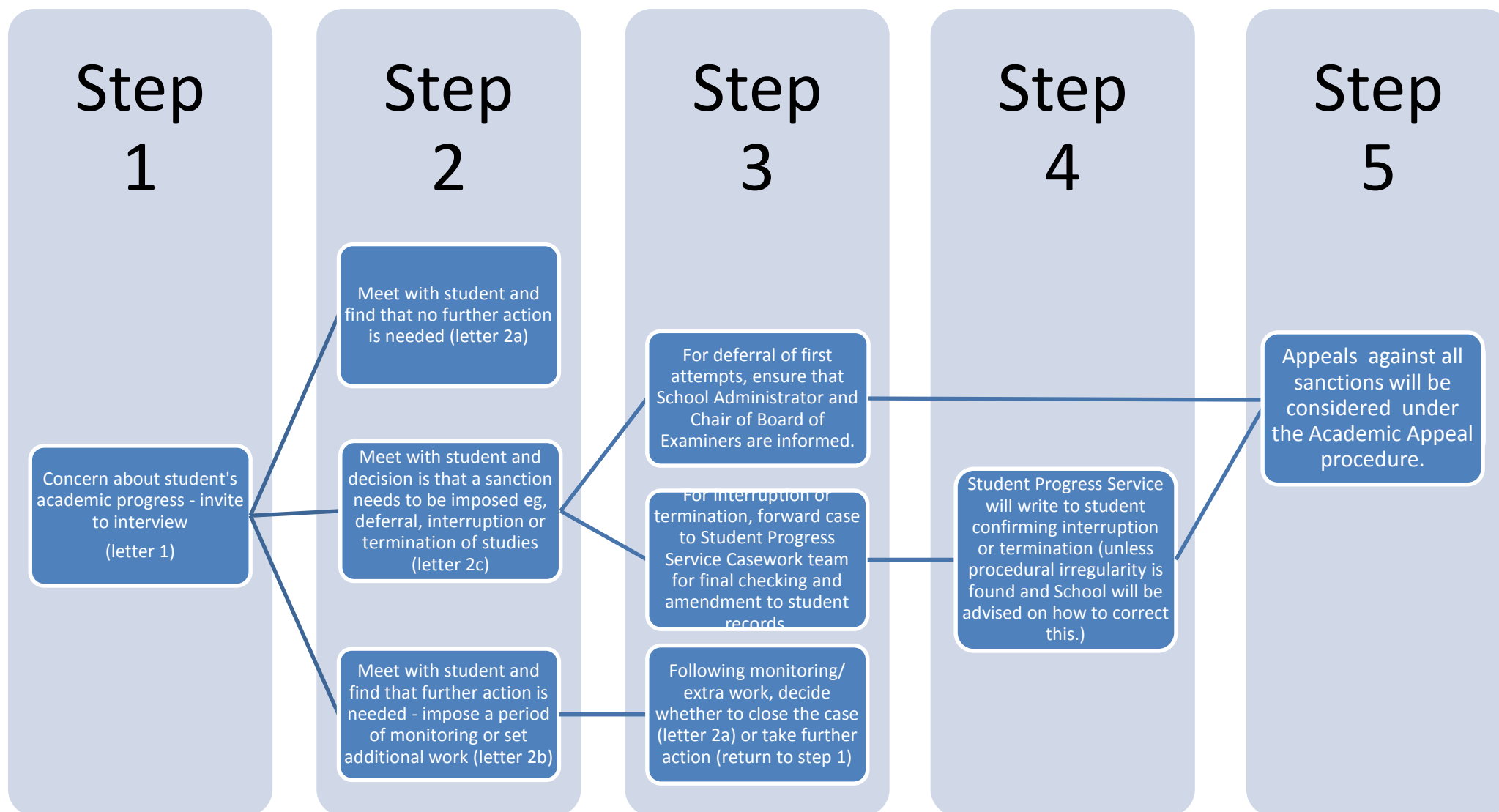
Appeal Procedure

A student appealing against action taken under regulation G24 (UG) or F17 (PGT) may do so only in writing by submitting an Academic Appeal within 21 calendar days of the written notification of the action (Letter 2)

The Academic Appeal procedure and application is accessible online at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm

