

What can we learn from students who are terminated from their studies?

Terminating a student for unsatisfactory academic performance is clearly a negative outcome for both the student and the institution at which he/she has been enrolled. At Curtin University, a series of information sessions are offered to terminated students at the end of each semester, at which students are provided with information about their options and are connected to further avenues of support. For the past several years, the University has also collected some data from the participants at the sessions. This paper will present the collated findings from these sessions. These findings indicate that students who have been terminated have typically not used support services in the period prior to termination. The discussion will include the reasons students attribute to their academic failure and why they have not accessed support – and will make suggestions on strategies to intervene more actively at an earlier point in their student career.

Key Words

Unsatisfactory performance, student progress, student support

Introduction

At the end of each study period, Curtin University students are provided with an Academic Status along with the particular results for individual units of study. Academic Status is an indicator of satisfactory progress. Students who have made satisfactory progress are advised that they are on Good Standing. Students who are giving cause for concern are advised that they are on Conditional Status. Those who will not be permitted to continue in their course are assigned a Terminated Status. Other universities will use different terminology and there may be some variation in the criteria used from one institution to another, but the broad structure of this model will be familiar to all involved in higher education. Whilst there are a small number of students assigned Terminated status on disciplinary grounds (such as academic misconduct), by far the majority of cases will be on the grounds of poor academic performance.

At Curtin, a student may be placed on Terminated status under the following circumstances:

- Termination should only occur after the student has previously been placed on Conditional status at some point in the course and should not be based on results achieved in a single study period.
- A decision to terminate a student must be based on academic performance over at least two, and generally three, study periods – usually the most recent study periods in which the student had an enrolment.
- A student will not normally be terminated on academic performance grounds on the basis of their results in their first and second study periods alone.

When we explore the implications of these circumstances, it indicates that a student who is terminated has been experiencing academic failure over a considerable time period. The student would have received a warning that things were not satisfactory by being placed on Conditional status. And of course, the student must have failed individual units, probably

with poor results in at least two successive semesters. It surely can come as no surprise to those individual students when they are advised that they have been terminated. Or can it?

The authors of this paper have had a long history of individual contact with such students. Our respective experience includes roles as counsellor, international student advisor and Guild student advisor. These are typically the services that students are directed to on receipt of their academic results. These services have often been taken aback to note that some students appeared to be astonished that they had been terminated – and that many seemed to be unaware that this had even been a risk. They had, of course, known that they had failed units. But they professed not to know anything about Academic Status until officially advised they had been terminated. In some cases, they were even unaware of their Terminated status until they attempted to re-enrol. Nonetheless, at the time of the release of results, our respective services are in heavy demand from this group.

The following vignettes will serve to illustrate the diversity of student issues which can impact upon their studies resulting in them being placed on terminated status. (These are actual examples of student's situations however names and course details have been changed)

Case One

John, a 21 year old student and recent migrant to Australia was at the end of the second year of his degree when he received the official communication from the university that he had been placed on terminated status. John's academic record over his past four semesters revealed a very erratic pattern, ranging from distinction passes to major failures. In assisting John with his termination appeal, it quickly became apparent that this was the first time John had talked to anyone about the problems he was experiencing and how these had affected his studies.

John was an only child and had moved to Australia with his parents only a few months before commencing his course. Extended family in his home country were providing financial support for John's studies. However his father did not approve of the fact that John was "wasting time" in University and thought he should be out in the work force. As a consequence of this John found study at home impossible and quickly fell behind in his course. To compound this John felt that he could neither discuss his family situation at university or his university situation at home.

Case Two

International student Betty was placed on terminated status at the end of her third semester after receiving "Fail– incomplete" grades for 3 of the 5 units she had just completed. Although Betty had failed a unit the previous semester, placing her on "Conditional Status", the issues that directly resulted in the termination could be attributed to the events of the past semester. Towards the midpoint of the semester, Betty had become aware that her parents, whom she had not seen since beginning her course, were experiencing significant problems in their relationship to the point that they were considering separation and divorce. This situation was further compounded by the news that her grandfather had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and given only a matter of weeks to live. Betty lacked confidence in her spoken English and felt unable to talk about her situation with her School. She took the decision to immediately fly home to be with her family and as a consequence fell behind in her assignments and missed the submission deadlines.

