

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTES ACADEMIC MONITORING AND EXCLUSIONS POLICY

DIRECTORATE: SECTORAL COLLEGES



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, forestry & fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DRAFT: October 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Preamble	3
2.	Definition of Terms	3
3.	Objectives of the Policy	3
4.	Scope of the Policy	4
5.	The Policy	4
6.	Classification of Academic Performance	5
7.	Appeals	6

1. PREAMBLE

The institute 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 institute 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.

This rule provides that students may be excluded for failing to meet the academic requirements for continued registration. This policy provides the framework in which the institute gives effect to this rule.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

2.1 Academic exclusion means termination of a student's registration on academic grounds resulting in exclusion from the institute.

2.2 Admission means the act by which the institute admits a person to study, after acceptance by an applicant of an offer of a place at the Institute.

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

2.4 Qualification means a degree, diploma or certificate.

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

2.6 The Institute means the Agricultural Training Institute.

2.7 Student Appeals Committee: As constitute in the Policy on Student Discipline for Agricultural Training Institutes

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 has 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 for higher education qualifications at the institute.

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 institute 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 after three semesters at institute. 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 will be considered by the institute’s Student Appeals committee for final decision.

Students will finally be excluded from the institute 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 if s/he is able to demonstrate that s/he has achieved a level of competence satisfactory has resolved the personal circumstances that led to poor performance.

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 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 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 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 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 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.

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. 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 not 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.

7. APPEALS

Students will be informed and assisted to lodge an appeal where they qualify to do so. Consideration will be given to any mitigating circumstances given by students and supported by appropriate documentation, the report from Student Counselling Unit as well as the student’s academic record and participation in support programmes. The decisions of Student Appeals Committee are final and no further appeals are allowed.