### Academic Monitoring and Exclusions Policy and Procedures

**RefCO/06/0412/09**

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<tr>
<th>Custodian:</th>
<th>Student Academic Administration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy approved by:</td>
<td>Council</td>
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<td>Date: 4 December 2009</td>
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<td>Policy effective date:</td>
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<td>Policy review structure &amp; date:</td>
<td>UTLC Deans of Faculty</td>
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<td>Date: September 2012</td>
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<td>Implementation responsibility:</td>
<td>Faculty Examination Boards,</td>
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<td>FEACOM and AEACOM</td>
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<td>Implementation procedures approved by:</td>
<td>SENATE</td>
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Academic Monitoring and Exclusions Policy

A: POLICY STATEMENT

1. PREAMBLE

The university acknowledges that academic monitoring and support is important to retain students through a wide range of student-focused support systems and learning environments that enable them to complete their studies successfully. Students will only be excluded on account of poor academic performance as a last resort after all other avenues have failed to restore their academic performance to the required level. The policy commits the university to identifying under-performing students timeously and providing the necessary academic support to assist students to graduate in the minimum time possible or redirect them and obligates students to attend and participate in the range of support that is made available.

Rule GR30 provides that students may be excluded for failing to meet the academic requirements for continued registration. Each Faculty defines its minimum progression requirements and these are approved by Academic Affairs Boards and Senate and are listed in the Faculty handbooks. This policy and the accompanying implementation procedures specify the manner in which the university gives effect to this rule.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Academic exclusion** means termination of a student’s registration on academic grounds resulting in exclusion from the university.

**Admission** means the act by which the university admits a person to study, after acceptance by an applicant of an offer of a place at the University.

**Module** means any separate course of study for which credits may be obtained.

**Qualification** means a degree, diploma or certificate.

**Registered student** means a student who is registered to study in one or modules offered by the University. Such registration will lapse on the date of the following registration session or earlier should the student cease to be an admitted student.

**Senate** means the Senate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

**The University** means the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

**FEACOM** refers to Faculty Exclusion Appeals Committee

**AEACOM** refers to Academic Exclusion Appeals Committee.
3. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the Academic Monitoring and Exclusions Policy is to ensure that as many students as possible are successful in their studies and this is the responsibility of both staff and students.

Staff have the responsibility of selecting, admitting and orientating students carefully; delivering excellent teaching and assessment; ensuring that students have the opportunity and means to assess and monitor their performance on a regular basis; and providing appropriate academic support to students.

Students have the responsibility of committing themselves fully to their studies; monitoring their performance in their studies; and utilising all the available resources (academic counselling, academic support as well as career and personal counselling) to successfully complete their studies preferably in the minimum time for their qualification but not exceeding the maximum time allowed.

4. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The policy applies to all students registered in undergraduate degrees across all faculties.

5. THE POLICY

The Academic Monitoring and Exclusion Policy is based on a system of classifying student academic performance as “good academic standing”; “at risk” or “severely underperforming” with appropriate interventions and actions for each category. Every undergraduate student’s performance is assessed at the end of each semester and their status, based on their academic performance at the end of the semester or subsequent supplementary exams, is determined and reflected on the student administration system as “green”, “orange” or “red” (see section 6).

The aim of this policy is to enable underperforming students to be identified early and offered academic, personal and careers counselling. Appropriate interventions and systems of support are expected to reduce dropout rates and exclusions and to improve throughputs and completion rates.

Specifically the implementation of this policy means that no academically underperforming student will be excluded from the university in their first year of study. However, it also means that if a student does not respond to support interventions and continues to underperform, s/he will be required to appeal for readmission to the same or a different faculty after three semesters at university. If readmitted and does not meet set probation requirement while on final probation, then the student will be excluded after four semesters and no further appeals allowed.
Appeals are first considered at Faculty level (by FEACOM). All unsuccessful appeals will be referred to a university wide committee (AEACOM) for final decision.

Students will finally be excluded from the university on account of poor academic performance after all other avenues have failed to restore their academic performance to the required level.

