Academic Progress Committee hearing checklist for Chairs and Executive Officers - student is in attendance

Committee panel pre-discussion

- We are here to help the student tell their side of the story; we should keep an open mind and be respectful of the student’s circumstances that have brought them here.
  - summarise case
- During the course of the hearing you will be assessing what the student has to say
  - Is there an explanation for poor performance?
  - Weighing up of contributing factors
  - What assistance could be given?
  - Will they succeed if they continue?
  - Were reasonable accommodations provided to a student with a disability during the period of poor performance?
- At the end of the hearing we will try to seek a consensus – but you can vote differently to the majority.
- We need to be mindful that this is as open a process as possible – What would an outsider think? and How would I like my family/friends to be treated?
  - Have you reviewed the documentation?
  - Have you any conflict of interest or prior conflict with any of the students?
- Issues that may affect procedure from a student and student rights perspective include focus on the student
  - Phones should be off and not be referred to during the hearing unless exceptional reasons e.g. for a student to check notes and for language support. A student must seek permission from the chair and with due consideration e.g. turn the phone to silent mode.
- Confirm whether the student has an alt exit option

Committee hearing (suggested wording is in bold)

Welcome and introductions

- Invite student in (and student’s support person) ‘Welcome and thank you for attending’. 
  - If a virtual hearing, call the student and support person in from the waiting room
- The chair asks the student ‘are you well enough to proceed with the hearing?’
  - Does the student show any signs of psychological distress such as a complete lack of emotion, flat responses, confusion, not understanding the questions or intense signs of fear, despair or anger?
- Introduce the student ‘Are you happy for us to call you…’. Introduce yourself / let the panel members introduce themselves.
- If the hearing is being held by tele/video conference, Chair asks the student ‘can you clearly hear everything that is being said?’ and to let the panel know if any issues with the quality of the connection occur.
- If the student has decided against having a support person, ‘I note that you did not ask for someone to support you today. That is completely your choice however we have a Student Advocacy and Support Advisor on standby, we can ask them to support you if you like although they cannot represent you’
  - If the student does require support you will need to briefly adjourn the hearing to contact the Monash Student Organisation (MSO) who will have a student advisor on
stand by. The advisor should be given 10-15 minutes at least to talk to the student before the hearing continues.

- Chair asks ‘do you have any objections to members of the panel and potentially feel that there is a conflict of interest or that you won't get a fair hearing?’. The student should have provided an objection in advance of the meeting so asking this should be a formality however if this does happen at the hearing the student can only ask that the hearing be adjourned (in order for the objection to be reviewed) in exceptional circumstances and evidence must be provided (see APC Procedure 2.16-2.17). The APC chair is responsible for considering and determining if there are exceptional circumstances that exist beyond the students control.

Confirm all documentation
- Describe the documents and evidence that will be considered by the panel.
- Ask the student, ‘did you receive all the documents in advance of the hearing?’
- Ask if there is any additional documentation
  - If additional documentation is provided at the hearing the chair can decide to briefly adjourn whilst the panel reviews this.
  - If there are a significant number of documents the Chair can decide to briefly adjourn the hearing in order for the panel to ascertain whether the documentation will help determine the case and will either reschedule the hearing (for a date to be agreed with the student) or dismiss the documentation.

Begin proceedings
- ‘As you know we are here to consider your academic performance, the reasons for it, and how you would plan to succeed if given an opportunity to continue.’
  - ‘I'll start off, and, as the hearing continues, other panel members may ask you questions’
  - ‘You can confer with your support person(Student Advisor/Student Rights Officer (SRO) when you feel you need to’
  - ‘Before we deliberate we will ask you to sum up or add anything else, and also give you an opportunity to discontinue if you wish’
  - ‘Sometimes you may need to talk about deeply personal issues; anything you say will be held in the strictest confidence’
- ‘Can you briefly summarise how your studies were affected during the last semester’
- The Chair provides an overview of the student’s academic history
- ‘I acknowledge that COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns has probably affected your studies’
- Point out the positives:
  - ‘I can see you passed x&y, well done on that achievement’
  - ‘I can see that you really want to do well and improve’
  - ‘I can see that you are trying to get well and are reaching out for support that you need’

Committee asks additional questions for the student to respond, for example:
- If student has outlined health or mental health issues affecting their studies ‘Do you have the support that you need now in order to continue your studies’
- ‘Can you explain what is going to be different next semester?’
- ‘What are your reasons for [career aspirations e.g. becoming a teacher]’
- ‘Why did you not reach out for support when offered to you?’
- ‘What will you do if you are allowed to successfully continue with your course?’
- ‘Have you ever considered dropping a unit or enrolling part time?’
- ‘Have you ever met with your course director to manage your enrolment?’
● ‘Do you still feel this is the right degree for you?’
● Pick up cues and ask questions:
  o ‘I can see you’re sitting in a gamers chair. Is that taking up a lot of your time?’
Close the first part of the hearing
● ‘Ok, this is the end of the hearing – do you have anything else you would like to add that you haven’t already told us in your documents or in this meeting?’
● ‘You can spend up to 5 minutes to speak to your support person outside and consider if you want to withdraw from your course – this opportunity is given to all students and is no reflection of what you have presented or what the committee may decide. Do you wish to do so?’
  o If student says no to the break, ‘I would encourage that you do so to discuss your options with your support person’
  o Student and SRO can leave the room but door is kept open
    ▪ For online hearings, refer to the student and support person to a break out room
  o The panel cannot discuss the case at all during the adjournment
  o Student returns and gives their decision
    ▪ If the student chooses to discontinue they must complete the Request for Course Discontinuation that day otherwise the hearing will be reconvened.
    ▪ If the student chooses to continue, ask the student to leave while deliberations take place. ‘We’re now going to deliberate and will call you back in a few minutes’
      ● For online hearings, refer the student back to the waiting room

