When should early alerts be initiated?
Instructors are encouraged to submit academic alerts as soon as a student is identified as “at risk” for course failure. Early alerts may be initiated for a variety of reasons that impact the student’s success including excessive absences, poor exam/quiz grades, failure to submit course assignments/frequent late submissions that impact final grade, missed labs, or any graded portion of a course that could impact the student’s ability to be successful in the course. Disciplinary issues and non-academic behavioral issues can also be submitted via the early alert system using the “Student Conduct Concern” indicator. These concerns are routed directly to Student Affairs.

Who has access to the Academic Alert system?
The early alert system is accessible to various individuals on campus that are either connected to the alert or function as a referral service as part of the early alert process.

Students are the main 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 member of the student success team for follow up. Student assignments have various parameters based on a number of student attributes (i.e. student-athlete; Honors College; Nursing, MSS Scholarship, etc.).

Course faculty only have access to the system for the courses they are teaching. Faculty may add comments or refer a student by identifying additional areas of concern at any time. Please Note: General comments made by faculty on the early alert system are shared with the student as part of the automated e-mail that is generated when a flag is raised. Faculty comments should focus strictly on concerns that need to be addressed.

Student Retention Services staff will be able to view all referrals, add comments, assign alerts to specific Retention Specialists, and assign appropriate campus resources.

Deans, Program Directors, Department Chairs, and College Academic Advisors are all provided access to the EarlyAlert System as needed for advising purposes. In most cases, they are only able to view alerts but not able to make any changes.

Campus referral resources such as Health, Wellness, & Counseling, Disability Access Services, and Multicultural Student Services will be allowed to view and comment on the referrals forwarded to their departments.

Can I submit more than one alert for a student during the same semester?
Yes. Alerts can be initiated as many times as necessary. Student Retention Services will follow up on every alert to continue to support the student.
Frequently Asked Questions
(Faculty & Staff)

What can faculty members expect as a result of utilizing this system?
The Early Alert system is guided by the following expectations:
- Proactive, meaningful contact with students that addresses an issue/concern that may inhibit their success in a course.
- Solution-based support that is guided by best practices and university policies/procedures.
- Strategic and interactive intervention that is geared at holistic evaluation to determine primary success roadblocks.
- Continuous and up-to-date communication between SRS, the student, and the reporting faculty that promotes an intentional collaboration for success.

Can I submit an early alert on a graduate-level student?
While the system is open to all instructors teaching courses at the University, the primary target group for early alert would be those students pursuing undergraduate study. Based on the type of intervention services we provided in SRS (i.e. assistance helping student define clear and measurable goals, motivation for continued enrollment, strategies for effective time management for increased success, connection to tutorial services), graduate level students and instructors are less likely to find these services helpful when concerns arise. The early alert system, however, can still be used by graduate-level faculty as a means to notify a student that his/her progress in the course is not meeting expectations. With the exception of very few cases, upon receipt of alerts for graduate level students, SRS sends the student a note encouraging him/her to make an appointment with his/her instructor as soon as possible to discuss concerns.

At what point of the semester is the best time to submit an academic alert?
Early intervention is the key to a successful early alert system. Early alerts are most critical during the first 6 weeks of courses and prior to mid-term so that intervention can take place while there is still time to make the necessary adjustments and change course outcomes. Progress surveys are initiated at strategic points of the semester to solicit specific feedback on student performance. The academic alert system, however, is accessible throughout the entire semester.
What are some examples of how early alerts are handled?

For attendance referrals, a student would be contacted to discuss why they have been missing classes. In support of this type of alert, it is important for faculty members to have a clear attendance policy on the syllabus that we can refer to when working with the student. Based on the discussion during the meeting, SRS may take one or more of the following actions:

- Assist the student in clarifying his/her goals for enrollment and why class attendance is important in achieving those goals.
- Suggest time management workshops and techniques that could assist the student in managing a busy schedule.
- Create an action plan to help the student create short-term, achievable goals for their course attendance.
- If warranting circumstances exist, discuss appropriate process/procedure for course withdrawal.

For academic performance referrals, a student would be contacted to discuss the specific concern that is submitted (i.e. failed exam; major assignment not submitted; in danger of failing). During this meeting, the focus would be on identifying the factor(s) that has (have) contributed to the performance issue. Based on the discussion during the meeting, SRS may take one or more the following actions:

- Evaluation of student schedule and commitments.
- Making an appointment for student to take advantage of one or more support services (i.e. tutoring, supplemental instruction, academic support labs).
- Recommendation for attendance at appropriate study-skill workshop.
- Referral to Disability Access Services (where applicable).
- Assist the student to prepare for a meeting with the faculty member during office hours.

**These are just examples of how alerts may be handled; however, these examples do not provide an exhaustive list of intervention strategies used by SRS. Each student referral will be reviewed individually and handled based on the specific circumstances presented.**
Frequently Asked Questions
(faculty & staff)

- What is the difference between a faculty-managed flag and a flag managed by a Retention Coordinator?
  - A faculty-managed flag is an indicator that is raised by the faculty member but is not routed to SRS. Just like with other flags, the student is notified of the concern via UMSL e-mail and is encouraged to make an appointment with his/her faculty member as soon as possible. These concerns are typically handled within the course context with the student and the faculty member without external support. Examples of faculty-managed flags would include low participation, failed quiz, and attendance concern.

  - On the other hand, flags managed by Retention Coordinators are indicators that have external intervention attached (meaning beyond the course faculty member). When a student is flagged for any of the flags managed by a Retention Coordinator, faculty members can expect that the appropriate support personnel will work to make personal contact with the student and develop an intervention plan. The faculty member can also expect to be part of the intervention plan since s/he raised the initial concern. The key difference is an additional layer of intervention. Examples of these flags include failed exam, in danger of failing, and attendance affecting grade.

  *A full chart of flags and management protocols can be located on the SRS website (see Early Alert Flag Management Matrix)*
MORE QUESTIONS?

Contact us!

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