

Academic support and progress policy

2023-24

Updated : September 2023

Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Scope.....	3
3. Causes of poor academic progress	3
4. Students with health and wellbeing challenges	4
5. Support for students who struggle with the academic challenge of the course.....	4
Academic support	4
Additional support	4
7. The process	5
Intervention	5
Stage 1	5
Stage 2	5
Stage 3	5
8. Changing course.....	6
9. Student involvement and parental contact.....	6
10. Intervention points and actions over the two-year course period.....	6
11. Initial diagnostic assessments.....	6
12. Year group interventions and actions.....	7
Lower Sixth (L6)	7
L6 January exams and end of Spring term review	7
L6 Summer exams.....	7
Academic contracts for students with E/U grades	8
Summer exam resit.....	8
Upper Sixth (U6) Autumn term.....	9
U6 November and February mocks	9
Year 2 Final exam entries.....	9
13. Requests to repeat the year	9

1. Purpose

The majority of Woodhouse students achieve very highly but we do have a minority of students who do not make the expected academic progress, and this policy seeks to explain how the College supports and challenges these students throughout their two years with us. The policy sets out the different approaches taken to working with students according to the causes of their poor academic progress. It also explains the processes in place for managing poor academic progress at different points in the two years. We have a particular focus on early intervention and helping students develop the independent learning skills which are so crucial to success at A level.

In this policy, 'course' and 'subject' are used interchangeably to mean a single A level studied over two years.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the following documents:

- Fitness to Study Policy
- Academic Support Procedure

2. Scope

Woodhouse College is committed to providing its students with effective academic and pastoral support. The aim is to ensure that students have access to a framework of support that builds on best practice, meets the needs of students, and is of a quality and consistency appropriate to our college which has a strong reputational standing. The framework is designed to provide consistent quality of provision, while also helping students to monitor their progress and performance more systematically and relate these to their longer-term aspirations. It blends a clear set of college-wide requirements, well-understood by all students and staff, with scope for tutors to tailor provision to reflect differences.

Within Woodhouse, the tutorial (pastoral) system is a key element of academic and pastoral support for our students. The tutor is a key role, and every student has a tutor who provides a readily accessible, primary point of contact for academic guidance and pastoral support (signposting to student support services), to help tutees reflect on their academic progress and get the most out of their studies. They will help their tutees to take an active partnership approach to learning.

3. Causes of poor academic progress

We have identified three main reasons for poor academic progress:

- students are hindered by health and well-being challenges;
- students struggle with the academic challenge of the course;
- students have poor attendance and/or do not work hard enough.

Our approach is very different in these three different scenarios, and we tailor our support to individual circumstances in every case.

4. Students with health and wellbeing challenges

Students with major health and well-being challenges who are not making the expected academic progress may be supported through the Fitness to Study Policy, though parts of this policy may apply at points in their Woodhouse journey.

5. Support for students who struggle with the academic challenge of the course

Linear A levels are extremely challenging and success at GCSE does not always mean students will make good progress at A level. When students are working very hard and still struggling to understand the content and develop the necessary skills, we put a significant amount of support in place:

Academic support

Academic support is provided beyond lessons in a myriad of ways within subject departments, including:

- Access to additional resources and material
- Upper sixth mentoring
- One to one help from teachers
- Small group 'booster' sessions for struggling students

Additional support

Beyond subject departments, support is provided :

- To students with identified Additional Learning Support (ALS) needs through the ALS department.
- Support is also provided by Student Progress Managers to students who need help with time management and study skills.
- Referral to Barnet Mentoring scheme where more holistic support is needed
- Other referral and signposting to wider student services team for additional pastoral support if appropriate

6. Students with poor attendance or who do not work hard enough

We have evidence from many years of data that students who do not work hard enough and/or have poor attendance/punctuality will make poor academic progress. As we are trying to prepare our students for university and careers, we allow our students more freedoms than they have often been used to in schools, such as free periods and being allowed off site when they don't have a lesson. Most students transition well to this, and we provide a huge amount of support to help students develop the required independent learning skills to succeed in this environment. However, some students do not make this transition well, and this usually manifests itself in students missing and being late for lessons, and not working hard enough. Because we want every student to achieve their potential, we do not tolerate this and use our Academic Support, Attendance and Punctuality and Behaviour Disciplinary processes to ensure these students are challenged and supported to change their learning behaviours.

