



STUDENT RETENTION POLICY

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1. Purpose

This policy is framed to create a positive learning environment, and to ensure that students are supported and directed towards a successful completion of their programmes at Villa College. It aims to retain students in an admitted programme of study until they achieve the award. This policy outlines the principles, definitions, procedures and implementation to substantiate the information for reporting and decision-making about student retention.

2. Definition of Terms

Academic Load - Module load or the credit load of a programme.

Active student - A student who is enrolled during the current semester or is on semester break.

At-risk student: A student with unsatisfactory academic progress and/or low attendance.

Attrition - Reduction in the total number of students who successfully complete or progress to the next level of the enrolled programme.

Unattended offers - Successful applicants who were given an offer of admission, but fail to register the programme.

Census date - The last date that a student may drop modules and withdraw / defer from the programme without incurring any academic penalty.

Deferment / Deferral / Timeout - The process of temporarily delaying or postponing studies until a later semester, year or for a specific period.

Dropout - A student who registers at College, but due to personal or institutional reasons, leaves College before completion of a programme of study.

Full-time student - Takes a full academic load of a semester in order to complete the programme in the normal duration of study.

Inactive student - A student who completed semester registration in the previous semester, but did not defer or withdraw officially, and did not register for the current semester.

Initial registration - New students' admission and enrolment in the first semester of the programme of study.

Maximum duration - The maximum time limit allocated for a student to complete a programme of study.

Normal duration - The standard time period a student can complete a programme by taking a full academic load for each semester.

Part-time student - Does not take a full academic load of a semester, but will complete the programme within the maximum duration allowed.

Progression - Advancing or moving towards a higher level of the programme.

Re-admission student - A student who is registered at the College and given admission for a new programme after completion / withdrawal from another programme.

Retention - Retaining students who enrol for a programme and remain enrolled at Villa College until they complete their studies for that programme and ultimately graduate with an award.

Withdrawal - Permanently terminating the study programme.

3. Scope

This is an internal policy and applies to all departments, institutions, centres, faculties, learning centres, campuses, and students of Villa College.

4. Policy Principles

- 4.1 Create a positive learning environment that ensures that students are supported and directed towards successful completion of the admitted programme.
- 4.2 Provide high-impact student support services that enrich student experiences to improve student retention.
- 4.3 Collect and maintain student data to monitor student performance, progression and persistence, which can be used to enhance student experiences and retention.
- 4.4 Enhance evidence-based decision making and effective implementation of retention strategies.

5. Policy Description

- a. The successful transition of students to College, and their retention to higher levels of study must be a joint, collaborative responsibility of all departments, institutions, centres, faculties, learning centres and campuses of Villa College, in consultation with the students.
- b. All students must be provided with programme advice aligned with their goals, achievements and academic pathways.
- c. The progression of all cohorts and their performance and persistence must be monitored and maintained throughout the course of their studies, and the records

must be reported to the Student Experiences Committee once every semester for discussion.

- d. At-risk students must be identified and provided with the required guidance and support to improve their academic performance.
- e. Student support areas that need to be developed, fostered and improved must be identified, and necessary measures must be taken to implement the required support service.
- f. All students must be supported and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and to actively pursue success.
- g. Student satisfaction surveys must be conducted once every semester, and the outcomes must be reported to the Student Experiences Committee.
- h. Retention strategies must be developed, coordinated, monitored, evaluated and continuously improved.

5.1 Monitoring academic performance

- 5.1.1 Student progression at different levels must be monitored in order to identify their academic performance and persistence.
- 5.1.2 Satisfactory performance can be determined when students achieve pass grades in their programmes of studies at a normal pace.
- 5.1.3 Unsatisfactory academic performance can be determined if the student is
 - Achieving a low cumulative grade point average (CGPA) (for undergraduate, CGPA below 2.0; and for postgraduate, CGPA below 3.0)
 - Failing a module more than once
 - Exceeding beyond the normal duration of the enrolled programme
 - Failing to meet programme requirements
 - Low attendance
- 5.1.4 Unsatisfactory academic performance may impact on academic progress due to
 - Being placed on probation (enrolling with fewer modules)
 - Having the programme duration extended (allowing timeouts/deferrals or personal circumstances)
 - Being exited from the programme (offering exit award)
- 5.1.5 Students who have unsatisfactory academic performance identified at the end of each semester must be reported with the reasons why their academic progress is deemed unsatisfactory.
- 5.1.6 At-risk students must be identified and recorded based on their academic performance.

