



Understanding Academic Probation

Discovering you have been placed on academic probation can be frightening and disappointing. If you find yourself on probation, you have fallen below the minimum standard for academic progress, a 2.0 GPA at USC. **Many students struggle at some point in their college careers.** In many senses, academic probation serves as a serious warning and simultaneously serves as an opportunity to take corrective action... and get back on track.

Fortunately, proper planning and determination can help you overcome your academic difficulties. First, you should take a look at what factors influenced your academic decline. Then you can take steps to remove the barriers that keep you from achieving your goal of academic success. By taking a critical look at your study habits and academic strengths and weaknesses, you can make adjustments and seek additional help where necessary. Finally, you should formulate a realistic plan to improve your grades and to prepare yourself for future academic success.

While on academic probation, you are expected to take appropriate steps to ensure your academic success. This includes consultation with your academic advisor and an Academic Review Counselor. The corrective action you take may range from changing academic directions, to making lifestyle and study habit changes. You are encouraged to use the entire range of campus resources available to you to help you formulate your plan.

What Brought You To This Point?

Course Scheduling

Balancing your courses well is a contributing factor to your overall academic achievement. Were you taking three difficult courses in one semester? Don't take courses that are all math heavy or writing heavy. Try to create a well-balanced schedule by consulting with your academic advisor. Combine your major classes with one or two general education classes or elective classes. Also, do not forget to check the prerequisites required for each course.

Over Commitment

Are you trying to work 30 hours a week, take a full-time course load, and be involved in campus activities? Are you living away from home for the first time, taking difficult courses, and trying to contribute the same amount of community service as you did in high school? You may have many roles in life, but try to maintain a realistic schedule. Learn to manage your responsibilities.

Academic Skills

Do you need to brush up on your test taking skills or improve your study habits? Sometimes obtaining or enhancing basic academic skills can help improve your grades. The Center for Academic Support provides various workshops throughout the semester to help you become a master student.

Support System

A strong support system can greatly impact your academic progress. A support system may include family members, friends, staff, faculty, and your academic advisor. Try to develop a network of individuals who can assist, guide, and motivate you towards achieving your goals.

University Procedures

Adding and Dropping courses

Do not forget to officially ADD and DROP classes when you switch sections or change courses. Never assume ADD's and DROP's have been done for you. If you do not officially drop a course, you will get a "UW" on your transcript, which is the grade equivalent of an "F" in your grade point average. Always check your schedule before registration deadlines to ensure accuracy!

Incompletes

Do **NOT** re-enroll in a class in which you received an **INCOMPLETE ("IN")**. You cannot re-register for the course to complete the IN and must finish the work in the original class to clear the first grade. The "IN" will become a grade of "IX", that is the grade equivalent of an "F" in your grade point average, if it is not completed within one calendar year of receiving it. Contact the original professor to find out how to complete an incomplete. You should make completing incompletes a priority and factor in the time you'll need to complete your IN when deciding how many units to enroll in the next semesters.

Personal Circumstances

Sometimes things beyond your control may interfere with your academic performance. If an emergency, death, or severe illness occurs during the semester, talk to your professors and arrange to make up any work missed or discuss other options. Do not hesitate to talk to your academic advisor! If you feel you have personal issues and need time away from USC, consider speaking with your academic advisor about taking a leave of absence.

What Are USC's Academic Standards?

GPA Standards: A grade point average of at least C (2.0) on all baccalaureate units attempted at USC, as well as on the combined USC-transfer GPA, is required for undergraduate degrees. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in all attempted upper division courses for the major is also required, regardless of the department in which the courses are taken; some programs have a higher grade point average requirement. In order to graduate from USC, you must meet the minimum grade point average in both of these areas.

Academic Probation: If you drop below a 2.0 GPA in your overall USC GPA, you will be placed on academic probation. The purpose of probation is to warn you that your academic performance is below the minimum required standards for graduation and that improvement is required. Academic Probation is serious because it can lead to academic disqualification from USC.

Mandatory Advisement: If your GPA falls below a 2.0, you are required to seek academic advisement prior to registering for the following semester. An Academic Review Advisement Record with an authorized school signature is the only proof of advisement the Academic Review and Retention Office will accept. Once this form is completed and you have met with the Academic Review and Retention Office, you are then eligible to register in-person at the Registration building on the date and time designated on your permit to register. *Please note that registration using Web Registration is not available to students on academic probation, though you can use the schedule builder feature to plan your schedule.*

Academic Disqualification: Once your GPA has fallen below a 2.0 you have two semesters of enrollment (excluding summer) to raise your GPA before being academically disqualified from USC. However, if you earn a minimum semester GPA of 2.3 or higher in a subsequent semester, but a 2.0 has not yet been reached, you will not be disqualified and will be allowed to enroll for an additional semester.

What Are Grade Point Deficiencies?

