

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Title: Policy on Academic Progress in Lower Division Courses
Policy Number: 02.10.15
Effective Date: September 1, 2003
Issuing Authority: Office of the President

Scope of Policy

For many students the transition from high school to college is difficult. There are fewer classroom hours, and time is less structured. Study and other academic work is undertaken more independently than in secondary school. Evaluations of performance are less frequent. As a result, students may be unaware when they are not making a good beginning toward meeting academic expectations. They may also not be aware that the pace of expectations in most courses quickens significantly as the semester progresses. Even when early evaluations indicate marginal or unsatisfactory performance, students may believe that they have ample time and opportunity to improve.

It would serve students and the instructional program of the University for students in the early semesters of their university career to be given clear warnings about unsatisfactory work and to be guided to appropriate assistance. An “early warning” system that would show University concern about unsatisfactory performance together with recommendations that students see a designated academic advisor to obtain guidance and assistance could help many students improve their academic performance and help strengthen overall student performance in classes in the University.

This policy’s purpose is to provide students in the freshman and sophomore years with early warning of University concern and early guidance to seek assistance when their performance in a course is not satisfactory. Its secondary purpose is to assist faculty by counseling students to seek their assistance and by giving students clear notice that the University takes seriously unsatisfactory evaluations given by teachers.

Policy

Effective fall semester, 2003, courses offered principally for freshmen and sophomores shall, not later than the end of the fifth week of classes, include one or more evaluations of student progress in the course. Evaluation(s) may include quizzes, exams, papers, essays, performances, presentations, laboratory or studio demonstrations or experiments, or other activities determined by the instructor to be subject to evaluation or grading.

The instructor shall report to an office designated by the University, on a form provided

for that purpose, the name and student identification of each student who receives an unsatisfactory grade, or an unsatisfactory evaluation (where the evaluations are other than standard grades), or an incomplete on the evaluation(s) given through the fifth week of classes.¹ In colleges that develop systems for obtaining early evaluations of students and create programs for counseling those students about weak academic performance, the college, with the concurrence of the Provost, will be the University office to perform these functions.

Reports of unsatisfactory or incomplete work submitted by the faculty may be used by the University, including its schools or colleges and its central academic offices, to advise students that their academic performance in certain courses is a cause for concern and to counsel students to seek appropriate assistance in their studies, including assistance from the instructor in the course.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by Deans if early evaluation of student progress would be inconsistent with the purpose of the course or would be a significant burden in meeting course objectives. Each Dean shall report such exceptions each semester to the Provost.

Notes

1. Dates of official enactment and amendments:

Adopted by the President on February 6, 2003. Effective on September 1, 2003.

2. History:

Secretary's Note: This policy was previously identified as #02.78.15.

3. Cross References

none

¹ The fifth week has been designated for three reasons: (1) It allows time for the appropriate academic office to receive and process reports of unsatisfactory or incomplete performance, (2) It provides time for such offices to contact students to urge them to seek assistance, and (3) It provides assistance to students early enough in the semester so that they have a strong chance still to reverse poor performance. This process of providing academic assistance for students should be seen as distinct from the mid-term exams or other mid-term evaluations common in courses, whose principal purpose is perceived by students and by many instructors as serving to contribute to students' ultimate grades in courses.