So what became of John and Betty? As a result of accessing assistance with his termination appeal, John was able to take stock of his situation and chose not to appeal. He used the following twelve months to build a stronger relationship with his father and subsequently successfully applied for re-admission to his course. He has progressed well and is now 2 units away from graduation. Betty was successful in appealing her termination, and as a result, her self esteem and self confidence have improved tremendously.

The whole issue of terminating students from their studies is obviously a matter of concern. Student retention is an issue of high priority in higher education. The university loses those students who do not re-enrol for a range of reasons; and those who are asked to leave. The former group represents a larger proportion of student attrition, but those who the university terminates are not insignificant numbers. The scale of the issue at Curtin is illustrated in the table below.

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Table 1: Students on Conditional Status and Terminated Status 2009

	Conditional Status at the end of Semester Two	Terminated Status at the end of Semester Two
Australian	2509	351
New Zealander	14	2
Permanent Resident excl Humanitarian	123	22
Temporary Entrant Permit	1589	218
Overseas Student Residing Overseas	1039	102
Permanent Humanitarian Visa	18	3
Residential status not entered	35	0
Total	5327	698

These figures indicate that of a total enrolment near 40,000 students, approximately 13% were on Conditional status and 2% were on Terminated status at the end of 2009. In approximate terms again, roughly thirteen per cent of Conditional status students proceed to Terminated status. There were also comparable figures at the end of Semester One. In absolute terms, these are a significantly large number of individuals to offer assistance and advice.

Interestingly, if students do submit a written appeal against their termination, they have a more than reasonable prospect of success. For example, of the 698 students on terminated status at the end of 2009, 229 successfully appealed and were returned to either Conditional status or Good Standing. Well over 50% did not submit an appeal at all, while 83% of the students who did appeal achieved a positive outcome.

As a further observation, we should note the higher risk level for students on Temporary Entrant Permits compared to other students. If we exclude Overseas Student Residing Overseas from these data, students on Temporary Entrant Permits represent between 36% and 37% of students on Conditional status and on Terminated status, which is a higher proportion than actual enrolment numbers would lead us to expect.

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Upon the release of results, substantial numbers of individual students seek advice from the Counselling Service, International Student Advisors, and the Student Guild. As a way of managing this demand, we developed a standard group information session that was offered every day for a week or so after students received their results. The broad content of these sessions covered four general headings:

1. to clarify exactly the meaning of being "Terminated";
2. to present the options available to students at that point;

3. to detail the processes associated with appealing against the Termination; and
4. providing information on sources of advice and help.

From these generic sessions, many students were able to handle their next steps unaided, whilst we were then also able to provide individual help to those who needed it.

Naturally, students who attend these sessions are not in the happiest frame of mind. Given the sensitivity of the issue, we had avoided running the information session in any interactive manner. It was assumed that students would likely be concerned with their own situation and would not wish to engage in any discussion. At the same time, the process of the information session did potentially provide an opportunity to reassure students that their own circumstances were perhaps not as unique as they may have believed. It was also decided that it would be beneficial to ask the students who attended the information sessions to provide us with some data. It is always useful to find out from students themselves what factors had affected their studies, and it would especially useful to learn from students who had been terminated. The sensitivity of the situation meant that we needed to consider carefully how we might collect the data in an appropriately confidential manner.

Methodology

The use of Turning Point technology allowed the authors to combine the considerations implied in the preceding paragraph. That is, data collection can be confidential and at the same time allow participating students the reassurance to observe that their own experience was not unique. A very brief description will be useful for readers unfamiliar with this technology. Turning Point allows a number of participants to respond to and interact with information presented on a screen. Each individual is provided with a keypad, and can press appropriate letters or numbers in response to prompts on the screen. Whilst it is possible to link a particular keypad with an individual's response, it is equally possible to allow each response to remain anonymous.

In the case of this project, the broad methodology was:

- A PowerPoint presentation was constructed which provided a number of slides outlining the information we wished to deliver to the participants
- At a number of points in the presentation, some slides sought a response from each of the participants in answer to a number of survey questions
- Participants were advised their responses were anonymous. As we did not collect participant's names at any point, they could be certain that it was not possible to link any response with any individual
- Participants were also invited to submit anonymous written qualitative comments at the end of the session if they wished.

