



## **Probationary First Term Policy**

### **Background**

If students are not attending and undertaking the course requirements in the first term then it is likely that they will fail to complete the course successfully. Monitoring attendance can help identify students who might be in danger of leaving or failing their course. Early intervention can often prevent situations from escalating, which may otherwise lead to early withdrawal or failure of the student to successfully complete their qualification. OUVS regulations require all OUVS registered students to attend at least 80% of their timetabled classes.

### **Introduction**

Through early identification of such students, Ruskin College has an opportunity to be proactive by offering assistance and guidance to students to help encourage their progression and to avoid potential discontinuation. Owing to the broader benefits of attendance monitoring, and to ensure equality of treatment, the attendance of all students is monitored through the same mechanism, as described in this policy. This policy applies equally to all higher education students unless specifically stated otherwise.

### **Probationary First Term Policy**

1. All students should be aware that under exceptional circumstances, and only with the prior agreement of the Academic Registrar, students may be able to enrol without having fulfilled all their conditions of their offer letter (e.g. the College is still waiting on a reference, medical clearance etc). If these conditions are not met by the end of the first term, the student's place will be withdrawn under the probationary first term policy. Under no circumstances will a student with outstanding offer conditions be allowed to start term two. If a condition of an offer was to attend a short course, and the student did not do this without good cause, they will not be able to enrol.

2. Students who do not achieve Level 3 on their admissions literacy test (not applicable to Social Work students or students who already achieved level 3), will be allowed to enrol on the condition that they work through the relevant workbooks and/or guides until they achieve level 3. Students who do not work on their literacy and resit the assessments as appropriate will fail the probationary term. The Disability Officer will inform the Academic Registrar at the end of the first term of the names of students who have not progressed with their literacy.

3. The attendance of students on all programmes is monitored by tutors taking registers for classes and recording attendance at tutorials. If any student has missed one or more classes (or a weekend in the case of block residential students), or has missed a scheduled tutorial, the relevant Academic Group Administrator (AGA), or other individual nominated by the College is notified weekly via the online registration system or by the Module Tutor on the appropriate form.

4. The AGA or other individual nominated by the College will send a letter to the student's Ruskin email address informing them that their non-attendance has been noted and giving them the date (ten days from date the letter is sent) by which they should contact the Academic Co-ordinator (AC) or his/her nominee to arrange a meeting to explain their absence and discuss pastoral and/or academic support and guidance as appropriate. In the case of block residential students not attending a weekend they will be required to explain their absence to the Programme Coordinator by email or telephone within 10 days. Block residential students who miss a tutorial, despite being in attendance for the weekend should verbally explain their absence to the Weekend Tutor prior to departing for the weekend.

5. The AGA or other individual nominated by the College will then inform the AC that the relevant letter has been emailed to the student and the date by which the student should contact the AC, or in the case of block residential students when they should email or telephone the Programme Coordinator. When the student meets with or contacts the AC or Programme Coordinator they should inform the AC or Programme Coordinator the reason for their non-attendance. This may bring to light that fact the student is facing personal difficulties of some kind. This meeting or email or telephone conversation provides an opportunity for the student to be offered appropriate assistance whilst continuing with their course. Alternatively, the student may need a period of approved temporary withdrawal (known as suspension of studies).

6. If a student has three unauthorised absences in a term, or in the case of block residential students has missed two or more weekends, the AGA or other individual nominated by the College will be notified by the online or paper registration system and will inform the AC or Programme Coordinator that the relevant letter or email has been sent to the student informing them that they are at risk of failing their Probationary First Term due to non-attendance.

7. Students who are at risk of failing the Probationary First Term due to non-submission of summative or formative assessments, persistent lateness or other factors will be informed of this by their tutor during tutorials in the first term, and confirmed in writing. Students will then have the opportunity to improve their attendance, time keeping etc, before the end of the first term, with appropriate support.

8. At the end of the first term each AGA will be notified by the online registration system or paper register of any students who have attended less than 80 percent of classes, or weekends for block residential students and/or tutorials due to unauthorised absence. The AGA will inform the relevant AC, Module Tutors, Programme Co-ordinators and the Academic Registrar of the identities of these students. This information will be considered by the Tutors, in conjunction with details of any non-submission of summative or formative assessments, persistent lateness or other factors arising in Part B of the relevant Programme Boards, to determine whether the student in question has so far met the requirements of the Probationary First Term or is in danger of failing the Probationary First Term. Students who are noted at the Programme Board to be in danger of failing the Probationary First Term will be informed of this in writing. Students will then have the opportunity to improve their attendance, time keeping etc, before the end of the first term, with appropriate support.

9. At the end of first term, where the Probationary First Term requirements have not been met, the Academic Registrar will contact the student by letter and email to their Ruskin College email address to inform them that they have failed to meet the requirements of their Probationary First Term and are no longer a registered student at the College. Students will be informed of this one week after the end of the first term. Ruskin College will then inform all appropriate external bodies that the student is no longer registered at the College.

10. The Probationary First Term may be extended to a second term if the AC, in conjunction with Tutors, decide that this is appropriate, and would be beneficial to

the student. Students to whom this applies, will be informed of the extension of their Probationary First Term to a Probationary Second Term one week after the end of the first term, along with the reasons for the extension of their probationary term.

11. Students who have passed their Probationary First Term will be notified of this one week after the end of the first term by the Academic Registrar.

12. If a student has attended less than 50 per-cent of classes or fewer than 5 weekends in a year for block residential students due to illness in the first term, progression to the second term will be discussed with all relevant parties. The college may require the student to produce a letter from their GP to confirm that they are fit to study.

13. In addition to the above, Social Work students should ensure that they are aware of the Suitability Procedure as they are subject to the GSCC Code of Practice (for Social Work) (which covers behaviour and conduct in and outside of the college). Youth and Community Work Students should ensure that they are aware that Ruskin College applies the NYA Ethical Conduct in Youth Work (which covers behaviour and conduct in and outside of the college).

14. There is no appeal against failing probation since it indicates that the student has breached their contract with the College by failing to meet agreed conditions of the offer of a place.