

Cal Poly
Undergraduate Academic Notice and Subject to Dismissal Policy

Guiding Principles*

Cal Poly is committed to ensuring that every admitted undergraduate student has the opportunity to earn a Cal Poly degree. We strive to support students through proactive, asset-based approaches that leverage their strengths and address external barriers. Recognizing that academic performance is shaped by structural, personal, and systemic factors, the university engages with students facing academic challenges, particularly those on Academic Notice or Subject to Dismissal status, by offering guidance and developing personalized pathways to degree completion. This policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and refined through an inclusive excellence lens, incorporating direct feedback from students, staff, and faculty to improve effectiveness and equity.

Cal Poly's Undergraduate Academic Notice and Dismissal Policy establishes the academic standards used to determine a student's eligibility to remain enrolled based on academic performance at the end of each term, including the Term GPA, Cal Poly GPA, and Higher Ed GPA. All campuses of the California State University system follow uniform standards for Academic Notice, Subject to Dismissal, Administrative-Academic Notice, and Administrative-Academic Dismissal. Undergraduate students are placed in academic statuses based on the conditions stated below. *For minimum academic standards applicable to graduate and post-baccalaureate students, see the Graduate Programs section of the catalog.*

I. Academic Status Notification

Students who are placed into Academic Notice or Subject to Dismissal status will be notified via email from the Office of the Registrar once grades are finalized for the term. Students are responsible for checking their Cal Poly email accounts regularly; failure to receive or review notification of Academic Notice or Subject to Dismissal status does not create the right to automatically continue enrollment.

II. Academic Notice Status

Undergraduate students are automatically placed in Academic Notice status when their current term grade point average (unadjusted for any subsequent grade forgiveness), Cal Poly cumulative grade point average, and/or higher education grade point average (GPA) drops below 2.000 (i.e., the equivalent of an average grade of C). Once grades are finalized, if students are placed in Academic Notice status, they will be notified by the Office of the Registrar via campus email. Students may be required to complete specific actions as outlined in the notification letter. Students are responsible for checking their Cal Poly email accounts. If a student's term, Cal Poly, and Higher Ed GPAs all improve at or above a 2.0, then they will return to good academic standing.

III. Subject to Dismissal Status

Undergraduate students are automatically placed in Subject to Dismissal status if their Cal Poly cumulative GPA (Cal Poly GPA) or higher education GPA (Higher Ed GPA) falls below the GPA limits based on the student's corresponding actual academic progress (degree applicable work completed and in-progress) percentage and the levels below:

Academic Progress Levels/Percentages:

Academic Progress Level IV (75.1%-100%):
 Academic Progress Level III (45.1%-75%):
 Academic Progress Level II (20.1%-45%):
 Academic Progress Level I (0%-20%):

GPA Limits Based on Actual Academic Progress:

1.950 Cal Poly Cumulative or Higher Ed GPA
 1.850 Cal Poly Cumulative or Higher Ed GPA
 1.700 Cal Poly Cumulative or Higher Ed GPA
 1.500 Cal Poly Cumulative or Higher Ed GPA

5-year programs: *Students in the 5-year programs are held to the same corresponding GPA levels as described above.*

New Student Success clause: *To allow for an adjustment period, first-time first year and new transfer students will not be placed in Subject to Dismissal status until the end of their first year at Cal Poly, even if their GPA falls below the designated actual academic progress level GPA limits.*

IV. Subject to Dismissal Status Appeals

Students who are in Subject to Dismissal status will be required to submit an appeal to their college to continue their enrollment. Steps for appeal can be found in the notification email from the Office of the Registrar. Reviewers of appeals will consider mitigating circumstances, including personal hardships, family responsibilities, mental health challenges, economic hardship, and/or structural barriers. Students who do not submit an appeal or whose appeal is not accepted may be dismissed from the university.

V. Academic Success Agreements

If students' Subject to Dismissal status appeal is accepted, they will be required to complete an academic success agreement the following term. The conditions of these agreements will be individualized based on the specific circumstances outlined in the students' appeal, with a focus on supporting the students' return to good academic standing (i.e., improving their GPA(s) to be 2.0 or higher). Students who do not initiate or do not fulfill the terms of their academic success agreement may be dismissed. Students should connect with their college's dean or designee for establishing academic success agreements to discuss extenuating circumstances and options prior to the end of their agreement.

Students may pause their academic success agreement to take time off in accordance with the University Leave of Absence policy and with approval from their college's dean or designee. Upon returning to Cal Poly, they must meet with the college's designee to review the terms of the agreement during their first term back.

If, at the end of the following term, a student's Cal Poly and Higher Ed cumulative GPAs improve above the corresponding progress level for Subject to Dismissal status, but their term GPA remains below a 2.0, they will be placed in Academic Notice status. If their term, Cal Poly, and Higher Ed GPAs all improve a 2.0 or higher, then they will be returned to good academic standing.

VI. Administrative-Academic Notice

Undergraduate students may be placed in Administrative-Academic Notice status by action of the dean or designee of the college in which the student's declared major resides for **any** of the following reasons:

- A. A protective measure for students who are already in Subject to Dismissal status and to provide them with an opportunity to improve academic standing without needing to submit additional appeals. Examples may include:
 - i. Previously dismissed students who are readmitted but need additional terms to improve their GPA(s).
 - ii. Students on academic success agreements who will need multiple terms to make necessary academic progress or improve GPA(s).