7. The process

Intervention

When teachers are concerned that a student is not making the expected academic progress, they will put an intervention in place, setting the student targets and providing support to help them improve. If there is still no improvement after a few weeks, they will put the student on a 'Stage 1 learning contract' with targets and support provided.

Stage 1

This will be instigated when a student makes less progress than expected. They could also be placed on the stage for incomplete work and /or missing assessment. A meeting will be held between teacher and student to clearly outline the issue and put in any necessary support for students to meet the targets set.

Stage 2

If the student continues to make poor academic progress, the teacher will close the Stage 1 Learning Contract and the Head of Department (HoD) will create a Stage 2 Learning Contract. At Stage 2 the HoD will ensure there is further support provided as outlined above which could include a referral to a Student Progress Manager. Students will have four hours of directed study (silent supervised study) added to their timetable at Stage 2.

In addition to failing to make progress whilst on a Stage 1 contract, students may also be placed directly onto a Stage 2 contract if they are failing key assessments in one subject. This would be a supportive measure to ensure appropriate interventions are put in place.

Stage 3

If underachievement is likely and progression is jeopardized, a student is put on this stage by their Head of Year. This includes students who do not meet their Stage 2 targets, have poor Attitude to learning (ATL) or Completing work (CW) in two or more subjects in reports, and students who are failing key assessment in two or more subjects. This entails four hours of directed study with the student encouraged to complete further independent work in the library or other study areas. At stage 3 they will meet with a Student Progress Manager for a short weekly course in time management and study skills, as well as continuing to receive additional support from the subject departments.

Where a student has not met their Stage 3 targets despite continued supportive intervention, they will meet with their Head of Year and the Head of Student Progress and Tutoring (HSPT) for a review meeting. At this stage new targets may set, and students will be expected to demonstrate engagement and progress. The HSPT will explain to the student that the consequence of failing the contract is a temporary exclusion, followed by a meeting with the Principal and a parent/carers. During this meeting the student would need to convince the Principal that they deserved to continue at Woodhouse, and if they are allowed to continue it would be under very strict targets. The decision may be that they can continue but will be withdrawn from some of their courses. If they are not allowed to continue they would be offered the option of withdrawal instead of permanent exclusion.

Where a student is on Stage 2 and likely to end up on stage 3, or on stage 3 and likely to fail, we may say that if they do not pass the targets they will have to drop one of their subjects or change it to an AS if this is available. This would be particularly where they lack the motivation

to work hard enough on all three A levels, or where students are unable to access the academic content of the course despite support and their best.

8. Changing course

In some cases, students find it so hard to access the academic content of their chosen course that they cannot make progress, no matter how much hard work they put in and how much support they are given. In these circumstances and if it is during the first half term of the first year, we take steps to ensure these students change onto a subject in which they can succeed. There is more detail on this process under Initial diagnostic tests.

9. Student involvement and parental contact

We want parents/carers to be aware when a student is receiving support, so every academic and attendance contract is emailed home within 24 hours.

Each time a student is placed on an academic contract, the teacher will have a discussion with the student, and parents/carers will receive an email copy of the targets. Teachers will call home. Parents/carers are welcome to contact teachers at any point to discuss concerns.

At Stages 2 and 3 the HoY, HoD or HSPT sees the student when a contract is created to discuss the targets and our expectations. We will attempt to speak to the parent/carer on the phone and will arrange a meeting with them and the student.

Please see the 'Academic Support Procedure' document for more detail on procedures at each stage.

