



## **Policy and Procedures in the case of unsatisfactory academic performance by an Undergraduate Student**

Once you are admitted as an undergraduate student, the College is committed to working with you to ensure that you perform to the very best of your ability and fulfil your academic potential. We recognize that as mature undergraduate students you may have calls on your time that standard age students do not – family commitments, homes to maintain, and so on. Directors of Studies and Tutors will always do their best to help if personal circumstances start to hinder your academic work and most difficulties can be settled informally if you keep your Tutor and Director of Studies informed about your situation. The College however takes the view that no less should be expected of mature students in terms of academic achievement than of any other student. There are some (very rare) cases where unsatisfactory academic performance becomes entrenched, and it is then important to have a clear procedure for handling these situations. This procedure is set out below, and you will see that its primary aim is to get you back on track academically: a last resort, if all else fails, is to require a student to leave College permanently.

1. Academic performance shall be considered unsatisfactory if a student fails to complete all the requirements of their course in a timely and satisfactory manner. This includes the following:
  - Consistent failure to prepare for and/or attend lectures, seminars, tutorials or other prescribed classes
  - Consistent failure to prepare for and/or attend supervisions
  - Consistent failure to prepare for and/or attend practical classes and fieldtrips
  - Consistent failure to produce written work as required by the course regulations or at the request of their Director of Studies, Supervisor or Tutor
  - Consistent failure to meet the requirements set out by a Director of Studies, Supervisor or Tutor
  - Failure to successfully pass examinations including failing to obtain Honours in any Honours examination (whether or not being given an allowance towards an Ordinary degree)
2. Where a Director of Studies, Supervisor or Tutor considers that a student's academic performance is unsatisfactory they shall notify the student of the fact and convene a meeting with the student and their Director of Studies (in the case of undergraduate students) and their Tutor within 14 days. At this meeting the student will be informed of the reasons for considering that their academic performance is unsatisfactory and the student shall be given an opportunity to explain and defend their performance. In the event that the student is unable to give a satisfactory explanation for their academic performance the Director of Studies and Tutor will give the student a formal warning and explain to the student what action or actions are needed to rectify the situation and the timescale within which this should be undertaken. This will form the Action Plan, which will be put in writing at the conclusion of the meeting, and given to the student, together with the reasons for considering that their academic performance had been unsatisfactory. The student will be warned that failure to comply with the terms of the Action Plan may result in final or temporary removal from the College.
3. In the event that the student fails to attend the meeting described in (2) or having attended the meeting fails to comply with the terms of the Action Plan, then the Senior Tutor shall

write to the student giving them a second warning and requiring them to rectify their unsatisfactory performance, and where an Action Plan exists, to take steps to comply with its terms. The letter may also contain additional academic conditions that the student is required to fulfil. The Senior Tutor's letter will warn the student a second time that the consequences of failing to rectify their academic performance and to comply with the Action Plan, where one exists, may result in final or temporary removal from College and will put the student on notice that if the unsatisfactory academic performance persists that they will be reported to the Academic Review Committee.

4. Where a student's academic performance continues to be unsatisfactory the Senior Tutor may notify the Chairman of the Academic Review Committee that a case will be made that the student should be temporarily or finally removed from College on the ground of unsatisfactory academic performance and request that the Committee be convened to hear the case.
5. The Academic Review Committee shall be composed of a maximum of 5 members, who shall be Fellows of the College, appointed by the President, and include the Vice President who shall Chair the Committee. In the event that the Vice President is unavailable the Committee shall be chaired by the most senior Fellow on the Committee. When it becomes necessary for the Committee to sit to hear a case of alleged unsatisfactory academic performance the Chair shall:
  - a. Inform the student concerned that the Senior Tutor has reported the case to the Committee and that a hearing has been fixed to consider the student's alleged unsatisfactory academic performance. At least 3 days notice of the hearing shall be given to the student in writing, either by email to the student's official Cambridge email address or by placing a letter in the student's college pigeonhole.
  - b. The notice shall include the date, time and place of the meeting and notification that the student is entitled to be assisted by a person of their choice who is a resident Fellow, Senior or Junior Member of the College or University.
  - c. The student shall also be informed that witnesses may be called, and that the Student is entitled to attend the Academic Review Committee and make representations in person or in writing to the Committee.
6. The Chair of the Academic Review Committee will invite the Senior Tutor or their nominee to write a report on the student setting out their grounds for considering that the student's academic performance was unsatisfactory.
7. The Report must be sent to the Chair of the Academic Review Committee at least 72 hours before the time stated for the hearing of the case by the Committee.
8. A copy of the report should be sent to the student either by email to their official Cambridge email address or by delivering it to their College pigeonhole at least 48 hours before the time set for the meeting of the Committee.
9. At the meeting of the Academic Review Committee the Senior Tutor shall inform the members of the Committee of the details of the alleged unsatisfactory performance and

present any supporting evidence. The student together with their supporter (if any) is entitled to be present whilst evidence of their alleged unsatisfactory performance is presented. The student should then be afforded the opportunity to make their own representations and to present supporting evidence to the Committee. The Chair or other members of the Committee may question any party on all matters raised. The Chair may additionally invite any other person to attend and to make representations to the Committee.

10. If, after hearing the representations and evidence, the Academic Review Committee determines, either unanimously or by a simple majority, that the student's academic performance has been unsatisfactory, it may:
  - a. Decide that the student be removed permanently from College; or
  - b. Decide that the student be removed temporarily from College and that the student only be allowed to return upon fulfilment of further academic conditions; or
  - c. Decide that the student be permitted to remain in College, subject to fulfilling further academic conditions.

The Chair of the Committee shall write to the student, Senior Tutor, Director of Studies or Supervisor and Tutor informing them of the Academic Review Committee's decision. The letter should indicate the nature of the grounds for the Committee's decision. The Chair should also liaise with the relevant Department/Faculties regarding the outcome of the process.

11. The student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter, indicating the end of the procedure. If the student remains dissatisfied at this stage, a complaint can be submitted to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), the external ombudsman for complaints from higher education students.

Students are advised to seek advice before raising a complaint. Advice can be sought from their Tutor or other trusted advisor. Independent advice on all complaint procedures can also be sought from the Students' Unions' Advice Service.

If the student is not satisfied with any decision made in accordance with these procedures, they may also follow the College's General Complaints Procedure within 14 days of the receipt of a letter outlining the decision of the Academic Review Committee.

12. In any event the Chair of the Committee shall write to the College Council notifying them that the Academic Review Committee has met and advising them of the outcome of the hearing. Where an Appeal is made by the student, the Chair will provide the College Council with copies of all papers relating to the hearing by the Committee together with the reasons for their decision.