Exclusion holds for a minimum period of one year unless otherwise stipulated. Thereafter a student may apply for admission to the same or other Faculties at UKZN if s/he is able to demonstrate that s/he has achieved a level of competence satisfactory to the relevant Faculty or has resolved the personal circumstances that led to poor performance. Admission or readmission will be at the discretion of the Faculty to which the student applies and according their admission requirements. Faculties will specify broad guidelines for what will be deemed satisfactory competence level for readmission.

6. CLASSIFICATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The categories of academic performance and the consequent interventions and actions are as follows:

6.1 Good academic standing (Green)

New students who register for the first time and have not transferred from another faculty of the university are initially deemed to be of good academic standing and coded green. A student remains coded green provided s/he has passed at least 75% of the maximum expected credit load to date and also has passed 70% or more of the normal credit load this semester. These are regarded as acceptable performance levels; however optional counselling and support is available if requested.

6.2 At risk (Orange)

A student who is at risk is required to participate in a compulsory developmental programme including academic counselling, a possible modified curriculum as well as student counselling for personal, life skills and/or career counselling.

A student may be deemed “at risk” when:

- his/her performance is above the faculty's minimum progression requirements but is not at the level of “green”, that is, s/he has not passed 75% of the max expected credits to date;
- fewer than 70% of the normal credit load has been passed in the current semester.
• credits are below the faculty’s minimum progression requirements but the student has been registered for 1 semester only, the student is placed on academic probation with specific and realistic conditions. Even if such a student is performing below the faculty’s minimum progression requirements s/he will remain at risk (orange) provided s/he continues to meet the set probation requirements which are reviewed each semester

6.3 Underperforming (Red)

A student will be coded red when his/her performance falls below the faculty’s minimum progression requirements and s/he has been registered for 2 semesters or more. The first time a student becomes “red” s/he is placed on strict academic probation. After compulsory academic and personal or career counselling s/he may be permitted to continue in the same faculty or may be advised to redirect to another faculty.

A student will become “red” for a second time if s/he does not achieve the probation conditions set in the previous semester or if, after improving performance for a period, the student again drops below the required levels. In this case, the student must appeal to be readmitted to the same or a different faculty. If a student is readmitted following a successful appeal, s/he is placed on final probation with specific conditions to be met and continued academic support.

If a student who was severely underperforming (“red”) responds to interventions, achieves probation requirements and eventually works back to good academic standing (“green”), s/he will be deemed to be rehabilitated and the previous period as “red” will not be considered should s/he subsequently lapse.

If a student does not respond to such interventions and s/he continues to underperform s/he must appeal for readmission and may or may nor be readmitted on final probation. If readmitted and still does not respond to interventions while on final probation the student will be excluded. No further appeals are allowed.

Students who transfer between Faculties carry their history and academic status with them. Students will normally only be accepted into a new Faculty if they are able to complete the new degree in the maximum time permitted for this degree, which includes the semesters they have already spent at UKZN and for which they may have generated credits towards the new degree.

7. THE APPEAL COMMITTEES

Students will be informed and assisted to lodge an appeal where they qualify to do so.
7.1 FEACOM

FEACOM shall be the first entity within the University to which appeals against academic exclusion must be submitted. Consideration will be given to any mitigating circumstances given by students and supported by appropriate documentation. FEACOM will either readmit the student or exclude the student from the university. In the case of the latter the appeal is forwarded to AEACOM for final decision.

7.2 AEACOM

AEACOM is the final appeals body that will consider all appeals that were turned down by FEACOM. Consideration will be given to reasons given by FEACOM, Student Counselling Unit and any mitigating circumstances given by students and supported by appropriate documentation as well as the student’s academic record and participation in support programmes. The decisions of AEACOM are final and no further appeals are allowed. AEACOM may recommend redirection to other Faculties in the university irrespective of whether a student requests such readmission.

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Each student in the university is coded in the student administration system according to the above policy as “green”, “orange” or “red”.

1. PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING PERFORMANCE DECISION CODES

Performance decision codes (see Appendix) are assigned after each semester exam. When considering exam results, the students’ current status (as determined in the previous semester) and their performance in the semester just completed are taken into consideration as follows:

1.1 The student was in good academic standing and hence was “green” in the semester just completed: (ie. none of the performance decision codes have been assigned)

1.1.1 If the student performed at an acceptable level and passed 70% or more of the normal credit load the student remains “green”. Note that for a 64 credit normal load the student should pass at least 48 credits in the semester; for a 72 or 80 credit normal load the student should pass at least 56 credits in the semester (or as many as logistically and practically possible).

1.1.2 If the student has not passed 70% of more of the normal credit load this semester their performance places them at risk (RISK: Performance unsatisfactory, must consult Dean); however further analysis is needed as if the student is now below faculty’s minimum progression
requirements s/he will be classified as “red” unless this is the first semester. Students in their first semester are deemed to be “orange” (RISK: Performance unsatisfactory, must consult Dean) and specific probation conditions are set. Students in subsequent semesters are classified as “red” and readmitted on probation, either immediately (FPRR: Failed progression, readmit on probation) or deferred for a semester if there is not a valid curriculum (FPRD: Failed progression, readmission deferred).

1.2 The student was at risk and hence was “orange” in the semester just completed: (ie. had been given performance decision codes RISK or RSK2 in the previous exam session)

1.2.1 If the student has passed 75% or more of the credits expected at this stage of the qualification s/he is now back in good academic standing. The student is rehabilitated and any prior semesters as under-performing are not taken into consideration should s/he subsequently lapse.

1.2.2 If the student is below this level and has passed fewer than 75% of the credits expected but is above the faculty minimum progression requirements the student is still at risk (RSK2: Still at risk, continue counselling).

1.2.3 If the student is below the faculty's minimum progression requirements but was already on probation (ie. severely underperformed in their first semester at university) and has achieved the probation targets, the student remains at risk and new probation conditions should be set (RSK2: Still at risk, continue counselling). Students who underperform in their first semester but thereafter continue to meet probation requirements will remain “orange” and not become “red” even if they cannot immediately recover to above the faculty's minimum progression levels.

1.2.4 If the student is below the faculty's minimum progression requirements, was already on probation (ie. severely underperformed in the previous semester) and has not achieved these targets, the student is severely underperforming and is classified as “red”. If this is the first time the student becomes “red” or the student has rehabilitated the student is warned and readmitted on probation, either immediately (FPRR: Failed progression, readmit on probation) or deferred for a semester if there is not a valid curriculum (FPRD: Failed progression, readmission deferred). If the student had been classified as “red” before and has not rehabilitated then the same procedure as for a “red” student is followed depending on whether the student was previously on strict or final probation.

1.2.5 Probation conditions normally require a student to perform at an acceptable level and to register for and to pass 70-75% of a normal credit load. Note that for a 64 credit normal load, probation should be set at 48
credits in the semester; for a 72 or 80 credit normal load probation should be set at 56 credits in the semester (or as many of these as are logistically and practically possible depending on the curriculum).

When a student successfully completes the qualification, the warning signs (RISK and RISK2) will be removed from the academic record by the Faculty.

1.3 **The student has been underperforming and hence was classified as “red” in the semester just completed:** (ie. had been given performance decision codes FPRR, FPRD, FPMA, FPDS or PROB in the previous exam session)

1.3.1 If the student achieves the probation conditions set and is now above faculty's minimum progression requirements the student is now considered “orange” (RSK2: Still at risk, continue counselling)

1.3.2 If the student achieves the probation conditions set and but is still below faculty's minimum progression requirements the student remains “red” and new probation conditions are set (PROB: Continue on probation). Should the student meet the probation requirement for two successive semesters, the student should be allowed to register for a normal load to enable them to pass sufficient credits to start closing the gap and to move back from “red” to “orange” in due course.

