

Homewood Schools

Policy for Graduate Student Probation, Funding Withdrawal, and Dismissal

(Revised Fall 2018)

The Krieger School of Arts and Sciences (“KSAS”) and the Whiting School of Engineering (“WSE”) full-time programs, centers, and institutes establish the following policy regarding the procedures and consequences of graduate student underperformance, including probation and dismissal. This policy applies to all new and continuing WSE/KSAS graduate students but does not apply to AAP or EP graduate students.

Probation Procedures and Types

If it is determined that a graduate student has failed to meet performance requirements as dictated by their program and/or their Advisor, they may be placed on probation by their home department/program. An advisor cannot put a student on probation on their own; but in most cases are crucial in advising and guiding a student’s program on the decision to place a student on probation and in determining corrective measures for probations.

There are several typical types of graduate student probation:

1. Coursework Probation
2. Research Probation
3. Teaching Assistantship Probation
4. Multiple Issue Probation (e.g. coursework and research, teaching and research, coursework and teaching)

Timing of Probation

A graduate student may be placed on probation at any time, but if a probation can be resolved with coursework, the student should be notified before the first day of classes in a particular semester.

Notification of Probation

Students must be notified in writing through a probation letter (or official email) from their home department/program and there should be an offer by the student’s program to have a meeting between the student and either their advisor, program Chair/Head, or other program designee to discuss the probation. Students may elect to not engage in the process, but the probation process will continue per this policy.

A probation letter should:

- clearly outline the student’s performance shortcomings; noting the type of probation;
- indicate solid corrective measures ¹ necessary to remain in the program (this should include concrete deliverables);
- state the length of the student’s probationary period;

¹ May be commonly referred to as ‘terms’ in many probation letters

- indicate clearly (when appropriate) that any funding support in place before the start of the probationary period will remain in place for the length of the probation period (unless there is a voluntary change of enrollment status that affects funding support²).
- set a date at the midway mark of the probation period to review (in a meeting, if possible) the student's progress and provide feedback;
- set a second date at the end of the initial probation period to review (in a meeting, if possible) the student's progress and to determine next steps

Programs are encouraged to consult with their respective Office of Graduate Academic Affairs in the preparation of probation letters, both for letter templates and policy guidance.

A copy of the written probation notice should be forwarded via email to the program's respective Office of Graduate Academic Affairs³.

Student Status While on Probation

While on probation, students retain whatever enrollment status they were in at the time of the probation, and their visa status and any funding/benefits will not be affected through the probation period (unless there is a voluntary change of enrollment status that affects funding, visa, and/or benefits).⁴

If a student needs to take a Leave of Absence (LOA) while they are on probation, their probation is paused for the duration of the approved LOA period. Upon the student's return from LOA, their probation is reactivated with the same terms, but the clock for the probation is reset from the date of return to the longer of (1) the minimum time period dictated by the policy for the appropriate category as noted on the student's original probation letter (such as research, coursework, etc.), or (2) the remainder of the student's probationary period as noted in the student's original probation letter. <http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/academic-policies/#studentenrollmentstatusetext>

Length of Probation

1. Coursework probation: students will have until the end of the semester.
2. Research probation: students will be given at least 8 weeks.
3. Teaching Assistantship probation: students will be given at least 4 weeks.
4. If the probation is related to multiple aspects of the student's work (e.g. coursework and research, teaching and research, coursework and teaching) the appropriate timing applies for each individual component, independent of the other component(s).

Note that programs are at liberty to provide longer probationary periods.

Appeal Process for Initial Probation

A student may appeal their program's decision to place them on probation in writing within ten university business days to the program Chair/Head, stating why they feel the decision is unmerited. The program must

² For example, a student switches to part-time or nonresident status in the middle of a probationary period.

³ to the Vice Dean for Science and Research and the Director of Graduate and Postdoctoral Academic and Student Affairs in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, or to the Vice Dean for Graduate Education and the Assistant Dean for Graduate and Postdoctoral Academic Affairs in the Whiting School of Engineering

⁴ For example, a student switches to part-time or nonresident status in the middle of a probationary period.

render a decision on the appeal in writing within ten university business days. The student may then appeal that decision in writing within ten university business days to their respective graduate affairs Dean, again, stating the reasons for why they feel the decision is unmerited. The cognizant Dean (or designee) will render a decision in a timely manner (typically within ten university business days). ***An appeal of probation does not pause the start of a probationary period.*** The decision of the cognizant dean is final and there are no additional avenues for appeal under this policy.

Probation Outcome Communication Procedures

Students must be notified in writing through a probation outcome/decision letter (or email) from their home department/program and there should be an offer by the student's program to have a meeting between the student and either their advisor, program Chair/Head, or other program designee to discuss the outcome.

