

The Academic Alert (formerly, Early Alert) online referral system is designed to identify, report, and provide feedback for students who are at risk of failing a course. Faculty are encouraged to use the system **as soon as** a student is identified at risk for course failure in order to provide the earliest intervention possible.

Why was it developed?

Under the Chancellor's Action Plan, the University of Missouri – St. Louis reviewed student retention data and developed goals and action steps to increase our student retention rates. Data on how University of Missouri – St. Louis students progress toward their degrees indicates that poor academic performance, especially in the first semester on campus, directly correlates to increased attrition. A Retention Team appointed by the Provost and working with a retention consultant developed strategies aimed at increasing student retention. The Academic Alert System is one intervention that is designed to allow faculty to identify and help students in their courses who are at risk of failing.

Students on the University of Missouri – St. Louis campus are expected to meet the academic expectations and behavioral standards outlined for each of their courses. This may include class attendance and participation, submitting assignments on time and in a professional manner, and/or successfully completing the course assessments. If a student is not meeting these expectations, we want each student to be aware that they are at risk of failing the course. The earlier a student is aware that professors are concerned about their academic progress and success, the sooner interventions can be initiated to increase the student's achievement in the course. By referring students via the Academic Alert system, faculty convey their awareness and concern for the student's success. Multiple academic resources are available on campus to assist students academically. Student Development Coordinators in the Center for Student Success will contact students referred to them and connect them with appropriate academic resources.

When was it implemented?

Fall Semester 2006, as the Early Alert system. Name change to Academic Alert took place in Summer 2008.

How will the Academic Alert referral process work?

The referral system is designed to address academic concerns, not disciplinary issues. If a student requires a disciplinary referral, faculty will continue to follow the University of Missouri - St. Louis policy and refer such matters to Student Affairs.

The Academic Alert System is online. Faculty choose referral reasons from a choice of categories including *Excessive Absences*, *Missed Assignments*, *Failed Exam*, *Failed Quiz*, *Missing Lab*, *Missing Presentation*, and *Other*. The *Other* category option allows faculty to comment on other areas of concern. All comments made on an Academic Alert referral are shared with the student, so comments must be written with consideration of the student's privacy. Faculty who have comments that they do not want to include in the referral may communicate those comments directly to the appropriate Student Development Coordinator in the Center for Student Success. The Academic Alert for each student will be assigned to an individual Student Development Coordinator and the instructor may contact the Coordinator by using the email hyperlink found in the referral for that particular student.

Once an instructor completes and saves the referral, it is stored within the Academic Alert system and retrieved by the Center for Student Success. Each referred student will be assigned to a Student Development Coordinator who will contact the student and discuss an appropriate plan of action and provide information on campus resources as appropriate. The faculty member who makes the referral will receive a copy of this e-mail so that they are aware of what action was taken. The e-mail will also serve to notify the faculty member of the identity of the Student Development Coordinator in the Center for Student Success if they have additional information to convey. Faculty will be able to view the status of their student referrals by viewing the course

report on the Academic Alert website. Automated e-mails will be sent to an instructor each time the Student Development Coordinator updates a student referral **if** the instructor checks the box, "E-Mail Status Notification." This box can be un-checked if the instructor prefers not to receive automated e-mails.

Which offices and people have access to the Academic Alert system?

- Students are the focus of the system and will be notified via campus e-mail whenever a faculty member refers them. Upon referral, each student is assigned to a Student Development Coordinator.
- Instructors only have access to the system from the courses they are teaching. Faculty may add comments or refer a student by identifying additional categories of concern at any time.
- Deans, program directors, department chairs, and college academic advisors will be able to view the Academic Alert system as needed.
- The Center for Student Success staff will be able to view referrals, add comments, assign Student Development Coordinators and make referrals to other campus resources.
- Campus referral resources, such as Health, Wellness, & Counseling, Disability Access Services, Writing Lab, Math Lab, ESL, International Student Services and Student Affairs will be allowed to view and comment on the referrals forwarded to their departments.

How will students learn about the Academic Alert system?

- The Student Planner
- Information will be available during New Student Orientations and Transfer Student Orientations.
- Every syllabus can mention how the Academic Alert System will be used. See the syllabus template on the Center for Teaching and Learning website.

How shall I alert my students if I intend to use the Academic Alert system?

The Center for Teaching and Learning has modified the syllabus template, Essential Elements of a Syllabus, to include suggestions for faculty who intend to utilize the Academic Alert system within their courses. The syllabus template is available on the Center for Teaching and Learning website under Instructional Support and Resources for Teaching. http://www.umsl.edu/services/cte/instr_support/tchng_res.html.

Academic Alert System FAQ, 3

How will the University of Missouri - St. Louis assure student confidentiality throughout the Academic Alert referral process?

In accordance with FERPA [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act], the system is designed to allow referrals to be viewed only by those individuals who have a need to know. Students will be assured that an Academic Alert referral is not a component maintained in their permanent student records. The system is cleared at the end of each semester.

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