UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL MATHS SCHOOL
EDUCATION FOR 16-19 YEAR OLDS

Academic Progression Policy

Status: Non-statutory

Delegated to: Education Committee

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1. Purpose

This policy exists to ensure that:

- decisions made regarding students' transition to Year 13 and the courses taken in Year 13 are made in the best interests of the students;
- students whose health, wellbeing or educational needs are such that they are not able to access the curriculum fully are well supported and have appropriate educational provision;
- the process for making such decisions is clear, consistently applied, and free from discrimination;
- the school's processes are open and transparent and subject to governor scrutiny.

2. Definitions

Pastoral Staff: Form Tutors, Lead Pastoral Tutor and Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for student wellbeing and safeguarding.

Through the School's admissions process care is taken to select students who have the potential to thrive at University of Liverpool Mathematics School (ULMaS). It is therefore the expectation that the vast majority of, if not all, students will progress from Year 12 to Year 13. All students start on 4 A-Level Courses and most will reduce this load to 3 A-Level courses at the end of Year 12.

Once admitted it is the School's responsibility to support students by all means possible within the resources available, to achieve the best outcomes. The school recognises that

- the best outcomes are not always high grades in examinations: different students will have different needs and priorities
- some students will face significant struggles academically, or in their physical or mental health

This school is committed to supporting the students it enrols regardless of the difficulties they may face. It is the school's aim to achieve 100% student retention and success in A-Levels each year, but this must not come at the cost of students' well being or their long term best interests.

3. Fitness for Study

ULMaS will not prevent or discourage any students from continuing at the school because they are not predicted to achieve high grades. However, it may be in a student's best interests to not continue at the school because the curriculum or ethos at this school has proved to be a poor match for the student's needs.

If, during or at the end of Year 12, a student's academic performance or their pastoral wellbeing suggests that they are not thriving in the school then it may be in their best interests to move to a new course in a new provider whilst they are still able to access two years of free education. Ultimately a student may be told that they must leave the school, or may not proceed to Year 13, or that they must restart Year 12. Such a decision may only be motivated by the student's best interests.

Where concerns arise about a student's ability to complete the full programme of study in Year 13, the school will normally seek to support the student to remain on roll and secure the most appropriate and achievable qualification outcomes. In such cases, the focus will shift from maximising grades to ensuring that the student is able to complete a viable programme successfully. This may include adjustments such as reducing the number of A-Level subjects, substituting A-Level Further Mathematics with AS Further Mathematics where appropriate, adopting a targeted examination strategy, implementing reasonable adjustments or access arrangements, and/or making timetable modifications to support effective study. Such arrangements will be agreed with the student and, where appropriate, their parent(s)/guardian(s), and will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain in the student's best interests.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be in a student's best interests to transfer to alternative education, training or employment during Year 13. This will usually only be considered where the evidence indicates that the student is unlikely to secure appropriate outcomes through continued study at the school, and that a different pathway would provide a more suitable match to their needs, interests or circumstances. Such pathways may include transfer to a college offering a different course mix, progression to an apprenticeship or employment with training, or specialist provision where health or wellbeing needs are significant. Any decision to pursue a managed transfer will be made in consultation with the student and, where appropriate, their parents/ carers, and the school will take reasonable steps to support a planned and orderly transition.

In rare cases, a student may withdraw from examinations or leave the school without completing their programme of study. This will only be considered where there are compelling reasons, such as significant health or wellbeing concerns, or where there is no realistic prospect of the student achieving any meaningful qualification outcomes, and where continuation would not be in the student's best interests. Such decisions will be made following careful discussion with the student and, where appropriate, their parents/ carers, with due regard to the school's safeguarding responsibilities and the student's longer-term welfare and progression. The school will seek to ensure that appropriate advice and support are in place to enable the student to move on to a suitable next step.

This policy is distinct from the school's Behaviour and Exclusions Policy which considers the best interests of other students and the school as a whole. Where concerns relate to a student's failure to engage with reasonable academic expectations or agreed support, and this is not attributable to identified additional needs or health factors, the matter may be addressed under the Behaviour Policy. Persistent non-engagement may lead to sanctions, including suspension or removal from roll where appropriate.

In exceptional circumstances, a student in Year 13 may be permitted to follow a reduced programme of study, typically involving the completion of one A-Level in Year 13 and a return in a subsequent academic year to complete additional qualifications ("Year 14"). This pathway will only be approved where there is compelling evidence of significant health or wellbeing need, where there is a clear and demonstrable educational benefit to a reduced programme, and where no more suitable alternative provision is available. Approval is at the discretion of the Headteacher and will take into account the school's capacity to accommodate the arrangement. Students must demonstrate a commitment to the revised programme; failure to engage may result in the arrangement being reviewed or withdrawn. All such cases will be reviewed at least termly to ensure that the arrangement continues to be in the student's best interests.

Where the number of students wishing to repeat Year 12 exceeds the number of places available, the school will apply a prioritisation process.

