

# ULSTER UNIVERSITY

## AT RISK OF WITHDRAWAL PROCESS: GUIDANCE NOTES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The following students shall be considered by the At Risk of Withdrawal (AROW) Board of Examiners:

- Those students who have failed to pass a failed module on the third and final attempt
- Those students who have failure in accrued modules totalling more than the permitted amount as stipulated within the applicable Programme Regulations.

### 2. OPERATION OF THE AT RISK OF WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

- 2.1 At the Subject/Course Board of Examiners or the Campus Progress and Award Board, students who would normally be coded as U1, L1 or S2 shall be coded DW, which means that the decision about the progress for that student will be referred to the AROW Board of Examiners.
- 2.2 Students who are coded DW shall receive confirmation of this code on the Student Portal, following the decision being made at Subject/Course Board of Examiners or the Campus Progress and Award Board. This will indicate to those students that they are deemed to be at risk of withdrawal and will advise them of their right to submit information for consideration by the AROW Board of Examiners. In addition to this notification on the Student Portal, it is expected that Course Directors will communicate with students in this situation, advising them that they are deemed to be At Risk of Withdrawal.
- 2.3 Students wishing to submit information for consideration by the AROW Board of Examiners must do so in writing, using the electronic form (ARW1). On that form, students should detail any supporting information and/or evidence that they consider helpful to the AROW Board of Examiners. On the form, students will be asked to complete a number of questions, where they should specify the reasons why they should not be withdrawn based on their academic progress and provide details of any supporting evidence that would support their reasons. This may include certificated evidence of extenuating circumstances and other relevant factors that would not have been previously communicated to the Subject/Course Board of Examiners or the Campus Progress and Award Board at which the DW code was awarded.
- 2.4 Students will have five working days from the release of the notification of the Board of Examiners decision on the Student Portal (DW) to submit their ARW1 form. The submission of the ARW1 form is the opportunity for the student to make representations to the Board. The AROW Board of Examiners retains the discretion to invite students deemed as at Risk of Withdrawal to make in-person representations during the Board meeting, however this will be deemed to be by exception only.

- 2.5 The information provided by the ARW1 form will be considered by the relevant AROW Board of Examiners. The details of the ARW1 form shall be treated with confidentiality. The contents of representations shall only be disclosed to members of the Board of Examiners and other relevant University staff involved in the decision-making process.
- 2.6 Students shall receive communication of the decision of the AROW Board of Examiners on the Student Portal. This communication shall include the AST code to be awarded. Course/Subject Directors will communicate the reasons for the decision of the AROW Board of Examiners. Normally these communications will be sent within 72 hours of the decision being made.
- 2.7 If the decision results in withdrawal, the notification shall include information on the appeals process available to the student. The normal rights of appeal apply to the decisions of the At Risk of Withdrawal Board of Examiners.
- 2.8 In determining its decision, the AROW Board of Examiners shall consider the following factors:
- Whether there are evidenced factors relevant to the academic performance of the student that were not known when the original decision was made by the Subject/Course Board of Examiners to consider the student to be at risk of withdrawal.
  - Whether there are satisfactorily evidenced reasons why the above information was not supplied sooner to the Subject/Course Board of Examiners.
  - Whether the evidenced factors relevant to the academic performance of the student are likely to be operative for the student going forward and whether support can be offered in relation to ongoing circumstances.

### 3. ORGANISATION OF THE AROW BOARD OF EXAMINERS

- 3.1 There will normally be one AROW Board per Faculty scheduled as part of the Boards of Examiners meetings where the students in the circumstances outlined at point 1 will be considered. Additional AROW Boards may be organised, if the number of candidates for consideration requires this.
- 3.2 The AROW Board of Examiners shall take place normally no earlier than seven days after all Course/Subject Boards of Examiners and Campus Progress and Award Boards have been completed. The date of the AROW Board of Examiners will be determined by Student Administration.
- 3.3 The composition of AROW Board of Examiners shall be as follows:
- The AROW Board Chair (a Senior Officer or a nominee thereof: normally the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience, Dean of Learning Enhancement or their nominee)
  - Chief External Examiner for AROW
  - A representative from Student Administration

- Faculty Administrative Officer or nominee
- Head of School or Associate Head of School or other designated representative from the respective Schools being considered at the AROW Board

3.4 Based on the information presented, the AROW Board of Examiners shall make one or more of the following decisions:

- the student should remain on their programme of study, with modules to be retaken, whether they are deferred, resat or repeated (award a D code).
- whether the student should repeat or restart the level of study (award an N code)
- whether the student should trail credits into next stage of their programme (P3)
- where the student is eligible, to recommend that the student exits the programme of study with a lower award (S2)
- whether the student should be withdrawn from the programme (award an L1 or U1)

In addition to the above decisions, the AROW Board of Examiners may advise that the student be encouraged to apply for a future Leave of Absence and rejoin their programme of study afterwards.

Where students do not submit an ARW1 form (or fail to do so within five working days), the AROW Board of Examiners shall recommend that those students be withdrawn (with an exit award if appropriate).

3.5 As students may appeal the outcome of the decision of the AROW Board of Examiners, each Faculty will organise an appeal date for submission of any appeals to the AROW decision. Such an appeal should be based on new evidence and not information already presented at the AROW board, as well as an explanation why the evidence submitted to the Appeals panel was not submitted to the AROW Board. Where an appeal is made without any evidence being submitted to the AROW Board, the student is expected to explain why no submission was made to the AROW Board. The deadline for the submission of these appeals shall be determined by Student Administration.