Your grade point deficiency is a numerical value, which represents how far you are below a 2.0 GPA. As the chart below shows, every grade you get below a C takes you deeper into probation while every grade you get above a C works to bring your GPA above a 2.0. Getting C's will not help your GPA so it is best to aim for higher GPA's such as A's and B's. As mentioned previously, a 2.0 GPA is required for graduation. Therefore, the further below you are from a 2.0, the further away you will be from graduation.

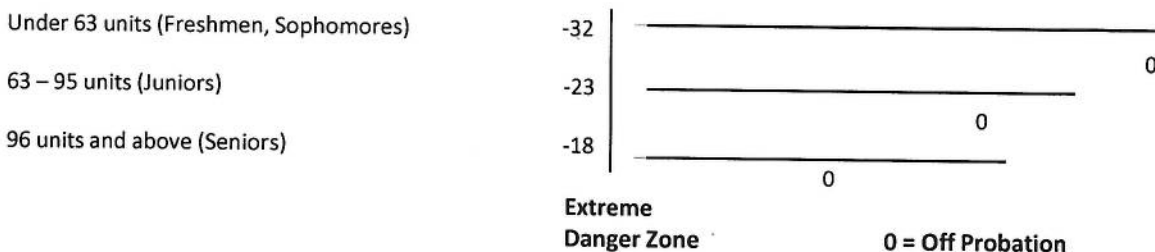
A	+2.0	C	0	C-	-0.7
A-	+1.7			D+	-0.3
B+	+1.3			D	-1.0
B	1.0			F	-2.0
B-	+0.7			UW	-2.0
C+	+0.3			IX	-2.0

Using the formula as shown below, you can calculate your grade point deficiency. You will need the following from OASIS Completed Course Summary: "GPAU" [units applied towards your GPA] and "Gpts" [number of grade points earned] to help you calculate this.

$$\text{Grade Points} - (\text{GPA Units} \times 2.0) = \text{Grade Point Deficiency}$$

$$- \left(\frac{\quad}{\quad} \times 2.0 \right) = _$$

Grade Point Deficiencies Based on College Level



Reaching the 2.0 Target GPA

To calculate possible target GPA's needed to raise your overall GPA to 2.0 and remove you from academic probation, you will need the "GPAU" [units applied towards your GPA] and "Gpts" [number of grade points earned] from above AND also add future units you plan to take (ex. 12 letter-graded units in the upcoming semester).

$$(\text{GPAU} + \text{FUTURE UNITS}) \times 2.0 \text{ TARGET GPA} = \text{GRADE POINTS NEEDED}$$

$$\text{GRADE POINTS NEEDED} - \text{Gpts} = \text{GRADE POINT DEFICIT}$$

$$\text{GRADE POINT DEFECIT} / \text{FUTURE UNITS} = \text{GPA NEEDED}$$

It is helpful to calculate using several possible ranges of future units (12 units, 16 units, 20 units, 32 units) to see how the future units will affect the GPA needed to raise your overall GPA.

Note: If the GPA needed is greater than 4.0 (A), it would not be possible for you to raise your GPA to above a 2.0 with those number of units.

How Can I Improve My Academic Standing?

1) Earn Higher Grades

To remove a deficiency, you will need to earn more A's and B's. Earning C's will keep you at the same GPA, while earning D's and F's will cause you to lose more grade points per unit.

2) Freshman Forgiveness

A special provision governs the repeat of courses by students who enter USC as first-time freshmen. These students may repeat a maximum of three courses taken during the first two semesters at USC in which grades of D+ or below (including UW and IX) were received, and only the subsequent letter grade, even if lower, will be calculated in the grade point average. The courses must be repeated at USC for a letter grade, and both courses with the grades received will appear on the transcript. A prerequisite course may not be repeated after a student has completed a course for which it is designated a prerequisite. The same course may be repeated no more than once for the benefit of substitution of grade.

Beginning Fall 2008, students who were admitted for spring and were first-time freshmen elsewhere in the previous fall may repeat a maximum of two courses taken during the first semester at USC in which grades of D+ or below were received with the same set of provisions stated above.

Students are encouraged to consult with their academic advisor, an Academic Review Counselor, or the Degree Progress Department prior to repeating the course. Students who have been assigned a grade as a result of a Student Conduct sanction may not repeat the course under this provision. There are no provisions for transfer students.

3) Utilize Campus Resources

There are many departments on campus here to serve you and help you to do your best at USC. They are all here to assist you in your academic success! A listing of all of the on campus resources and their contact information is provided at the end of this handout. Don't hesitate to contact any of those departments.

4) Talk With Your Professors and T.A.'s

They are there to help you so get to know them and ask questions. Professors hold office hours that students rarely show up to. Not only will you get to know some very knowledgeable people, but they'll be more willing to help you when you're in need if they know who you are on a more personal level.

5) Time Management & Study Strategies

These are not only skills but necessities for college students. Check the Center for Academic Support for workshops and more information on changing the way you study and how to prioritize so that you can use the time you have most effectively and efficiently.

Students experiencing academic difficulties are encouraged to contact the Academic Review and Retention Office (FIG 107, 213-740-1196) and their academic advisor to discuss strategies to remove themselves from academic probation.