Decisions will be made by the Headteacher (or delegated senior panel) based on a holistic review of each case. The following factors will be considered:

1. **Strength of academic rationale**
    - The extent to which repeating Year 12 is likely to lead to significantly improved attainment and successful completion of A-levels.
    - Evidence that the student has the capacity to benefit from an additional year (e.g. prior attainment, trajectory, subject suitability).
2. **Exceptional or mitigating circumstances**
    - The presence of significant factors that adversely affected performance in Year 12 (e.g. serious illness, bereavement, disruption to education), supported by appropriate evidence.
    - Students whose underperformance is clearly attributable to such circumstances may be given higher priority.
3. **Commitment and engagement**
    - Evidence of consistent effort, attendance, and engagement during Year 12, or clear and credible evidence of improved commitment where this was previously lacking.
    - Willingness to meet any conditions set by the school for a repeat year.
4. **Suitability of alternative progression routes**
    - Whether progression to Year 13 remains viable and appropriate.
    - Whether alternative pathways (e.g. modified programme, course changes, or external progression routes) would better serve the student's needs.
5. **Capacity and curriculum considerations**
    - Availability of places within subject classes and the need to maintain viable teaching groups and staffing structures.

Where demand exceeds capacity, priority will normally be given to students whose cases most strongly meet the above criteria, particularly where there is clear evidence that repeating Year 12 is both necessary and likely to result in a substantially improved outcome.

The school's decision will be final, and not all requests to repeat Year 12 can be accommodated.

Where there is concern about a student's fitness for study at this school we will follow the Progress Review Process (PRP)

4. Progress Review Process

The school routinely shares concerns about student progress through the normal academic monitoring processes (mock examination review meetings, termly reports and one to one tutor meetings). Where this fails to elicit suitable improvement in a student's approach or the progress that they are making, the student will enter the Progress Review Process.

The purpose of this process is to ensure that

- The student's needs are met, if this is possible, by the school
- Where the student's needs cannot be met by the school, the student is directed and supported towards a more appropriate setting

- Where the long term best interests of the student would be best served by leaving the school, they are supported to do so in a way that is clearly structured, fair and open.

PRP Stage 1

The student will be invited to a formal progress review meeting in school with a member of the Pastoral Team. The student will be allowed to be accompanied by a parent, guardian or a friend or supporter (who could be their form tutor or another member of the school staff). The student will be given 2 working days' notice of the meeting.

In advance of the meeting the student will be sent a copy of this policy and informed that the meeting is Stage 1 in the PRP process. Where appropriate their parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be included in the email inviting the student to the meeting.

During the meeting the student will be offered suitable support and guidance as follows:

- The student will be informed that the school has serious concerns about their progress or their fitness for study at the school, and it will be explained to them how this concern arises.

There will then be:

- A clear and frank discussion of how the student is performing relative to what is expected based on the curriculum taught at the school, the student's apparent academic potential and the prior attainment data available;
- A consideration of whether they have any additional needs for which reasonable adjustments could be made which might result in a significant improvement in their learning;
- A review of the means of support available through school and how well the student is accessing these;
- A review of any means of support available outside the school such as the Student Assistance Programme;
- A review of any alternative options for education, training or employment that the school thinks the student might wish to consider
- An agreement about what examination grades would be considered to be the minimum acceptable grades based on what the student is capable of achieving given prior assessment data and the challenging curriculum of the school. This is likely to be as set out in the table below, but reasonable adjustments may be required where a student has experienced illness or other setbacks:

ALIS 75 Estimates:	Likely agreed target grade band in December of Year 12:	Minimum Acceptable Grades at the end of Year 12 are likely to be at least:
Generally A or higher	A*A	ABB
Generally B or higher	AB	BCC
Generally C or higher	BC	CDD
Generally D or higher	CD	DEE

A plan will be agreed with the student to ensure that they have the best possible chance to demonstrate their suitability for ongoing study at the school over the next 2-4 working weeks.

After the agreed time period there will be a further meeting with the student which will review the progress made towards demonstrating full fitness to study the curriculum delivered in school. In considering the matter, the member of staff conducting the meeting will have due regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and make a note of such consideration and their conclusions in this regard. The outcome of this meeting will be:

- To move to PRP Stage 2 (if they are still not achieving results in line with the Minimum Acceptable Grades agreed)
- To end the PRP and return the student to the normal academic monitoring process (if they are now achieving at least Minimum Acceptable Grades)
- To extend Stage 1 PRP by up to 2 more working weeks if the situation is not yet clear

PRP Stage 2

At this stage, parents or guardians will be informed via email or telephone of the school's ongoing concerns about the student's engagement with study, or the suitability of the education provided at the school for the student.

The student and, where appropriate, their parent(s)/ guardian(s) or other chosen supporter(s) will be invited to attend a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher (or their designated deputy), which may be held online.