1.3.3 If the student does not achieve the probation conditions and is on strict probation following a FPRR/FPRD decision in an previous semester, the student is advised that probation has been failed and an appeal must be lodged (FPMA: Failed probation, must appeal for readmission). If however the student qualifies to write supplementary exams and a decision cannot be made until the supp results are known the FPDS code should rather be used (FPDS: Failed probation dependant on supplementary exams, must appeal now).

1.3.4 If the student does not achieve the probation conditions and was on final probation (ie. was readmitted on probation (RAPB) after FPMA or FPDS) then the student is finally excluded (XNFA: Final exclusion, may not appeal).

1.3.5 A student is permitted only one appeal against exclusion (FPMA/FPDS) (rule GR31a). Once a student has appealed and been readmitted on probation, any subsequent poor performance which results in probation conditions not being met or the student failing to meet minimum progression requirements will result in final exclusion without appeal (XNFA)

1.4 **If a student has been awarded supplementary exams and the supplementary results are not known** at the time performance is assessed and term decisions made, it is often not possible to make a final classification as that may depend on the performance in supplementary exams.
1.4.1 If failure in supplementary exams will lead to a student who is on strict probation failing to meet probation requirements and hence becoming “red” for the second time the FPDS code is used as described above (FPDS: Failed probation dependant on supplementary exams, must appeal now). If the student passes sufficient supplementary exams to achieve probation or faculty minimum progression requirements the FPDS is deleted and the students current status is assessed. Usually such a student would still be at risk (PROB: Continue on probation or RSK2: Still at risk, continue counselling).

1.4.2 If failure in supplementary exams will result in a student becoming “red” for the first time it is suggested a WARN code is used (WARN: Must pass supplementary exams). Then once supp results are available the student’s status can be assessed.

1.4.3 A decision on the status of all other students with supplementary exams could be deferred until after exams when the results are known, unless passing supplementary exams will not change the status (eg student will be at risk whether or not passes a supp)

1.5 Faculty discretion may be exercised in certain cases

1.5.1 faculties may exercise discretion in cases where the student is a final year student who has exceeded the maximum semesters allowed but requires 56 credits or fewer to complete and can obtain these in 1 semester (or at most 2 semesters in exceptional circumstances). Instead of making them FPMA or XNFA, they should be made FPRR/FPRD and readmitted for a final semester (depending on which semester it is they need) in order to complete. The student should be sent a letter explaining the concession and warning that this is the last chance as well as indicating compulsory participation in any academic or counseling support programme.

1.5.2 Another situation in which Faculty discretion should be exercised is when a student was FPMA some semesters back, has been passing and meeting probation consistently and has worked back to orange and then slips - the Faculty may wish to assign an FPMA and not XNFA, particularly if the student shows evidence of being able to complete in the maximum time allowed for the degree.

The discretion referred to in 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 is exercised by the Faculty Examinations Board at the meeting at which examination results are considered.

2. THE APPEAL PROCESS

A student who is severely underperforming and has failed probation (FPMA) or has failed probation dependant on supplementary exams (FPDS) can appeal for readmission. Such a student must lodge an appeal within 10 days for readmission
the subsequent semester, or within 1 semester of exclusion for readmission the following semester. The appeal is considered by FEACOM initially and if unsuccessful will be referred to AEACOM. A student who is readmitted by either FEACM or AEACOM is placed on final probation with specific conditions to be met and continued academic support.

In readmitting a student, AEACOM may redirect the student to a different faculty from that to which they had appealed for readmission. Furthermore, a student who has appealed for readmission to a particular Faculty may not be readmitted directly by another Faculty without this being referred to AEACOM.

There will be no further appeal to any person or body beyond AEACOM.

Students who do not appeal are given the term decision XAC (Excluded academically) and are automatically suspended. If they appeal within 1 semester they are dealt with under the appeals process. Thereafter, if they subsequently wish to return to UKZN, they must submit a motivated application and are dealt with under normal faculty admissions processes, not as appeals for readmission.

