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.

Updated Fall 2014
Calculating Your GPA

Your grade point average is determined by two factors:

**Course Unit Value** – how many units each course is worth and...

**Grade Points** – how many points were earned for the course, based on the amount of units the class is worth and your earned grade.

**Note:** Grades of W, P, NP, CR, NC, IN, and MG do not earn grade points. Completed IN’s and resolved MG’s though will affect your GPA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course Unit Value</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ex. ARLT 100</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(B+) 3.3</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADE POINT CHART**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Course Unit Value** / **Total Grade Points** = GPA

Updated Fall 2014
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Deficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>+2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>+1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>+1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>+0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

\[
\text{Grade Points} \quad - \quad \frac{(\text{GPA Units}) \times 2.0}{\text{Gpts}} = \text{Grade Point Deficiency} \\
\]

\[
\text{Grade Points Deficiencies Based on College Level} \\
\text{Under 63 units (Freshmen, Sophomores)} \quad -32 \quad - \quad 0 \\
\text{63 – 95 units (Juniors)} \quad -23 \quad - \quad 0 \\
\text{96 units and above (Seniors)} \quad -18 \quad - \quad 0 \\
\text{Extreme Danger Zone} \quad 0 = \text{Off Probation} \\
\]

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).

\[
(GPAU + \text{FUTURE UNITS}) \times 2.0 \quad \text{TARGET GPA} = \text{GRADE POINTS NEEDED} \\
\text{GRADE POINTS NEEDED} - \text{Gpts} = \text{GRADE POINT DEFICIT} \\
\text{GRADE POINT DEFICIT / FUTURE UNITS} = \text{GPA NEEDED} \\
\]

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.
USC Services and Resources

Academic Review and Retention Office
(213) 740-1196, FIG 107, acadrev@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/academicreview
The Academic Review and Retention Office in the Office of Academic Records and Registrar counsel and advise students on academic probation, monitors the progress of undergraduate academic statuses, and help students navigate the readmission process.

Academic Advisement
Academic advisement is important in planning a curriculum that fulfills general education requirements and major requirements, while allowing you to take advantage of the varied programs and classes the university offers. An academic advisor can help you sort through requirements and introduce interesting options for your program. Each school or department also provides academic advisement for undergraduate students admitted (or interested in being admitted) to the major.

Dornsife College Advising Office
(213) 740-2534, CAS 120, cas@usc.edu, http://dornsife.usc.edu/dornsife-college-advising
Academic advisement is important in planning a curriculum that fulfills general education requirements and major requirements, while allowing you to take advantage of the varied programs and classes the university offers. An adviser can help you sort through requirements and introduce interesting options for your program. If you are an undecided/undeclared student or a student interested in graduate school or law school, you can meet with advisers in the Dornsife College Advising Office.

Dornsife Office of Pre-Health Advisement
(213) 740-4844, HNB 120, prehealth@dornsife.usc.edu, http://dornsife.usc.edu/pre-health
The Office of Pre-Health Advisement exists to serve all current students, alumni, and post-baccalaureates of the University of Southern California who are interested in pursuing a career within the health professions. Our pre-health advisors are committed to providing an array of student-centered advisement services and support tools tailored to meet the individual needs, interests, and goals of pre-health students. We value a sense of community, meaningful relationships with students, staff and faculty, academic excellence, leadership, wellness, and learning through community service, clinical exposure, laboratory research, and campus organizations.

Center for Academic Support
(213) 740-0776, STU 301, study@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/cas
The Center for Academic Support organizes learning enrichment workshops, general academic support counseling, and student support groups that are available to students. The Center for Academic Support is the central resource and referral agency for learning enrichment at USC. The staff at the Center for Academic Support works to meet individual student needs as they relate to learning enrichment. Services available include: tutoring and learning assistance in learning strategies and study skills.
Asian Pacific American Student Services
(213) 740-4999, STU 410, apass@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/apass
USC Asian Pacific American Student Services (APASS) is a multifaceted department focused on the education, engagement, and empowerment of students. APASS has a two-fold mission: to facilitate Asian Pacific American participation, dialogue, community-building, and empowerment, while at the same time, to serve as a source of cross-cultural educational programming for the entire campus. APASS programs include orientation, leadership development, service-learning and community immersion, career and peer mentoring, cross-cultural and educational programs, academic collaborations, and individual and collective advocacy.

Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs
(213) 740-8257, STU 415, cbcsa@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/cbcsa
The Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs (CBCSA) provides a wide range of support services, programs and cultural activities aimed at the development of undergraduate and graduate students. CBCSA is committed to creating an environment that encourages intellectual, professional and cultural growth of students of African descent entering and completing degree programs. CBCSA’s five major areas of focus are cultural and community awareness, leadership, professional development, social enrichment and retention.

Career Center
(213) 740-9111, STU 110, careers@usc.edu, http://careers.usc.edu
The mission of the Career Center is to provide exceptional career services to all members of the Trojan Family and is your “one stop” for information on jobs and internships. Their array of programs includes career counseling, workshops, company profile events, career panels, internships, job listings & searches, connectSC Career Network and Career Fairs.

Student Counseling Services
(213) 740-7711, ESH, www.usc.edu/counseling
The purpose of Student Counseling Services is to help students appropriately handle the stresses and challenges they face in their academic, professional and personal lives. Services are provided to help enhance students’ skills and attitudes in adapting to college life, relating to new and different people and making their USC experience satisfying and productive. Services offered by Student Counseling Services include: confidential individual counseling, group counseling, and various workshops and consultation.

Disability Services and Programs
(213) 740-0776, STU 301, ability@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/disability
Disability Services and Programs provides support services to enable students with disabilities to develop their academic potential, while having the dignity of working toward an independent lifestyle. Services for students with physical, psychological and learning disabilities include: assistance in providing readers, scribes, note-takers and interpreters, advocacy with faculty, special accommodations for test-taking needs, auxiliary aid and equipment loans, assistance with architectural barriers, information on accessible seating at USC sporting events, assistive technology, support for individual needs, and information on various disabilities.

Updated Fall 2014
El Centro Chicano
(213) 740-1480, STU 402, ecc@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/elcentro
The University of Southern California established El Centro Chicano in 1972 as a direct request from the Chicano/Latino students on campus. Their vision of El Centro Chicano was a place that would identify with Chicano/Latino culture and history. Today, El Centro is working towards one goal; the retention and graduation of Chicano/Latino students at USC. Within the division of Student Affairs, El Centro serves as a support and resource center for all students and their families. El Centro provides various programs throughout the year that allow students the opportunity to enrich their leadership skills, cultural identity, and define their role in the USC community.

University Park Health Center
(213) 740-8742, ESH, www.usc.edu/uphc
The University Park Health Center provides medical services, counseling services, and health promotion and prevention services to students on the University Park campus. Their mission is to provide high quality, cost-effective and client oriented services and resources in health promotion and disease prevention, primary care, and counseling to the University Park Campus student community. The Student Health Center strives to facilitate the completion of your academic career at USC by promoting healthy lifestyles and caring for your physical and psychological illnesses and concerns.

Office of International Services
(213) 740-2666, GFS 120, ois@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/ois
The Office of International Services offers assistance of all kinds to the USC international student population. The office is a resource center offering assistance with a variety of issues, including immigration regulations, academic progress, financial problems, housing and counseling on cross-cultural adjustment. Referral services and educational programs are also provided.

Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity
(213) 740-7884, STU 311, http://kortschakcenter.usc.edu
The USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity (KCLC) is for students who learn differently and wish to receive academic support. Students who have a learning difference, a documented learning disability, ADHD or other disability-related learning challenge are encouraged to utilize the KCLC. At the KCLC, students are paired with learning assistants and/or tutors, have access to assistive technology, can study in a quiet environment and receive guidance in their preferred way of learning. KCLC also offers weekly Learning Enrichment Workshops on various topics throughout the academic year including: time management, power reading, memory enhancement, test-taking anxiety, note-taking, writing papers, exam-taking strategies, and thinking skills in problem solving.