During this meeting the school will:

- Set out the reasons for their ongoing concerns about the student's progress, approach or fitness for study;
- Review the Minimum Acceptable Grades and make any necessary adjustments based on any new evidence of disability, illness or any other circumstances.
- Consider whether the concern arises from academic fitness or behavioural choices made by the student. Where, in the judgement of the Deputy Headteacher (or their deputy), there is evidence that the student's poor progress is actually due to behavioural choices they may be referred to the Behaviour Contract Process in the school's Behaviour and Exclusion Policy and this Progress Review Process will terminate.
- Discuss with the student and their parent(s)/ supporters whether they have any additional needs for which reasonable adjustments could be made which might result in a significant improvement in their learning;
- Determine what grades or marks the student needs to achieve in their next tests or examinations to demonstrate that the school is an appropriate place for the student to be studying; in doing so they will consider the students prior achievement data, any grade targets already agreed with the student and any data from the ALIS or similar baseline tests taken by the student after joining the school;
- Agree a date within the next 2-4 weeks when the student's performance will be formally reviewed.
- In considering the matter, the Deputy Headteacher will have due regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and make a note of such consideration and their conclusions in this regard.

After the agreed time period there will be a further meeting with the student which will review the progress made towards demonstrating full fitness to study the curriculum delivered in school. This review will consider:

- recent summative assessment results
- recent feedback from classroom teachers and the pastoral team

In considering the matter, the member of staff conducting the meeting will have due regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and make a note of such consideration and their conclusions in this regard.

The outcome of this meeting will be:

- To move to PRP Stage 3
- To extend Stage 2 PRP by up to 2 more working weeks if the situation is not yet clear
- To end the PRP and return the student to the normal academic monitoring process

PRP Stage 3

Where, in spite of everyone's best efforts, the student continues to find it difficult to make reasonable progress the school will now take decisive action to ensure that the student moves into a more suitable course of study or other outcome. This is intended to protect students from the negative consequences of failing to respond the the evidence of their unsuitability for the school's curriculum

Where the evidence indicates that, in spite of the best efforts having been made to help the student to improve their performance, either:

- the student is not going to achieve qualifications in line with their potential if they continue at the school, but could do better elsewhere, or
- the student's wellbeing is not well served by their continuing enrolment at the school;

the decision will now be made by the Headteacher that:

- the student will be required to restart Year 12 study at school at the start of the next academic year if a place is available, but that they should continue to attend school in the meantime
- the student will be allowed to complete Year 12 but will not have a place in school after that.
- the student will leave the school immediately, or at another date determined by the headteacher.

Removing a student's place at the school is a last resort option and will only be used where it is clear, in the view of the headteacher, that the student's best interests are not well served by continuing to attend school.

A student or their parent or guardian may appeal this decision within 5 working days of being informed of the outcome in writing. To do so they should follow the appeals procedure set out in the school's Behaviour and Exclusions Policy.

5. Requests to Repeat Year 12 or Year 13

Where a student or their parent(s)/guardian(s) requests that the student repeat Year 12 or Year 13, the school will consider this request carefully in light of the student's best interests and the school's capacity. The school will not normally be able to confirm whether such a request can be approved until September, when student numbers and available places in each year group are finalised.

In allocating places, priority will be given to applicants who have met the admission requirements for entry into Year 12, including those who have been offered a place on the basis of mitigating circumstances. Requests to repeat a year will only be considered once these places have been allocated and where capacity remains.

The school reserves the right to refuse a request to repeat a year where it judges that doing so would not be in the student's best educational or pastoral interests, or where it is not financially or practically viable for the school to accommodate the request.

6.

7. Continuing with 4 A-Level Courses

Most students will be better served by focusing on just 3 A-Level courses in Year 13. For most students this will be:

- Mathematics A-Level
- Further Mathematics A-Level
- either Physics A-Level or Computer Science A-Level

Where there is good evidence that a student is likely to struggle with the content of Further Mathematics A-Level then the headteacher will consider whether they should be allowed to take AS Further Mathematics instead of A-Level Further Mathematics. Such a student will take both Physics and Computer Science A-Levels. This is considered a last resort option because the school's curriculum structure assumes that students will study mathematics throughout their 2 years in school.

Students who are achieving at least grade A in every subject in the summer examinations of Year 12 will be permitted to continue with 4 A-Level courses in Year 13 if they wish to; although they may be advised not to.

Students will be asked to choose which A-Level course they wish to drop at the start of Year 13. If they are unsure they may be granted an extension of one month to decide, at the discretion of the headteacher.

8. Implementation

Throughout the academic year, students complete in class assessments from which their progress is tracked. These are used, together with evidence from classwork and homework, to identify students in need of support. The support that is provided will be dependent on the students' needs.

All school staff are responsible for ensuring a supportive culture is maintained and have a duty to report any student concerns to a member of pastoral staff.

Form tutors are responsible for tracking the progress of their tutees and providing initial support. They have a duty to refer ongoing or significant concerns to an Academic or Pastoral Lead.

The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all students are provided with effective pastoral support and the Subject Leads are responsible for ensuring they have excellent academic support.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring appropriate academic and pastoral support is provided and that standards of teaching are excellent. If a student leaves ULMaS, it is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure effective support is in place to ease his/her transition.

It is the governors' responsibility to hold the Headteacher to account for the consistent implementation of this policy.

Associated Documentation

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour and Exclusions Policy
- Funding regulations for post-16 provision 2022 to 2023: Advice: funding regulations for post16 provision - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed biannually by a link governor and will then be brought to the Education Committee.

Data relating to students that have left the school will be reviewed annually.