

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

The purpose of all procedures of academic discipline is to identify as early as possible when a student is not working to the best of his or her ability, to help the student to do so and to conclude his or her course successfully. A student shall be deemed to be of '**good academic standing**' if he or she:

- Keeps the residence requirements laid down by the University (see www.ox.ac.uk/student)
- Passes the First Public Examination (or other examinations laid down by the University as a necessary part of the course)
- Attends all tutorials, classes, and other required academic commitments, except where permission on adequate grounds is obtained, preferably in advance, from the tutor(s) concerned.
- Produces assignments, (essays, problem sheets, reports of laboratory work, translations, etc) and sits Collections with the regularity required by his or her tutor(s), except where permission on adequate grounds is obtained, preferably in advance, from the tutor(s) concerned
- Produces work of an adequate standard, given the student's particular level of ability.

If Tutors consider that a student is failing to meet these expectations he or she may report these concerns to Education Committee. If disciplinary action is taken, the student will be made aware of exactly what is expected either in terms of rules to be observed or of levels of performance to be achieved. Matters of academic discipline will be kept separate from disciplinary action for other forms of misbehaviour, which will not be referred to in any document or discussion dealing with academic discipline. The stages of the academic disciplinary procedure are designed to be transparent and to give every opportunity for you to explain to tutors, to the Senior Tutor, or to the Principal, any special circumstances which should be taken into account in reviewing your situation. All tutors wish to ensure that their students make the best use of their time at Somerville; so long as you do this and work to the best of your ability, you will not be affected by the terms of the Academic Discipline procedure.

Stages in the academic disciplinary procedure:

1. **Report** (informal warning): a student whose Personal Tutor or Director of Studies raises concerns about his or her fulfilment any of the criteria for good academic standing may be put 'on report' by Education Committee. This will be noted on the student's file, and the student will be given an opportunity to discuss the case with his or her personal tutor, and make the College aware of any mitigating circumstances. If any come to light, they will be placed on record. Tutors will offer advice, and may refer the student to the College Doctor or the Counselling Service for further help. The Principal will usually see the student to discuss his or her general situation. Having been warned, the student will be given a reasonable period of time in which to improve performance and tutors may set targets to be met. Progress will be closely monitored and reported to each meeting of Education Committee. If the standard of work improves sufficiently, the student will be taken off report.

2. **Probation** ('formal warning'): If performance of a student 'on report' does not improve, or if there are serious concerns about a student who is not already 'on report', Education Committee may issue a formal warning and place a student 'on probation' for his or her place. The conditions of probation will be clearly conveyed to the student in a formal letter, which will remind the student of the College's rules and procedures for academic discipline (a copy of the relevant sections will be enclosed), and spell out the likely consequences of failure to comply.

The student will be told clearly what is expected of him or her in the future, and how much time is available to achieve this. Where the conditions of probation include achieving a set mark in 'special collections' this will be double blind-marked by external assessors, and in cases where they disagree, the more favourable mark will be used. The Principal will usually see the student and make sure that he or she understands the situation and has the opportunity to make all material circumstances known. An undergraduate who has been given a verbal warning by his or her tutors without yet having been placed 'on report' by Education Committee may be placed directly on probation by the Committee, particularly if time constraints are such that delays would jeopardise the chances of the undergraduate concerned being able to find a place on a course elsewhere.

Under the University's Regulations,¹ an undergraduate who has been placed on probation, in line with these procedures, and who fails one or more papers in the First Public Examination, will not normally be permitted a second attempt, and may be required to withdraw.

3. **Disciplinary Panel:** If Education Committee considers that the conditions which have been laid down for a student 'on probation' have not been met it will convene a formal disciplinary hearing. The Panel will consist of the Vice-Principal in the Chair, who is not present for matters of Academic Discipline at Education Committee, (or, where the Vice-Principal is the student's Personal Tutor, the Senior Fellow), the student's tutor, the Senior Tutor, and two non-tutorial fellows. In advance of this hearing, the student will be given a statement setting out the grounds for disciplinary action and a copy of supporting evidence, such as tutors' reports or collection results. He or she will be given the opportunity to bring forward material considerations and mitigating circumstances. The student may choose to be accompanied to this hearing by one or two supporters (if two, one is to be a JCR officer). The student and his or her supporter(s), the Senior Tutor and the student's subject tutor will withdraw before the panel reaches a decision. The panel will convey a recommendation to Governing Body for ratification.

¹ 3.17. A candidate who fails to satisfy the Moderators in his or her initial examination for the First Public Examination shall be permitted to re-enter for the First Public Examination on one further occasion (in accordance with the regulations governing the re-sit in that subject). The sole exception to this shall be where college academic disciplinary procedures are already in process at the time of the first attempt, and the student has received a written warning which explicitly provides, at least four weeks before the first examination (and subject to the normal college appeal mechanism), that a specified number of failures on identified papers or other elements of the Public Examination at the first attempt will lead to termination of the student's course of study.

4. **Appeal:** A student may make an appeal against a decision of Governing Body to send him or her down, i.e. to require him or her to withdraw on academic grounds, to the Appeal Tribunal of the Conference of Colleges not more than five days after being notified of the decision. Under the Higher Education Act 2004, certain complaints which the student concerned considers have not been properly dealt with by the College and the Conference of Colleges Appeal Tribunal may be pursued with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education [www.oiahc.org.uk]