If the probation outcome/decision is either dismissal from the degree program or a withdrawal of funding, a meeting is required⁵, and any information regarding readmissions procedures should be included in the letter and discussion if deemed appropriate. Students may elect to not engage but it will neither pause nor affect the probation outcome and any associated timelines.

All probation outcome notifications should be copied/forwarded (electronically) to the student's Office of Graduate Affairs.⁶

Types of Probations

1. Coursework Probation

If the probation was based on coursework performance, then as soon as possible, but no later than one month⁷ following the conclusion of the stated probationary period, the program must inform the student of their status based on whether or not the student met the terms of the probation. The options are as follows:

- (a) Remove the student from probation with no conditions
- (b) Extend the probationary period
- (c) Remove the student from probation but withdraw funding if applicable (*this is not an option for WSE PhD Students*)
- (d) Dismiss the student from the program

2. Research Probation

If the probation was based on research performance, then within ten university business days following the conclusion of the stated probationary period, the program must inform the student in writing of their status based on whether or not the student met the terms of the probation. The options are as follows:

⁵ See note about students' right to not engage; in the case of dismissals or withdrawals of funding, the department/program must show in writing a documented effort to schedule a meeting with the student. If the student does not engage, despite repeated efforts by the department/program, then the requirement will still have been deemed to have been met.

⁶ to the Vice Dean for Science and Research and the Director of Graduate and Postdoctoral Academic and Student Affairs in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, **or** to the Vice Dean for Graduate Education and the Assistant Dean for Graduate and Postdoctoral Academic Affairs in the Whiting School of Engineering

⁷ Or, if all relevant grades have not been posted by a month, as soon as possible after all grades have posted so that an assessment may be made.

- (a) Remove the student from probation with no conditions
- (b) Remove the student from probation but withdraw funding if applicable (*this is not an option for WSE PhD students*)
- (c) Extend the probationary period
- (d) Dismiss the student from the program

If the decision is (d) to dismiss the student from the program, they should be permitted to complete the semester if enrolled in coursework, but any stipend can be stopped at the time of the program dismissal. Any health insurance premium and/or tuition support should not be reversed for the duration of the semester. Note that any dismissal decisions must be made by the student's home department.

3. Teaching Assistantship Probation

If the probation was based on teaching assistantship performance, then within ten university business days following the conclusion of the stated probationary period, the program must inform the student in writing of their status based on whether or not the student met the terms of the probation. The options are as follows:

- (a) Remove the student from probation with no conditions
- (b) Extend the probationary period
- (c) Withdraw TA funding⁸

4. Multiple Issue Probation (e.g. (e.g. coursework and research, teaching and research, coursework and teaching)

If the probation was related to multiple aspects of a student's performance, then the appropriate decision timeline and possible ramification for each individual component applies, independent of the other component(s). The final, cumulative, outcome decision will be at the student's home department's/program's discretion in balancing the outcomes from each component*. The options are as follows:

- (a) Remove the student from probation with no conditions
- (b) Extend the probationary period
- (c) Remove the student from probation but withdraw funding if applicable (*this is not an option for WSE PhD Students*)
- (d) Dismiss the student from the program

**for example, in the case of a student on an 8-week research probation and a semester-long coursework probation- if after 8 weeks the advisor wanted to remove the student from the research probation they could. If the decision was to dismiss the student from the program after the 8-week research probation- they could be dismissed from the degree program effective immediately, but then given the opportunity to complete that semester's coursework. Programs are encouraged to discuss nuanced situations with their respective office of graduate affairs,*

General Dismissal Guidelines

In all cases, if the outcome decision is to dismiss the student from the program or withdraw funding, the action may be made effective immediately (with no proration) once the student has been informed of the decision. However, departments/programs are strongly encouraged to provide a grace period.

⁸ WSE Programs should consult with the Office of Graduate Affairs before making this decision to discuss how to handle TA funding when it is being used to help meet the fully funded PhD student mandate.

While not required, academic dismissal may be noted a student's transcript at the request of the program and with approval from the cognizant Dean (or designee).

Appeal Process for Probation Outcomes

A student may appeal the probation outcome decision in writing within ten university business days to the program Chair/Head, stating why they feel the decision is unmerited. The program must render a decision on the appeal in writing within ten university business days. The student may then appeal that decision in writing within ten university business days to their respective graduate affairs Dean, again, stating the reasons for why they feel the decision is unmerited. The cognizant Dean (or designee) will render a decision in a timely manner (typically also within ten university business days).