10. Intervention points and actions over the two-year course period

Interventions and support are tailored to the individual student but also to how far through the two-year journey they are. While monitoring, support and intervention by teachers are continuous, there are some major assessment and reporting points when teachers, HoDs, HoYs and Senior Leaders will make decisions about the academic support and challenge required for students who are not making the expected academic progress. These assessments and reporting points are detailed in the sections below.

11. Initial diagnostic assessments

Every lower sixth student takes diagnostic assessments in all their subjects within the first few weeks of starting at Woodhouse. This is so that teachers can tailor lessons and differentiate to the needs of their class. The assessments are carefully designed to assess the ability of the student to learn A level content. We have an internal system whereby each student is rated Red, Amber or Green by their teacher to reflect their effort and progress during the first weeks of the course.

AMBER students have shown that they can cope with the demands of A level study in that subject but are not yet working in the right way to ensure success.

RED students have made very a poor start, and we have concerns about their ability to work to A level standard in these subjects.

These students will be set targets by their teacher, Head of Department or Head of Year to help them improve ahead of the first set of formal reports in November. In certain subjects, particularly maths and the sciences, our data shows that significant underperformance in diagnostic assessments is closely correlated with an E or U grade in the final exams. As we do not want students to waste two years studying a course they are likely to fail or gain a low grade in, we suggest they change to a more suitable course.

This is the process we follow if a RED concern is raised:

The HoD meets with the student and parent/carer to discuss changing to different subject (if a student has a Red rating in two or more subjects it will be a HoY). If it is not possible for the parent to come in for a meeting it will be discussed on the phone/ virtually. If we cannot get hold of a parent we will still proceed with the student.

If the student does not change subjects (either because they don't want to or it is not appropriate or possible), they will be placed on an academic stage 2 contract under this Policy, with their progress being monitored closely.

Students on contracts who are continuing with subjects will then work their way through the process, as described above.

12. Year group interventions and actions

Lower Sixth (L6)

Throughout year 1 the interventions and support detailed in this policy will take place as appropriate for students making poor academic progress. After report cycles teachers, HoDs and HoYs will place students with poor Attitude to Learning, Completing Work and Skill Development grades on academic contracts, as well as those failing key assessments.

L6 January exams and end of Spring term review

Students who get D, E or U grades in one subject in the January exams will be placed on a Stage 2 academic contract by that department and supported as detailed above. If they were already on Stage 2 and they will be moved to Stage 3.

Students with more than one E or U grade will be placed on a stage 3 contract by a HoY. If they were already on a stage 3 contract and the grade is due to insufficient work and/or poor attendance, they will be moved onto a contract with the HSPT.

Student progress will be reviewed against these targets by the end of the spring term.

Students who have not made expected progress towards their targets, be they academic or attendance, will move up to the next stage of our system.

L6 Summer exams

The summer exams are an excellent measure of how much of the year 1 content a student has understood. Students who get E or U grades in these exams are in a very precarious position to start the harder upper sixth (U6) as they do not have the knowledge and skills to build upon. If it is clear from their results that a student is doing the wrong subjects or is not suited

to academic study, it is a good time to accept this and make a change in their study programme and/or place of study to ensure they can progress and do not waste a year of their lives. We endeavour to do the right thing for the student and sometimes this means we have to help them make difficult choices.

Academic contracts for students with E/U grades

Ahead of the resit exams, students who get an E or U grade in one subject in the summer exams will be placed on a Stage 2 academic contract by the HoD, or moved up to a Stage 3 contract with the HoY or HSPT if already on Stage 3. Students with more than one E or U grade will be placed on a Stage 3 contract by a HoY. If they were already on a stage 3 academic support contract before these exams and a student gets multiple E/U grades they may be asked to withdraw.