5.2 Identifying at-risk students

- 5.2.1 At-risk students can be identified as active students who are likely to fail and repeat certain modules, and might not continue to the next level or continue

with a lighter academic load in a semester. It can be measured from the basis of the following;

- Low attendance
 - Low CGPA / Overall mark / Average
 - Academic judgement
 - Consultations and guidance
- 5.2.2 At-risk students identified must be notified and urged to participate in support services/opportunities/activities designed to improve their performance and decrease dropout
- 5.2.3 The College Assessment Committee must specify the actions to be taken to provide support to the at-risk students and refer them to the Student Experiences Committee. The faculties must report back to the Committee in the next semester.

5.3 Monitoring enrolment

- 5.3.1 Student enrolment data must be maintained in order to monitor student attrition and retention.
- 5.3.2 Enrolment status must be monitored at the following cut-off dates in every semester;
- *Unattended offers*: taken on the first working day of the fifth week of the semester.
 - *New students' admission status at initial registration*: taken on the first working day of the fifth week of the semester.
 - *Active students' enrolment status*: taken on the first working day of the fifth week of the semester.
 - *Semester enrolment status at Census Date*: taken on the first working day of the eighth week of the semester.
 - *Semester enrolment status at the end of the semester*: taken after the result endorsement date of the semester. This must include all students who attempted the assessments and inactive students, and excluding deferred/timeout and withdrawn students.
- 5.3.3 The Registration Department must maintain all the records of student admission and enrolment in accordance with the cut-off dates specified above. The following reports must be generated from Student Management System (SMS) and maintained in every semester and presented to the Admission and Awards Committee and other relevant committees;
- Unattended Offer Report
 - Initial Registration Report
 - Active Students' Enrolment Report
 - Semester Enrolment Report at Census Date

- Semester Enrolment Report at the end of the semester

5.3.4 All faculties must monitor module level and programme level enrolments, and these enrolments must be included in the relevant assessment reports. These reports must be presented to the College Assessment Committee and the Student Experiences Committee.

5.4 Measuring attrition, retention and progression

- Attrition, retention and progression must be measured, monitored and maintained in order to develop and coordinate retention strategies and efforts. These must be measured at cohort and programme level each semester.
- The details of the calculation of attrition will be available in the *procedure for measuring attrition and retention*.

5.4.1 Attrition

- Attrition can be measured as follows
 1. By mid-semester (only new students)
 - The number of individuals among the students who are registered at the fourth week and thereafter of the semester and leave the programme of study by the census date.

Attrition at mid-semester (AMS) = Initial Registration – Semester enrolment at census date

2. By semester
 - The number of individuals among the students who are registered at the fourth week and thereafter of the semester and leave the programme of the study by the end of the semester.

Semester Attrition (SA) = Active students' enrolment - Semester enrolment at the end of the semester

3. Semester Attrition Rate

Semester Attrition Rate (SAR) = (SA/ Semester enrolment at census date) * 100

4. By annum (AA)

- The number of individuals among the students who are registered by the fourth week of the semester and leave the programme of the study by end of the year.

$$\text{Annual Attrition} = 1SA + 2SA$$

5. Annual attrition rate (AAR)

$$\text{Annual Attrition Rate (AAR)} = (1SAR + 2SAR)/2$$

5.4.2 Retention

- Retention is the opposite of attrition and thus the retention levels can be identified in the calculation of attrition.
- All active students and deferred/timeout students are considered as retained students.

$$\text{Retained students} = \text{Active students} + \text{Deferred/timeout}$$

- The measurement of retention identifies students at progression and at-risk students.