Panel deliberation

● The committee must form a decision that is logical, rational, reasonable, well-founded and based on evidence. These reasons will be scrutinised if a student appeals.
● Consider all evidence of ability, strategy, commitment or changed circumstances and weigh each factor according to its significance or importance in a considered manner. This includes:
  o The student's entire Monash academic record. This is the student's entire academic record as at the time that the APC is making its decision and therefore will include any units in teaching periods following the teaching period in which the APC process was initiated. The only units that should not be considered are units from which a student withdraws prior to the census date where the APC is making its decision in the same teaching period but after the census date. This is because such a unit is neither a current unit nor a withdrawn unit.
  o Evidence provided by a treating medical practitioner or other professional (i.e. explanation of the condition and its impact on the student's study during the impacted period, treatment plan and prognosis for the student's likely future impact, and dates that the student was affected)
    ▪ Engagement (or non-engagement) with recommendations made at a course progression meeting or through My Progress and Support (if applicable in a previous review period)
    ▪ Any relevant academic misconduct.
    ▪ Does the student have any interim grades? OGC advice is clear that students with interim results from the review period that the hearing relates
to should not be excluded because the panel cannot consider the student’s full academic history, and is a challengeable decision.

- The student’s future prospects of success with appropriate supports, the reasonable likelihood that the student can sufficiently improve academic performance, and factors relevant to the likelihood they will complete the course of study.

**Student returns to be informed of the outcome**

**Panel decision**

**Student is to remain in course**

- “The committee has decided to allow you to continue in your course”
- “We have placed some conditions on your enrolment and/or recommendations – these will be also be confirmed by email to you”
- “Thank you for your attendance”

**Student excluded**

- ‘Having had regard for the documents provided, your written response, and the material presented today including your answers to the committee’s questions; the committee has decided to exclude you from your course’
- ‘The committee was not convinced that you took sufficient actions to address the indicators that your progress and performance were unsatisfactory and is therefore not confident that you would succeed if you were allowed to continue’
- ‘While the committee heard your plans for the coming year, it is not persuaded that these will lead to success in the future’
- ‘Your course does allow you to take an alternative exit meaning you will leave the course with a [name of award]. Please think carefully about whether you would like to accept the award. If you do, you will be unable to appeal the decision to exclude you from your course. If you do not take the alternative exit, you will be unable to request this once your exclusion has been confirmed’
- ‘This decision will also be confirmed by email – in addition this email will explain your right to appeal should you wish to exercise it, and how to access support’
- ‘You can talk to your SRO (If zoom, offer a break out room) or I can ask a member of the faculty to walk with you to the university counselling service if you need some more help?’
- ‘If you have any questions, you can ask the professional staff who’ve been emailing you, or your student association/support person here with you today’
- It is good for professional staff to check with both the student and SRO after they walk out the room. At this point the student may ask questions about how to re-apply for entry into this or other courses. For most students the outcome may not necessarily be a surprise so the conversation is generally a positive one – in some cases the student may not be prepared for the outcome and it may be worthwhile to reiterate what exclusion means in terms of their opportunity to evaluate their real commitment and /or heading / repositioning / rethinking their career goals.

**In case of direct confrontational discussion following decision some approaches could be:**

*Updated November 2021*
● ‘The committee has taken this into consideration in reaching its decision and a reason has been provided’
● ‘At this point your hearing is closed – you have a right to appeal outside this hearing and your Notice of Decision will tell you how to do this’

(Following the hearing an email will be sent to the student’s Monash account outlining the decision of the committee. SROs will be available to discuss the decision in more detail)

CONTACT NUMBERS:

Monash Student Organisations
Australia
Caulfield - Monash Student Union - 9903 2525
Clayton/Parkville - Monash Student Association - 9905 3138
Parkville - Monash Parkville Student Union - 9903 9309
Peninsula - MONSU Peninsula - 9904 4217
Graduate students - Monash Graduate Association - 9905 3197

Malaysia
Monash University Student Association - +60 3 5514 6000
Monash University Postgraduate Association - SC-2-01, Level 1, Monash Sports Centre

Health and wellbeing
In Australia
Emergency contacts:
Safer Community Unit - advice, support and info to help in difficult or risky situations - 9905 1599
Emergency support - 9905 3333 or 333 from a Monash phone (24 hours)
General security enquiries - 9905 3059

University Health Services (9am - 5pm):
Clayton - 9905 3175 - Caulfield - 9903 1177 - Peninsula - 9904 4615

Counselling services (9am - 5pm)
Caulfield – 9903 2500 - Clayton - 9905 3156 - Gippsland – 5122 6425 or 9902 6425
Parkville - 9903 9635 - Peninsula – 9904 4223. After hours counselling (EAP) - 1800 350 359

In Malaysia
Security (24 hours)
For emergencies on campus - +603 5514 6333 - For all other security enquiries - +603 5514 6065
Counselling services - +603-5514 6057 - Mental health emergency hotline (24 hrs) - 012 431 1562

In China (South East University) -
Contact Student and Staff Assistance Program on +86 512 62872219

Outside of Australia
From Malaysia: 1800 818 356 (toll free) - From elsewhere: +61 2 8295 2917
Benestar phone counselling service on 1300 788 336 (24/7)
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay - Contact Student Wellness Centre on 9769340435

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