AEACOM decisions shall be based on the merit of each case and will be one of the following:

(a) readmit the student to study in the current Faculty on final academic probation (RASA), or

(b) readmit the student to study in another specified Faculty on final academic probation (RAFA), or

(c) readmit the student to study in the current Faculty on final academic probation in the next semester (RDSA), or

(d) readmit the student to study in another specified Faculty on final academic probation in the next semester (RDFA), or

(e) refer the student to the Student Counselling Centre to get further information to finalise the appeal (REFA), or

(f) refer the student to the Student Counselling Centre to get further information to decide whether to readmit the student to another Faculty or another qualification (REFB), (admission to another Faculty may be advised by AEACOM even in cases where the student does not request redirection), or

(g) exclude the student from the university under one of the following conditions:

- **XACA**: a student is strongly advised to seek registration with another appropriate tertiary institution where s/he may be given credit towards an appropriate qualification on the basis of credits obtained at UKZN.

- **XACB**: a student is strongly advised to seek registration with another appropriate tertiary institution for the prescribed modules or equivalent and
to reapply for readmission to the Faculty in which s/he was registered once the modules have been successfully completed.

- **XACC**: a student is strongly advised to improve his/her circumstances either through relevant work experience or appropriate credits obtained at relevant institutions before applying for admission to the Faculty of his/she choice at UKZN, after a period of not less than 1 year.

- **XACD**: a student is strongly advised to go away to resolve any personal or financial issues and to demonstrate that s/he is in a position to continue with his/her studies before reapplying for admission to the Faculty of his/her choice at UKZN, after a period to be specified of not less than of 1 semester.

The ruling by AEACOM will be final and captured on ITS by the Division of Student Academic Administration. Students will be able to view the decisions of FEACOM or AEACOM on Student Central.
3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE APPEALS COMMITTEES

3.1 Membership of FEACOM

- The Dean or the Deputy (who shall not be a member of AEACOM), shall Chair meetings;
- Two members of the academic staff within the Faculty nominated by the Faculty Board (who shall not be members of AEACOM);
- Two student representatives one of whom shall be a member of one of the campus SRCs from which the Faculty operates, nominated by the Central SRC, and the other a member of the formally constituted Faculty Student Body within the Faculty concerned, nominated by such Faculty Student Body, neither of whom shall be members of AEACOM.
- In attendance: Faculty Manager/Officer

3.2 Membership of AEACOM

- DVC: Teaching and Learning (Chair);
- One senior member of each Faculty, nominated by the Dean, none of whom may be a serving member of FEACOM;
- Executive Dean of Students;
- Two student representatives nominated by the CSRC, neither of whom may be a serving member of FEACOM;
- One representative of Student Counselling from each campus
- Director: Student Academic Administration
- In attendance: Manager: Student Academic Administration

APPENDIX: Term Performance Decision Codes

FEACOM CODES

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>FPDS</td>
<td>Progression dependent on supp, must appeal now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPRR</td>
<td>Failed progression, readmit on probation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPRD</td>
<td>Failed progression, re-admission deferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPMA</td>
<td>Failed progression/probation must appeal for re-admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROB</td>
<td>Continue on probation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAPB</td>
<td>Re-admitted on academic probation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Re-admitted to another faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDF</td>
<td>Readmit deferred to another faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISK</td>
<td>performance unsatisfactory, must consult the Dean</td>
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RSK2  still at risk, continue counselling
XAC   Excluded academically (no appeal received)
XNFA  Final exclusion (no appeal)

AEACOM CODES
RAFA  Re-admitted to another Faculty
RASA  Readmit to the same Faculty
RDFA  Readmit deferred to another Faculty
RDSA  Readmit deferred to the same Faculty
REFR  Referred for Student Counselling assessment and/or further information
XACA  Final exclusion – no appeal
XACB  Final exclusion – may apply for readmission after completing certain specified modules elsewhere
XACC  Final exclusion – may apply for readmission after rehabilitation
XACD  Final exclusion – may apply for readmission after personal issues resolved