5.4.3 Progression

- Progression with full credits
 - The students successfully complete all modules offered, continue and carry full credits to the next level. The progression shows the successful academic performance or pass percentages of students.
- Progression with partial credits
 - The students' progress to the next level with partial credit
 - The students' do not progress to the next level and repeat the module(s) at the same level

5.5 Retention strategies

Retention strategies must be developed to identify and support at-risk students, and implemented through curricular and co-curricular activities. Examples of programmes and activities include:

- Orientation

The college must conduct orientation programmes for all commencing students. The college intends that all students receive similar experiences in learning and facilitate a successful transition into their course of study and learning environment through a well-designed orientation programme.

- Learning support services

The college must provide student learning support services focusing on all students at general intake and specific students with particular needs. The College must offer a range of programmes and activities that promote involvement in college life and engagement in learning that would enhance students' sense of belongingness.

- Peer support programmes

The college must ensure that new students have the opportunity to engage in peer-to-peer activities that will help to increase student interaction, self-management and access to college resources.

- Career guidance and counselling

The college must provide career guidance and counselling services for students in need and provide the opportunity for students to sign-up for one-on-one counselling sessions and guidance sessions for both academic and non-academic issues.

6. Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 All staff of Villa College shall comply with this policy.
- 6.2 Monitoring of the policy implementation will be done by the Registration Department.
- 6.3 This policy shall be reviewed in two years' time.

7. Administrative matters, responsibilities and accountability

- 7.1 The Student Experiences Committee is responsible for overseeing, monitoring and observing all matters related to student retention and attrition.
- 7.2 The Registration Department is responsible for maintaining all student records related to student retention. The following reports must be generated from the SMS and maintained in accordance with Records Management and Archive Policy.

- Application Report
- Unattended Report
- Initial Registration Report
- Active Students' Enrolment Report
- Semester Enrolment Report at Census Date
- Semester Enrolment Report at the end of the semester
- Active Students' Report
- Withdrawal Students' Report
- Deferment/Deferral/Timeout Students' Report
- Inactive Students' Report
- Graduates' Report
- Overall Student Population
- College Register

7.3 The faculties are responsible for

- Monitoring and maintaining the progression of all cohorts, their performance and persistence throughout the course of their studies.
- Identifying at-risk students and ensuring that those students are provided with the required guidance and support to improve their academic performance. The records of the support and guidance provided must be recorded and maintained.
- Identifying student support areas and liaise with the relevant departments to develop, foster and improve support services required by students.
- Monitoring module level and programme level enrolments, and include those in the relevant assessment reports. These reports must be presented to the College Assessment Committee and the Student Experiences Committee.

7.4 The faculties or the Registration Department must report the status of outreach programmes at learning centres separately, justifying to continue the programme for other semesters and identifying the support and advice required.

7.5 The Marketing Department is responsible for conducting the student satisfaction survey once every semester.

8. Financial aspects

All financial aspects that are covered in this policy must be completed in accordance and in compliance with the Villa College Policy on Student Finance.

9. Orientation and implementation of this policy

9.1 Orientation of this policy must be undertaken by the Registration Department.

9.2 The policy shall be implemented from January 2019 onwards.

10. Related Policies, Procedures and Version Control*

Related Policies / Procedure

Version	Policy / Procedure Name	Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Status
	Policy on Admission and Enrolment	VCAS / AF / PO / 2018 / 010.v1			
	Policy on Student Assessment and Learning	VCAS / AR / PO / 2018 / 014.v1			
	Policy on Learning Support	VCAS / AR / PO / 2018 / 008.v1			
	VC Policy on Student Finance				Drafted
	Policy on Guidance and Counselling				Drafted

Redundant Policies/Procedures with Implementation of this document

Version	Policy/Procedure Name	Number	Approval Date	Approved by	

Version History

Version	Policy/Procedure Name	Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Summary of Changes