The Language Center
(213) 740-1188, THH 309, language@dornsife.usc.edu, http://language.usc.edu
The Language Center is a support center for the learning and teaching of languages and a gathering place for interaction among cultures and language speakers. Whether students are pursuing language learning for professional and educational aspirations, as a context for understanding global affairs or to better understand their cultural heritage, the Language Center can help.
Math Center
(213) 740-2400, KAP 263, http://dornsife.usc.edu/mathcenter
If you want help with your math classes this is the place to come! Math graduate students, faculty, and assistants are available to help you. During the Spring and Fall semesters, the Math Center is open Monday to Thursday 8am to 7pm and Friday 8am to 5pm. It is run informally and is designed for easy drop-in usage. It works best to use the Center as a study room. It’s a good place to meet up with your study partners and work on homework. If and as you need help, ask one of the graduate students, faculty members or assistants.

Student Support and Advocacy
(213) 740-2421, STU 201, http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/departments/ssa
Student Support and Advocacy assists students and families in resolving complex issues which adversely affect a student’s academic success and/or collegiate experience. Whether the issues are personal, academic, or financial, we evaluate and present options to students, and facilitate communication and connections with university departments. Through our interactions, we strive to empower students to take full advantage of USC’s resources and opportunities. Housed in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Student Support and Advocacy serves to enhance the quality of service offered to all USC students. Our goal is to create an environment that is safe and welcoming for students, facilitates students’ successful completion of their academic programs, and encourages students’ to fully participate in the USC community.

Student-Athlete Academic Services
(213) 740-3801, JMC, http://saas.usc.edu
Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) provides the necessary support to assist all student-athletes in reaching their full potential academically, personally and professionally. Our program includes academic advising, career development, community service, tutorial programs and learning specialists, all of which are aimed at promoting a philosophy of individual responsibility so as to encourage each student-athlete to value his or her educational experience. In providing such services, SAAS gives student-athletes the opportunity to develop the skills needed to persist toward graduation, become leaders within the community and lead successful and productive lives.

Transfer and Veteran Student Programs
(213) 821-6028, TCC 330, tvsp@usc.edu, https://sait.usc.edu/ca/tvsp/
The Transfer and Veteran Student Programs, housed within the Office of Campus Activities, strives to facilitate a smooth transition into USC for transfer and veteran students that results in a strong connection to the Trojan Family. TVSP achieves this by serving as a comprehensive campus resource that also develops programs to enhance transfer and veteran students’ success academically, professionally, and socially, which results in increased retention, persistence and satisfaction. Our vision is to create a transfer and military friendly campus at the University of Southern California.

Trojans Care for Trojans
tc4t@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/tc4t
Trojans Care for Trojans (TC4T) is a Student Affairs initiative that empowers students to take action and speak out when they are concerned about a peer. The Website provides a private and anonymous service for students to express their concerns about other members of the Trojan Family. It also offers connections to institutional support and resources for students copng with personal difficulties.
Veterans Affairs Office  
(213)740-4619, TCC 425H, vets@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/veteransaffairs  
The Veteran Affairs Office certifies enrollment for USC students who apply and are eligible for educational assistance administered by the Veterans Administration. The Veteran Affairs Office processes all applications and forwards enrollment certifications to regional offices of the Veterans Administration, provides assistance to students with problems that relate to the Veterans Administration educational (or covered) programs, and maintains a reference file on all VA students for up to 3 years.

Center for Women and Men  
(213)740-4900, STU 202C, cwm@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/cwm  
The Center for Women & Men exists to facilitate the success of students, faculty and staff by providing innovative opportunities for leadership and scholarship and by offering advocacy and confidential counseling to those who have experienced gender-related harm. Above all, The Center for Women & Men serves as a haven for students, staff and faculty.

Writing Center  
(213) 740-3691, THH 216, writing@usc.edu, www.usc.edu/writingcenter  
The Writing Center is the USC Writing Program’s consulting service to the whole university, providing one-to-one consultations and small-group workshops to help students – of all abilities – to improve their critical thinking and writing skills. The Writing Center provides both individual consultations and small group workshops to help students improve their critical thinking skills and grow into stronger writers. They also provide free handouts regarding grammar, syntax, paragraph development, APA and MLA documentation, etc.