The demographic data sought from participants included:

- International or domestic
- Gender
- Undergraduate or Postgraduate
- Year of study
- Whether the student had previously studied another course
- Age
- Faculty in which the student was enrolled

Later in the session, we sought data directly related to their Terminated status. This included:

- What factors the student thought had contributed to the situation – English language, study, personal and/or other factors
- Which support services the student had used in the year prior to being placed on Terminated status

We also included two questions as a prompt to collecting some qualitative data. These were:

- If you had not used support services, why not?
- What could the University have done to help you more before placing you on Terminated status?

Whilst some of the data gathered has appeared to be more instructive than other parts of the data, we have chosen not to modify the questions over the semesters in which we have been collecting the data in order to maintain a consistent data set.

We should also note that these data are the responses only of the relatively small numbers of students on Terminated status who attended our information sessions. Over ten information sessions offered in 2009, the number of individual participants was only 69 – which represents only approximately five per cent of the students who were placed in Terminated status over this period. We have no way of assessing whether these data are representative of all Terminated students, or indeed of students in general. Nonetheless, the data are highly suggestive.

Before proceeding further with the data, the attendance rate and attendance pattern at these information sessions is worthy of comment. We were a little surprised that such a small percentage of Terminated students chose to attend. Further, after the first few sessions, we developed a practice of beginning the session about 15 minutes later than the advertised time as we found the students who did attend were very rarely on time. Our inference is that there is possibly a shame factor involved in both the low attendance rate and the late arrival – but this is only conjecture. As an alternative explanation, it may be that consistent late attendance is a behavioural pattern of these students that contributed to their poor academic results.

Because of the small sample size, we have left these data as descriptive percentages. They are nonetheless very suggestive. Of those students who attended, 48.84% were International students and 51.16% were domestic students. This represents an attendance rate for International students significantly out of proportion to their actual enrolment.

Gender: clearly, the proportion of male students attending is very different from their actual enrolment proportion.

Table 2: Gender of participants

	Male	Female
International	61.90%	38.10%
Domestic	65.00%	35.00%

It is also very clear this issue impacts more for undergraduate students, but that is not an unexpected result.

Table 3: Proportion of postgraduate and undergraduate participants

	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
International	4.65%	95.35%
Domestic	4.88%	95.12%

The reported year of study is interesting. In theory, a student should not be terminated in his/her first year – but many of these students had previously switched courses and were not in their first year at the university. Almost half of the terminations take place – as one would expect – in second year.

Table4: Year of study of participants

	First year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
International	28.89%	48.89%	17.78%	2.22%
Domestic	32.56%	48.84%	16.28%	0.00%

Students were asked whether they had previously studied in another course at Curtin. A substantial minority had attempted other courses, but we have no data on their success in previous courses.

Table 5: Previous study in another course of participants

	Yes	No
International	21.95%	78.05%
Domestic	23.08%	76.92%

It is difficult to infer much meaning from the age category of participants at these sessions.

Table 6: Age of participants

	17 and younger	18-20 years old	21-30 years old	31-50 years old
International	0.00%	35.71%	59.52%	4.76%
Domestic	0.00%	37.50%	57.50%	5.00%

The faculty of study for these students provided two figures to note – that is the extremely low numbers from Humanities. It was not surprising to have no participants from the Centre for Aboriginal Studies. The high proportion from Science and Engineering is also a matter for interest. Whilst the Business School also had a high participation rate in these sessions, that faculty also has an enrolment not greatly disproportionate to these percentages.

Table 7: Faculty of enrolment of participants

	International	Domestic
Curtin Business School	39.53%	40.48%
Humanities	4.65%	4.76%
Health Sciences	18.60%	16.67%
Centre for Aboriginal Studies	0.00%	0.00%
Science & Engineering	37.21%	38.10%

Students were next asked – over a series of slides – to attribute issues that may have affected their study. In each case, student could select more than one option or respond that none were applicable. The first question asked whether there were language issues

associated with Termination. Only written English was rated at all highly. The large “not applicable” response is very interesting.

Table 8: Language issues attributions

	International	Domestic
Understanding written English	1.89%	0.00%
Understanding spoken English	3.77%	4.17%
Writing assignments in English	18.87%	16.67%
Speaking fluent English	5.66%	6.25%
Not applicable	69.81%	72.92%

On the next slide, students were asked to rate a series of study-related issues associated with their Termination. The comparative high ratings given to non-attendance and lack of participation are worth noting.