Students now on Stage 3 and their parents will meet with their HoY (or HSPT if they were already on Stage 3) and discuss the implications of their poor progress. Students with multiple E/U grades are made aware that our data shows that they are likely to get a low grade or fail the final exams. HoYs will explore the best options for them. We will organise for them to see the careers adviser as it is important they have viable alternative options should following the resits they are not able to remain at Woodhouse College.

Summer exam resit

If the student wants to remain at Woodhouse and continue into the second year of their courses, they will have to do a large amount of work to show that they have the required knowledge and understanding to tackle the second-year content. They will take a resit exam in each of the subjects they got an E or U before the summer holiday. The purpose of the resit exams is to show that students have sufficient knowledge to progress to the second year of their courses and the resit result therefore does not alter the student's UCAS grade. If a student gets at least an E in each exam they can continue at Woodhouse.

If they get *any* U grades in the resits the following will happen:

- If they pass two subjects (i.e. get a minimum of an E grade) they will not be allowed to continue all three subjects at Woodhouse. In most cases this would mean the student should move to a different college, perhaps restarting with different subjects or alternative courses e.g. T levels or vocational qualifications. In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Principal the student will be permitted to continue with two subjects, dropping the subject they have not improved in. To remain a full-time student, they will have 8 periods of directed study added to their timetable. If the U grade is in science or maths it may be possible for them to take an AS in one of the subjects instead of a full A level. This would usually require them to attend L6 lessons in the subject.

Students must be aware that studying two A levels is not something that can be agreed to lightly as it limits the options for progression available. Woodhouse is funded on the basis that students study 3 or 4 A levels. In addition, most universities expect students to sit their A levels in the same year unless there are serious extenuating circumstances or they are resitting exams.

- If the student has U grades in *two or three* of their subjects, they will be asked to

withdraw as they have not got enough knowledge and understanding to be successful in their A level exams and they cannot continue at Woodhouse with one A level. We will refer these students to a careers adviser who will help them apply elsewhere.

Where a student's programme of study is changing significantly e.g. three A levels down to two or they are withdrawing a meeting will be arranged with the Principal or member of the College Leadership Team.

Upper Sixth (U6) Autumn term

Throughout U6 the interventions and support detailed in policy will take place as appropriate for students making poor academic progress. After report cycles teachers, HoDs and HoYs will place students with poor Attitude to Learning, Completing Work and Skill Development grades on academic contracts, as well as those failing key assessments.

U6 November and February mocks

Students who get an E or U grade in one subject in the November or February mock exams will be placed on a Stage 2 academic contracts by that department and supported as detailed above. If they were already on Stage 2 and they will be moved to Stage 3.

Students with more than one E or U grade will be placed on a stage 3 contract by a HoY. If they were already on a stage 3 contract and the grade is due to insufficient work and/or poor attendance they will be moved on to a contract with the HSPT.

Students who get a U grade in a subject they got a U grade in during the L6 summer exams may be required to drop this subject.

Year 2 Final exam entries

Between February mocks and study leave, if a student is continuing to not work hard enough and/or still has poor attendance despite all the intervention and support provided, we may decide not to enter them for an exam in one or more subjects.

This would happen as part of a Stage 3 contract and the student may be offered the opportunity to take AS qualifications instead of the full A level if the course allows for this.

13. Requests to repeat the year

If a student would like to retake Year 12 or Year 13, it is important to understand that the college is only funded to allow for this under very special circumstances.

In the case of health conditions, a serious illness may have contributed to missing significant parts of the initial first or second year of study. This would be considered as part of the college Fitness to Study process.

There may be other extenuating circumstances unrelated to a health condition e.g. the death of a primary carer, which have caused a student's learning and attendance to be severely disrupted. These would be considered by the Principal when making her decision.

It is the Principal's discretion whether to allow a student to retake the year: there is no right to do so and students cannot appeal against the Principal's final decision.

To apply to repeat the year, students should email their Head of Year in the first instance, clearly stating in the subject line: Year 12 Repeat or Year 13 Repeat, followed by their full name and ID number. Any supporting correspondence should be attached to the email.