

John Carroll University Educational Policy Proposal

Date: Fall 2018

Authors/Sponsors: University Committee on Educational Policies

Policy Name: Academic Sanctions

Time Sensitivity: Part of *Undergraduate Bulletin* revision cycle

Current University Policy

Academic Warning

Students are placed on warning whenever their semester average drops below 2.0 while their cumulative average remains above this minimum, or when the cumulative average is above the levels for probation, but below 2.0. Such students receive notice of academic warning and may be excluded by their assistant dean from certain extracurricular activities. Averages are computed to two decimal places and truncated, not rounded.

Academic Probation

Academic Probation is the status of any student whose cumulative average falls below these standards:

0-12	earned hours	1.75	25-47 earned hours	1.90
13-24	earned hours	1.80	after 48 earned hours	2.00

Probation is imposed by the University at the end of any semester in which the cumulative average is below these standards and continues for at least one semester until the required average is earned. Students on probation are subject to the following restrictions:

1. They may not register for a course load greater than they carried during the semester immediately preceding notice of probation. Normally registration is limited to 12-13 semester hours; in no case may a student on probation register for more than 15 semester hours.
2. Student athletes are not permitted to travel with varsity teams for competition, though they may be on the bench in street clothes for home contests. In order to practice while on probation, a student may initiate a "Permission to Practice Procedure," which involves having discussions with, and obtaining signatures from, the coach, Director of Athletics, Faculty Athletics Representative, and Associate Dean for

Academic Advising (or designee) and which must be processed by the designee in the Office of the Registrar. If the student chooses to continue to practice with the team, a season of participation will be charged to their eligibility. Travel is not restricted if outside the FALL/SPRING academic calendar year and approval by coach/athletic administrator is required.

3. They may not pledge a fraternity or sorority, or hold any elective or appointive office on campus.

Dismissal

Students are subject to dismissal for academic deficiencies by the University if they are placed on probation for two successive semesters or if their grades decline while on probation status in any semester, or if they fail more than one course in any semester. Students who have been academically dismissed may not apply for reinstatement until at least one full semester and one summer have elapsed. Students who have been academically dismissed twice may not apply for reinstatement.

New University Policy

Good Academic Standing

Students maintain Good Academic Standing at the University by earning a cumulative 2.0 grade point average or better overall and satisfactorily completing at least 12 credits hours per semester. Grade point averages are computed to two decimal places and truncated, not rounded.

Academic Sanctions

The University issues academic sanctions to students not in Good Academic Standing as a means to support successful degree completion. These sanctions, including Academic Warning, Academic Probation, and Suspension, alert students to renew their focus and attention on their educational progress and plans.

Academic Warning

Students are placed on Academic Warning whenever their semester average drops below 2.0 while their cumulative average remains above this minimum.

The University reserves the right to consider other indicators of satisfactory progress toward degree completion in its determination of Academic Warning. These indicators include an unsatisfactory grade

point average in the major (as required by the department¹) or Boler Core (below a 2.0 GPA), or multiple course Failures and Withdrawals. Students may remain on Academic Warning for two consecutive semesters. Students who do not improve their academic record after two semesters on Warning will be placed on Academic Probation.

Academic Probation

Students are placed on Academic Probation when their cumulative grade point average drops below a 2.0, or who have been on Academic Warning for two consecutive semesters. Students on Probation are subject to the following restrictions:

1. Course registration is limited to 12-13 semester hours.
2. Varsity student-athletes may not compete nor travel with teams for competition. They may sit on the bench at home competitions, but not in uniform. In order to practice while on Academic Probation, a student may initiate a "Permission to Practice Procedure," which involves signatures of approval and must be processed in the Office of the Registrar. The student will be charged a season of eligibility for team practice. Summer team travel is permitted with Coach and Athletic Director approvals.
3. They may not pledge a fraternity or sorority, or hold any elective or appointive office on campus.

Students remain on Academic Probation for at least one semester until the 2.0 cumulative grade point average is earned. Probationary status may extend for up to two, consecutive semesters.

Suspension

Students are subject to Suspension after two consecutive terms on Academic Probation. Students who are academically suspended are not eligible for readmission until at least one full Fall or Spring semester and one summer have elapsed.

Readmission

Students on academic Suspension may apply for readmission by contacting the Office of Admission and completing a returning student application in the term prior to the semester they are eligible to return

¹ Some departments require a higher GPA for students in their majors. Students should consult with their respective departments for information on the GPA requirement to be admitted to or to continue in that major.

(i.e., apply in the fall semester for readmission in the spring). Readmission is not guaranteed, and will not be granted prior to the required suspension period of one full Fall or Spring semester and one summer have elapsed. The earliest a suspended student may return to the University and resume taking classes would be the semester immediately following the required period of suspension. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Admission regarding returning student application deadline dates, which may be several weeks prior to the desired semester of return.

Readmitted students enroll for a probationary semester upon their return and are subject to credit hour and grade point average requirements for continued enrollment, as indicated in the readmission letter.