Table 9: Study-related issues attributions

	International	Domestic
Not having good notes from class or books & journals	10.96%	11.76%
Not attending enough classes	27.40%	26.47%
Not participating in class	17.81%	20.59%
Fear of doing class presentations	5.48%	4.41%
Poor access to lecturers/tutors for assistance	12.33%	11.76%
Lack of Computer Skills	2.74%	2.94%
Lack of access to a computer	2.74%	1.47%
Unable to do assignments	10.96%	11.76%
Not applicable	9.59%	8.82%

The next three slides asked for ratings on a range of other issues that may be related to Termination.

Table 10a: Other attributions

	International	Domestic
Poor time management	27.50%	23.29%
Procrastinating on assignments and other study tasks	23.75%	26.03%
Exam & Exam Preparation Anxiety	15.00%	15.07%
Personal problems eg death of family member; relationship break-up;	31.25%	32.88%
Not applicable	2.50%	2.74%

Table 10b: Other attributions

	International	Domestic
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Homesickness and/or Loneliness	21.21%	20.34%
Finances/money problems	31.82%	32.20%
Unsuitable Accommodation	13.64%	13.56%
Lack of Transport Options	4.55%	5.08%
Finding Independent Living Difficult	7.58%	5.08%
Not applicable	21.21%	23.73%

Table 10c: Other attributions

	International	Domestic
Health/medical problems	20.00%	16.98%
Disability issues (including physical, sensory, mental health and learning disabilities)	8.33%	7.55%
Religious/spiritual matters	1.67%	0.00%
Low commitment/motivation for your course or career goal	36.67%	41.51%
Not applicable	33.33%	33.96%

In very broad terms, there appears very little differences between the attributions of International and domestic students on the factors which contributed to their Termination.

Over the next two slides, we asked which of the support services the students had used in the year prior to being terminated. Students could choose more than one. The high rating given to “none” in the table below is rather disturbing. Given that many of these services could have addressed the issues that these students believed to have contributed to their poor academic result, it is concerning that they clearly did not access them.

Table 11a: Use of support services

	International	Domestic
Counselling Service	17.19%	17.54%
Disability Support	1.56%	1.75%
The Learning Centre	6.25%	7.02%
FYE	0.00%	0.00%
Health Service	7.81%	8.77%
Multi-faith officer	0.00%	0.00%
Housing Service	6.25%	5.26%
None	60.94%	59.65%

The second slide in this series named some other sources of support that students may have accessed. Approximately one-third of these students report that they sought advice or support from their lecturers – but otherwise, these data indicate that this group of Terminated students were not active help seekers.

Table 11b: Use of support services

	International	Domestic
Guild Student Assist	5.17%	3.92%
CBS Communication Skills	13.79%	15.69%
International Student Advisers	8.62%	5.88%

Lecturers	32.76%	35.29%
Other services within Curtin	3.45%	3.92%
Services external to Curtin	6.90%	7.84%
None	29.31%	27.45%

The students were then asked to respond to the following three items.

Table 12: Capacity for intervention

“The University should have done more to help me before placing me on Terminated status”

	Agree	Disagree
International	61.54%	38.46%
Domestic	60.42%	39.58%

“I should have done more to help myself to address problems with my study”

	Agree	Disagree
International	90.74%	9.26%
Domestic	93.62%	6.38%

“My terminated status was caused by factors beyond my control and there is little or nothing the University could have done”

	Agree	Disagree
International	57.89%	42.11%
Domestic	56.00%	44.00%

The final three sets of responses are a little contradictory at first glance. However, it is possible for an individual to agree with all three statements.

We also sought some qualitative data from these students. Students were provided with an anonymous feedback sheet with three broad questions:

1. Why have you not used the Support Services?
2. What could the University have done to help you more before placing you on Terminated Status?
3. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Given that many participants had not used Support Services, the reasons provided are of particular interest. The themes in their responses were commonly related to lack of knowledge, denial of the problem, a belief that they could handle the situation themselves or some degree of embarrassment. Some sample responses are listed below.