- B. Prolonged failure to make [Expected Academic Progress](#) toward the declared major, when circumstances appear to be within the student's control. Examples may include:
 - i. Withdrawal from all or a substantial portion of courses in two successive terms for reasons within the student's control.
 - ii. Repeatedly earning failing grades in major and support classes in the student's declared major.
 - iii. Routinely taking classes toward a major, with no official Individual Change of Major agreement, other than the student's declared major.

- C. Failure to comply, after due notice, with an academic requirement or regulation which is routine for all students or a defined group of students (e.g., failure to complete a required CSU or campus examination, failure to complete a required practicum, failure to comply with professional standards appropriate to the field of study, failure to complete a specified number of units as a condition for receiving student financial aid or making satisfactory progress in the academic program).

When such action is taken, students are notified via their Cal Poly email and are provided with the conditions for removal from Administrative-Academic Notice.

VII. Administrative-Academic Dismissal

Undergraduate students who have been placed in Administrative-Academic Notice status may be dismissed by the action of the dean or designee of the college in which the student's declared major resides for any of the following reasons:

- A. The conditions for removal of Administrative-Academic Notice status are not met within the period specified.
- B. The student's GPAs fall below the required threshold for academic notice while in Administrative-Academic notice status.
- C. The student has been placed in Administrative-Academic Notice status more than once.

VIII. Criteria for Appealing Dismissal decision from the University

Students may appeal the decision of dismissal in accordance with the university's established procedures through the [Office of Academic Innovations and Programs](#). The final review must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation to the Provost/Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, or designee. The written appeal should address one or more of the following criteria:

- A. **Procedural Error**
Evidence that the decision to dismiss was made as a result of a procedural error or irregularity in the application of university policies.
- B. **Extenuating Circumstances**
Documentation of significant extenuating circumstances that were beyond the student's control and directly impacted academic performance, such as serious illness or injury, death of a close family member, traumatic events, or other emergencies. The appeal should explain why these circumstances affected academic progress and why they are unlikely to continue impacting the student's performance.
- C. **New Information**
Presentation of new, relevant information that was not reasonably available at the time of the original decision and that could have materially affected the outcome.
- D. **Non-Academic Criteria**
Evidence that the decision was based on non-academic criteria in violation of university nondiscrimination policies or other university standards.

Note: Decisions on the appeal may take up to one full term. The student will be informed of the appeal decision through the Office of Academic Innovations and Programs.

Definitions:

Academic Notice Status: Academic status that is placed on a student's academic profile when their term grade point average (unadjusted for any subsequent grade forgiveness), Cal Poly cumulative grade point average, and/or higher education grade point average (GPA) drops below 2.000. This status does not show on official transcripts from Cal Poly.

Academic Progress: The degree progress that students make by the end of each academic term by successfully completing units applicable to their declared major.

Academic Progress Level:

At Cal Poly, students' academic progress is structured into four levels, corresponding to the progress expected by the end of each academic year. Transfer students follow three levels, while five-year degree programs include a fifth level. For more information, refer to the [Academic Standards](#) section of the Cal Poly Catalog.

Academic Progress Level GPA Limits: The minimum GPA that students must attain to remain eligible for enrollment at Cal Poly and to meet the minimum 2.0 GPA(s) required to graduate. The Academic Progress Level GPA Limits correspond to the Academic Progress Levels as outlined in the policy under "Section III. Subject to Dismissal Status."

Academic Success Agreement: A set of conditions that students who are in Subject to Dismissal status or Administrative-Academic Notice status must meet in order to remain eligible to enroll at Cal Poly.

Actual Academic Progress (AAP) (%): The percentage of degree requirements that a student has completed and is displayed as a gauge in the Academic Progress section of their Poly Profile, accessible through the student portal.

Cal Poly Cumulative Grade Point Average (Cal Poly GPA): The grade point average based on all graded work completed only via Cal Poly courses. Formerly CPSLO GPA.

Dismissal: Administrative action that prevents students from enrolling at Cal Poly for future terms. Dismissal may result from being placed in the Subject to Dismissal status or the Administrative-Academic Notice status, or from a disciplinary proceeding.

Expected Academic Progress (EAP) (%): This represents the percentage of degree-applicable units a student is expected to complete each academic year to ensure timely graduation. These units must fulfill requirements for the student's declared major, including major, support, general education, concentration, and, if applicable, free elective units.

Higher Education Grade Point Average (Higher Ed GPA): Grade point average based on all graded work completed at all colleges and universities including Cal Poly.

Subject to Dismissal Status: Academic status that is placed on a student's academic profile at the end of a given term that may lead to dismissal for academic reasons. This status is based on cumulative GPAs and evaluated based on progress levels as outlined in the policy under "Section III. Subject to Dismissal Status."

Term Grade Point Average (Term GPA): The grade point average based on all graded work for the term.

***Guiding Principles References**

Bowman, N.A., Jang, N. What is the Purpose of Academic Probation? Its Substantial Negative Effects on Four-Year Graduation. *Res High Educ* **63**, 1285–1311 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-022-09676-w>

Gonzalez, V. (2022). The cost of academic dismissal and attrition from students on academic probation. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2022, 75–85. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20444>

Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J. L., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2006). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature* (Vol. 8). Washington, DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. https://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/Kuh_Team_Report.pdf

Lindo, Jason M., Nicholas J. Sanders, and Philip Oreopoulos. 2010. "Ability, Gender, and Performance Standards: Evidence from Academic Probation." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2 (2): 95–117. <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/app.2.2.95>