Further appeals mechanism

Where the original decision is confirmed there shall be no further appeal within the University. Provision for external review is made through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	TRANSACTION	COMMENTS
E.g. 1/3/12	Meeting between Module Leader and DPD	XXX has not attended any lectures for XXX
5/3/12	Letter 1 sent	XXX invited to meeting on 10/3/12

TEMPLATE LETTER 1

EXAMPLE UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS LETTER – INVITE TO INTERVIEW

Dear XXXXX

As Degree Programme Director for XXXX, I regret to inform you that for the reasons listed below, your progress on this programme is currently deemed to be unsatisfactory:

EXAMPLE:

- You have not attended lectures since.....
- You failed to submit the assignment for.....
- You have failed to attend in-session English classes.....

(For further details about what may constitute failure to make satisfactory progress, please refer to UG Progress Reg G Postgraduate Taught Progress Reg F)

I would like to discuss your progress with you. If there are genuine reasons for your unsatisfactory progress, the University may be able to assist you. An appointment has been scheduled for you at XXX on XXX in XXX. You may be accompanied to the interview by a friend or supporter. Please report to XXX upon arrival.

The purpose of this interview will be to establish whether there is need for further action under Undergraduate Progress Regulation G. General Provisions Governing Attendance and Progress / Postgraduate Taught Degree Progress Regulation F. Attendance and Progress. In accordance with these regulations, **further action may include attendance monitoring, additional work, deferral of examinations or termination or suspension of your studies**. Following the opportunity for interview, I will write to you again to inform you of the decision of what, if any, further action is being taken.

I would like to highlight the seriousness of this matter and strongly advise you to make use of this opportunity for interview by attending at the scheduled time. If there is a good reason why you are unable to attend at this time, please contact me immediately. If you wish to make a written statement, it would be helpful if this could be received in advance of the meeting.

University Regulations are accessible online at www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations.

Yours sincerely

TEMPLATE LETTER 2a – NO ACTION AT THIS TIME

Dear XXXXX

Thank you for meeting with me on XXXX.

I am writing to inform you that I will not be taking any further action under Undergraduate Progress Regulation G. General Provisions Governing Attendance and Progress / Postgraduate Taught Degree Progress Regulation F. Attendance and Progress at this time. Your progress is currently deemed to be satisfactory.

I have reached this decision because (EXAMPLE: you have now provided a reasonable explanation for your failure to attend lectures/ submit work for XXXX)

Please be aware that any further indication of unsatisfactory progress will also be considered in line with the University Progress Regulations. It is advisable, therefore, to ensure that you keep your School informed of any personal or medical issues that may affect your ability to attend University or submit assignments.

University Regulations are accessible online at www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations.

Yours sincerely

TEMPLATE LETTER 2b – MONITORING/ EXTRA WORK

Dear XXXXX

Following our meeting on XXXX, I am writing to inform you that your attendance will be monitored for two weeks from the date of this letter.

(Provide details of monitoring e.g. Please collect a report form from the School Office and ensure the form is signed by the lecturer/ module leader at each lecture. The completed form should then be returned to XXXX.)

If you are unable to attend any lectures for legitimate reasons (ill health) during this monitoring period, please inform the School Office immediately.

Or

Following our meeting on XXXX, I am writing to inform you that your progress will be monitored. In order for me to monitor your progress you will need to submit the following additional work:

(Provide details of additional assignment –e.g. essay title, word limit, deadline)

Please note that this work does not count towards your degree programme. It is, however, mandatory. Failure to submit this work will be deemed as further evidence of your unsatisfactory progress.

If I am satisfied that your progress is satisfactory at the end of this monitoring period/ on the submission of additional work, no further action will be taken and I shall inform you. If however I remain unsatisfied with your progress at the end of this two week period, further action will be considered in accordance with *Undergraduate Progress Regulation G Procedure for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Progress / Postgraduate Taught Degree Progress Regulation F Unsatisfactory Progress.*

I would like to remind you of the consequences of continued unsatisfactory progress.

Failure to make satisfactory progress may be grounds for:

- (a) monitoring the attendance of the student or requiring the submission of written work in addition to that required by the degree programme regulations;
- (b) deferral of the student's first attempt at the whole assessment for the module(s) concerned to the August/September resit examinations in the same academic year. Where such a deferral is taken, the student's attempt shall be the second attempt;
- (c) interruption or termination of the student's programme of study.