- *Backed up with other students also seeking support. (i.e. could not get to see anyone due to demand from other students)*
- *I didn't have any information about these services.*
- *I'm an international student and I was unaware and had no information.*
- *Out of embarrassment, also thinking "it'll be okay"*
- *Aware of its existence just never sure how useful it would be.*
- *I find it difficult to discuss issues with a person who is unfamiliar.*
- *Cultural issues never really used it.*
- *Unaware of support services.*

- *I had not realised that I needed the help before I was terminated.*
- *Lack of knowledge.*
- *Didn't know where it was and feeling anxious about it and unsure who to talk to.*
- *Lack of commitment, didn't think it would help with my situation.*
- *Felt my problems weren't significant enough to warrant seeking external help.*
- *Thought I could fix the problem myself.*
- *I did not think they were appreciable (sic) to my case.*
- *Didn't believe I was having any issues that could be helped by such services.*
- *Didn't know which services applied to me, didn't think I needed it.*
- *Didn't know how it could help.*
- *I did not know it was so serious so I ignored it.*
- *Never thought there was any help available*
- *Didn't know available, didn't feel like I should have needed it, Don't like seeking assistance rather sort it out myself.*
- *Thought all my problems were small and I could manage.*
- *Wasn't sure of the availability of the service*
- *I just felt if I used them I was weak.*
- *I did not use any of the services I do not know how. I'm too shy to ask people.*
- *Because I never thought there was a problem even after being placed on conditional status, I thought it was just a matter of lack of effort, and I thought I would overcome it.*

There were two major themes in what these students believed the University should have done before placing them on Terminated status. A minority of the students believed that assessment or other educational processes should be improved.

- *More flexible classes, more student support groups. More financial support for international students, more cultural diverse tutors and staff members.*
- *More examples and class notes, have lecturers that speak English well. Not base 70% of assessment on exams.*
- *Have more internal tests that are not assessed with our final marks.*
- *Employ lecturers and tutors with teaching experience, flexible with creating additional questions and additional helpful information.*
- *Could make the dropping out date without academic penalty later in the semester.*

The majority made comments that indicated that the University should have been more directive, proactive or interventionist. Examples of these comments included:

- *Really make them aware of what it really means to be on conditional, especially if they are an international student as most options are more available of Australian residents.*

- *An official notice from university to advise that I'm going to be put into terminated status. Also give me advice earlier.*
- *Offered a one on one session after being put on conditional status to see how my studies were going.*
- *A mid semester check instead of end of semester termination.*
- *Having an appointment / info session that was course specific when first placed on conditional status.*
- *Noticed I was struggling with certain subject areas and provided recommendations on how to increase performance in these areas.*
- *When placed on conditional status have had an information session like this one.*
- *Not only contact us on occ (abbreviation for the University's Official Communications Channel), also through mail to make sure the person receives their notification of conditional status or terminated status. Notify students during the semester when there are beginning to head towards possible termination.*
- *Identify the potential of being terminated and helping avoid instead of a cure, as we international students have more pressure socially and financially. Have a special program for students on conditional status.*

The third qualitative question "Is there anything else you would like to tell us?" provided little additional data. Where students wrote anything at all, they tended to elaborate on the previous two questions.

Discussion

There are some standouts from these data. The first thing to note is the similarity in responses between International and domestic students. Whilst it was more likely that International students would persist to the point of being Terminated, and were more likely to attend our information sessions, the responses in these two groups were substantially the same. Whilst the authors had no particular predictions about potential differences between the two groups – other than perhaps an expectation that International students might more frequently nominate English language issues as a factor – we were nonetheless a little surprised to find practically no differences of consequence.

Whilst the data provided a range of possible factors that students might attribute to causing their academic failure, several recurred with greater frequency. Students who were terminated often noted that they were not engaged with their work – either by poor attendance, not participating in class, or procrastination on necessary tasks. An acknowledgement of poor time management may also be implicated. It was also common for students to believe that personal issues, financial issues and health/medical issues had affected their study.

Equally as interesting were those factors that we had thought might be important, but turned out to be less significant. It was suspected that students might attribute poor English skills as a factor in their academic failure. This expectation had been based on the often poorly expressed draft letters of appeal that had been sighted. But in comparison to other factors, these students did not perceive it to be an important problem. It was also thought that

students may have nominated IT difficulties with a little higher frequency than they did. It does not appear to be a major issue. A third issue that did not rate as highly as may have been expected was fear of doing class presentations. This expectation is probably based on two of the authors' experiences as counsellors, where substantial numbers of students will present seeking help on managing the anxiety associated with classroom presentations. That self-selected clinical population may well have biased our expectations.

It was also noted that a very low reported rate of usage of support services by these students in the study periods prior to termination. Yet they reported talking to lecturers or tutors. It is not known whether their teaching staff advised them to use support services. Some of these students gave qualitative responses why they did not use the support services. Some noted they were unaware of the services. Others felt a sense of shame, or believed that certain services were not really suitable for them. Yet it is clear that at least of the students may have benefitted from professional support from counsellors, learning advisors or other support areas.