Dismissal

A readmitted student who returns from Suspension and continues not to meet Good Academic Standing benchmarks will be dismissed from the University and not eligible to return.

Appeals

Students may not appeal the sanctions of Academic Warning and Probation. They may appeal academic Suspension and Dismissal and do so by contacting the Chair of the Academic Standing Committee. Grounds for an appeal include GPA miscalculations or administrative error. Further information regarding the appeals process will be included in the notification email and letter. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Academic Standing Committee and received within five business days of the notification email sent date. The Academic Standing Committee will review and process appeals and related communications during regular University business days.

Rationale and Discussion

Revisions to the University's academic sanctions policy were considered in the context of retention and successful degree completion. The revised language now provides an introduction for the purpose of academic sanctions—as a meaningful alert to students who are not making satisfactory academic progress toward degree completion. The policy defines “Academic Good Standing” as a 2.0 minimum cumulative grade point average and completion of 12 credit hours per semester. The expanded Academic Warning sanction incorporates other indicators of

satisfactory progress, such as the grade point average in the major or Boler Core.

Other key updates include the following: the alignment of terms used in the academic sanctions process with those in Student Life sanctions (suspension and dismissal); two semester sanction limits (for both Probation and Warning) so students do not drift too long not meeting Academic Good Standing; the inclusion of an appeals process for suspension and dismissal sanctions; the clarification of the time frames for communicating and receiving communications regarding sanctions; and, finally, the formalization of the Academic Standing Committee with a Chairperson.

The revised policy establishes a 2.0 as the minimum grade point average for Good Academic Standing, an update that replaces the graduated scale in the current *Bulletin*. The 2.0 standard was determined after analysis of historical institutional data (see Appendix), discussion with campus colleagues, and national benchmarking. The Committee learned that a 2.0 is the minimum required grade point average to be in good standing with College Credit Plus. Most importantly, however, the 2.0 is the minimum grade point average for degree completion at John Carroll.

In addition to national benchmarking, UCEP consulted with colleagues across campus during the review of this policy and supporting data. The Committee consulted with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Dean of Students, Office of Financial Aid, Director of Athletics, and Academic Standing Committee members, as examples.

Implementation Timeline, Budget, and Recommendations

The revised policy would go into effect with the forthcoming *Undergraduate Bulletin*. In addition to the *Bulletin*, UCEP would inform the Academic Standing Committee and Office of the Registrar of this policy update for planning purposes. UCEP supports the communication of Good Academic Standing benchmarks to students, especially in academic advising, as one way to communicate the University's expectations for timely degree completion. Lastly, UCEP invites broader University discussion on the identification of, and investment in, academic support resources and services. No budget implications were identified.

Appendix

GPA and Retention Data: Analysis for Academic Sanctions Policy

Based on data for JCU students who have enrolled since 2012, there is a strong connection between a GPA of 2.0 and higher at the end of their first semester and a student's continuation at and eventual graduation from JCU. As seen in Table 1 below, since 2012, 42% of students with a GPA of 2.0 or lower at the end of the first semester left (either because of academic dismissal or other reasons). The percentage of students with a GPA of 1.75 or lower who will leave increases to 50%. Meanwhile, the likelihood of students who continue at JCU increases as GPA rises. For students with a GPA between 2.0 and 2.5, only 27% do not stay. For students with a GPA of 2.5 or higher, 13.6% do not continue.

Most compelling, however, is that only approximately 7% of students with a GPA of 2.0 or lower at the end of their first term have gone on to graduate from JCU. While further disaggregation of the data suggests that students with lower ACT scores, or lower high school GPAs, are more likely to have a lower GPA at the end of their first semester at John Carroll, there is no one, clear variable contributing to low GPAs. Nor does there appear to be a specific population (commuters, athletes, etc.) that is struggling that the Committee can identify for additional or targeted outreach.

Given all of this, earlier intervention would be a critical step forward in better supporting students. Alerting students sooner that their academic progress is in jeopardy would enable them to seek additional resources, change majors, etc. before it puts their ability to graduate in a timely manner at risk. Changing the minimum GPA requirement to 2.0 or higher will provide additional support to our retention efforts, while also supporting students' timely degree completion.

Table 1. Cumulative Term GPA and Retention Numbers for All JCU Students Since 2012

GPA	Number in Cohort	Number Not Retained	Percent Not Retained
below 1.75	130	65	50.0%
1.75 to 1.79	11	3	27.3%
1.80 to 1.84	11	6	54.5%
1.85 to 1.89	17	3	17.6%
1.90 to 1.94	29	7	24.1%
1.95 to 1.99	9	3	33.3%
2.00 to 2.24	135	38	28.1%
2.25 to 2.50	221	58	26.2%
above 2.50	3771	513	13.6%
Total under 2.00 not retained	207	87	42.03%
Total 2.00-2.50 not retained	356	96	26.97%

Notes: The cohort is all students who started at JCU as first-time, first-year students since 2012. GPA reflects their GPA at the beginning of their second semester of enrollment. Until recently, students were not coded consistently for the reason of their separation from the university.