While a probation outcome appeal is being reviewed, the student's registration status (and subsequently, their visa status) remains unchanged from what it was during the probation, and any funding and/or support remains in place. The decision of the cognizant dean is final and there are no additional avenues for appeal under this policy.

Dismissal Without Probation

A student may be dismissed without a formal probation period under three circumstances:

- (1) if they meet the conditions for dismissal based on coursework performance as stated by the academic program in its department handbook or on its website;
- (2) If they fail an oral or written exam (or project) for which successful completion is necessary to continue in the degree program and whose retake options have been exhausted (as stated in the program's degree requirements), or if they fail to meet any condition resulting from a qualifying or GBO/DBO exam;
- (3) If they are expelled pursuant to any other Johns Hopkins University policies.

Under circumstances (1) and (2), programs are expected to follow the notification and guidance dismissal procedures cited above. Students must be notified in writing through a probation outcome/decision letter (or email) from their home department/program and the student's program must offer a meeting between the student and either their advisor, program Chair/Head, or other program designee to discuss the outcome. Any information regarding readmissions procedures should be included in the letter and discussion if deemed appropriate. Students may elect to not engage but it will neither pause nor affect the probation outcome and any associated timelines.

All probation outcome notifications should be copied/forwarded (electronically) to the student's Office of Graduate Affairs.⁹

Students expelled or dismissed under any other Johns Hopkins policy ((3) above) will be processed through that policy's procedures. The student's department/program and cognizant Office of Graduate Affairs will be informed by the cognizant university office and may be required to facilitate academic administrative functions related to a student's departure.

⁹ *to the Vice Dean for Science and Research and the Director of Graduate and Postdoctoral Academic and Student Affairs in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, or to the Vice Dean for Graduate Education and the Assistant Dean for Graduate and Postdoctoral Academic Affairs in the Whiting School of Engineering*

Funding Withdrawal Without Probation

A student's funding may be withdrawn without probation:

- (1) If it is aligned to a program dismissal without probation (see above)
- (2) If the student has been found to egregiously disregarded or neglected their research/teaching duties¹⁰ (or as appropriate under University or Homewood Schools policy); such action requires approval from the cognizant dean's office.

Appeal Process for Dismissal or Funding Withdrawal Without Probation

A student may appeal the probation outcome decision in writing within ten university business days to the program Chair/Head, stating why they feel the decision is unmerited. The program must render a decision on the appeal in writing within ten university business days. The student may then appeal that decision in writing within ten university business days to their respective graduate affairs Dean, again, stating the reasons for why they feel the decision is unmerited. The cognizant Dean (or designee) will render a decision in a timely manner (typically also within ten university business days).

While a probation outcome appeal is being reviewed, the student's registration status (and subsequently, their visa status) remains unchanged from what it was during the probation, and any funding and/or support remains in place. The decision of the cognizant dean is final and there are no additional avenues for appeal under this policy.

Dismissal Consequences

When a student is dismissed from the university, several consequences include:

1. The student's home department/program will file a 'withdrawal' form with their cognizant Office of Graduate Affairs and remove the student from payroll (if applicable);
2. The Office of the Registrar will then cancel the student's registration for the next semester which may trigger a refund of tuition to either the student or their department/program (or both);
3. The loss of an active student status will result in the loss of all student benefits and privileges;
4. Academic dismissal may be noted on a student's transcript at the request of the program and with approval from the cognizant Dean;
5. The Office of Financial Services will suspend any financial aid to the student as well as work study aid;
6. The Office of International Services will perform its duties as required by federal regulations pertaining to individuals not eligible to enroll in the university; note that this typically means that international students will need to leave the United States within 15 days.
7. The student will be asked to return university property, including keys, data, and equipment.

Readmission Following Dismissal

¹⁰ For example, nonresponsive, disengaged, etc. with no discernable extenuating factors

On rare occasions, students may be presented with the option to be readmitted. The terms for readmitting a student who has been dismissed are established by individual departments in consultation with their respective office of graduate affairs. The readmission process should be described in the dismissal letter, if deemed appropriate. Students who have been dismissed should discuss the readmission process with their advisor.

Support

Graduate students involved in any actions under this policy may make an appointment with their respective graduate affairs office at any time to discuss the policy and their situation. The GRO offers itself as a peer resource, and the Counseling Center is a supportive and confidential resource.

Students are also encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns with their advisor, chair/head/ or the program's Director of Graduate Studies.

Grievance Policy

If a student feels any decision under this policy was made in an arbitrary or capricious manner, they may be eligible to file a grievance following the [Homewood Grievance Policy](#). If the student filing a grievance was dismissed and is international, immigration regulations require that the student depart the country within fifteen days of formal dismissal in the registrar's office. This does not preclude the student from filing a grievance.