University Regulations are accessible online at www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations

Yours sincerely

TEMPLATE LETTER 2c – DEFERRAL OF ATTEMPTS, INTERRUPTION OR TERMINATION OF STUDIES

Dear XXXXX

Following our meeting on XXX and the letter dated XXX, I am writing to inform you that your progress on the XXX degree programme continues to be deemed unsatisfactory. Therefore, in accordance with Undergraduate Progress Regulation G Procedure for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Progress / Postgraduate Taught Degree Progress Regulation F Unsatisfactory Progress, the following action is being taken:

Your assessment for modules XXX is being delayed until the August resit period. The maximum mark you can achieve in the assessment is therefore a pass. You will be given a mark of zero for your January/ June assessment as a result of your unsatisfactory progress.

Note to Schools – In general, it is not advisable to apply this sanction to students already on resit attempts.

Or:

Your studies on the XXX degree programme are to be interrupted. You will receive confirmation of this decision from Student Progress Service in due course. Student Progress Service will also notify other internal and external services, for example the Finance Office, Accommodation Services, Local Authorities, UK Border Agency. Please be mindful that you will not be deemed to be a student during your period of interruption.

Your expected date of return is XXXX. *(Note to Schools: impose interruptions with caution, particularly in cases involving Undergraduate students. A short interruption with return in the same academic year is not normally practical. Interruptions are therefore likely to be for one full academic year in most instances, with return on same date, or start of same semester if deemed reasonable)*

Or:

Your studies on the XXX degree programme are to be terminated with immediate effect. You will receive confirmation of this decision from Student Progress Service in due course. Student Progress Service will also notify other internal and external services, for example the Finance Office, Accommodation Services, Local Authorities, UK Border Agency. Please be mindful that you will not be deemed to be a student from the date of this letter. This decision has been made for the following reasons;

Provide a short summary of the student's case. This may be the same information used in Letter 1 with an update following meeting/ monitoring/ extra work.

To appeal against this decision, you will need to submit an Academic Appeal. There are specific grounds for appeal. These are outlined in the Academic Appeals Procedure which is available at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm>

University Regulations are accessible online at www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations.

Yours sincerely

TEMPLATE MEMO 3 – REPORTING A CASE OF INTERRUPTION OR TERMINATION TO STUDENT PROGRESS SERVICE

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Student Progress Service (Case Team), Level 3, King’s Gate.

From: YOUR NAME. Degree Programme Director for DEGREE PROGRAMME OR SCHOOL

School of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Date: DATE

Unsatisfactory Progress – Termination/ Interruption of study

STUDENT NAME:

STUDENT NUMBER:.....

DEGREE PROGRAMME:.....

In accordance with University regulations I have considered the above student’s progress and deem that there is a need to **terminate/ interrupt** the student’s studies with effect from **DATE** due to continued unsatisfactory progress. **FOR INTERRUPTION:** The student’s expected date of return is **XXX**.

I enclose the following items:

- Copies of written correspondence with the student with specific mention of the relevant Progress Regulations (e.g. Letter 1, Letter 2c and any student responses);
- Evidence that the student has been given the opportunity to attend a meeting and provide a written response (e.g. Letter 1);
- Any documentation the student has provided in response to correspondence (e.g. student statement, medical evidence if applicable);
- Timeline of Events.

In accordance with Undergraduate Progress Regulation G24 Evidence of Failure to make Satisfactory Progress/ Postgraduate Taught Degree Progress Regulation F17 Evidence of Failure to make Satisfactory Progress, I find the following factors to be evidence of the student’s unsatisfactory progress. These are the reasons for my decision to **interrupt/ terminate** studies;

Provide a short summary of the case, outlining the main issues with the student. Much of this detail can be copied from Letter 2c to the student, but you may feel it necessary to provide additional explanation here.

I am satisfied that the appropriate regulations and procedures have been followed correctly and that the student has had sufficient opportunity to be involved in the process.

On receipt of the attached documentation, please therefore amend the student's record and inform all relevant services of the student change of circumstance.

Signature 1:.....

Degree Programme Director for XXXX

Signature 2:.....

Chair of board of examiners/ Chair of board of studies/ Head of school/ personal tutor/ school administrator.