At the same time, many of these students believed that the university should have done more to help them before terminating their enrolment. At the time when students are placed on Conditional status, they are strongly urged, via the same communication that advises them of their academic results, to access appropriate support services. Manifestly, this recommendation did not work in the cases of these individuals. Yet simultaneously, a substantial proportion of these students acknowledge that they ought to have done more to help themselves. A further confounding belief, held by some students, is that their circumstances was brought about by factors beyond anyone's control.

In summary:

- Some issues clearly appear to be more implicated in leading to Termination than others
- Support services are under-used by this group
- There is a belief held by the students that the university should have been more proactive, and
- There is a belief held by the students that they ought to have done more to help themselves

Implications and Conclusion

The clearest messages from these data are that both the students and the university need to be rather more proactive before students reach the point of being terminated. It is clear though that the university can probably not expect these particular students to become more engaged with their circumstances at an earlier stage unless processes are developed that are perhaps more directive and intrusive that may be used in higher education.

The university is certainly directive and intrusive once students have been Terminated. Students who wish to appeal against their Termination are required to submit written documentation which clearly states two things. They must first identify the factors that have been impacting on their studies. Second, they must state what will be done to ensure that these issues no longer have such a deleterious effect. When these appeals are considered, relevant staff at the university assess whether the student has accurately and adequately addressed both these points. In many cases, student appeals are successful and they are permitted to continue study.

But surely it should not be necessary to wait until this point is reached before intervening. When a student is issued a warning by being placed on Conditional status, a very similar process could be implemented. This is the point where a student is at-risk, and the point where he/she is best advised to identify and redress the issues affecting academic progress. This is not a unique insight, and indeed many universities have proactive interventions with students who are at-risk. The process is straightforward in principle. It is important to clearly identify what has contributed to academic failure; to develop a plan of action that addresses whatever issues are identified; and to implement and monitor that plan. This would clearly meet the criteria of being a documented intervention strategy.

The difficulty in the case of Curtin is the scale of the issue. As noted in the introduction, there are far larger numbers of students placed on Conditional status than Terminated status. In any semester, there will be approximately 5,000 individuals placed on Conditional Status. Curtin is not alone in dealing with such large numbers. An automated version of some parts of an intervention strategy can be implemented. On-line self-assessment tools may allow students to make some progress on developing an understanding of what went wrong. They may also be well able to create a plan of action and to implement the plan. But what if the self-assessment missed the mark? What if the plan is poorly conceived and/or not implemented? There is a clear need for some personalised intervention to review the assessment, the proposed plan and the implementation – in consultation and partnership with the student.

The university acknowledges that this occurs frequently. Many enrolling areas invite students on Conditional status to interviews with their teachers with the goal of assisting them to return to Good Standing. However, anecdotal comments from lecturers indicate that they are often disappointed in the response to such invitations. It is also clear that the intervention pattern is variable – not all teaching areas take action in the same way. And there is not necessarily any consistency in the way the intervention is documented.

The authors recommend that, a useful intervention model for students placed on Conditional status would have the following features:

- A student would be advised it is mandatory to submit a plan of action to address the factors that led to poor academic results. (It is noted that “mandatory” is very hard to enforce. It would be virtually impossible to exclude a student from enrolling if he/she chose not to do this. Nonetheless, it is believed this expectation should be worded in very strong terms).
- He/she would be directed to on-line resources that assisted them to self-assess and create a draft plan of action
- The student would then submit the plan for approval by an academic advisor in the course of study. Ideally this would include a personal interview, but this may not always be possible.
- The plan may be modified on the basis of the interaction with the academic advisor
- The approved plan would be lodged as the documented intervention strategy
- If students chose not to participate in this process, it would be documented that they had been advised to do so

At the end of the subsequent semester, the fundamental outcome would be the student's academic results. If indeed this was further failure, several possible explanations could be inferred:

- the assessment and the resulting plan were not well conceived;
- the plan may not have been conscientiously carried out; and/or
- there may have been further factors affecting the student's study.

In any of these cases, the existence of the intervention strategy gives greater strength to any decision process on what to do next.

It is hoped that the academic results would not be further failure. Implementation of a documented intervention strategy is not about being able to claim that the University did all it was supposed to do. It is ultimately about helping our student overcome adversity and achieve success.