



National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	Policy on Students' Retention, Progression and Transition
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/TEL/028
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Directorate of Academic Planning (DAP)
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1.0 Introduction

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is a single mode university that is committed to inclusive learning for its students. The university is aware of the diversity of its students who have different learning needs and abilities and therefore provides a structure to monitor the academic progression and transition of learners to support their success in learning.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 2.1 retain students and reduce students' attrition rates.
- 2.2 provide relevant and adequate learning support for the learners.

2.3 minimise the cost of wastage. The university recognises that the more students stay in a programme, and the more attrition of students could lead to an increase in wastage cost.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to staff members, students, and academic programmes in NOUN.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 **Admission rates or Entry rates.** This is a measurement of the movement of applicants into the university. It is usually the first grade in an academic programme. E.g. in Nigeria, it could be the movement from SSS3 to 100 level in the university. It could also be described as the number of candidates that the university gave temporary admission to at a specific time which could be classified by academic year or for a specific period for instance 2000 – 2022. Not all candidates who are given admission accept the offer. So, the number of admitted candidates are not the actual number of students in the school.

4.2 **In-take rates.** These are used for measuring the admission of students. There are two types of intake rates. They are gross in-take and the age-specific in-take.

4.3 **Enrolment ratios.** The ratio can also be converted into a percentage. Enrolment ratios refer to the number of students who are enrolled in a particular level or programme at a

specific time. Enrolment occurs when a student has accepted the offer of admission and register for the semester and courses. The number of enrolled students is the actual number of students in the university. Enrolment ratios could be classified by age, gender semester, programme, and academic year(s).

- 4.4 **Promotion rate.** This refers to the percentage of students promoted to the next academic level. For instance, a student who is cleared to move from year one (100 level) to year two (200 level) in an undergraduate degree programme.
- 4.5 **Repetition rate.** This is the number of students that are repeating an academic year or level in the following academic year or level. It is measured by the number of students who repeat a given Level in year $t + 1$ divided by the total number of students (total enrolment) in that Level in the previous year.
- 4.6 **Dropout rate.** This is the percentage of students who left a course or programme before the completion date. A student could drop a course or programme.
- 4.7 **Stop out.** Nonattendance of school or facilitation for a specific period.
- 4.8 **Reception rate.** This is an indication of the capacity of the university system to absorb new entrants. The ability of the university to admit new intakes. Attention is given to staff size, facilities, equipment, and funds that are available in the

school are used to determine the reception rate. This is also called Carrying Capacity.

- 4.9 **Transition rate.** This refers to the movement of students from one educational level to another. This is usually from a lower level to a higher level of education. The pattern in the movement is called transition history. To measure the transition history, a quantitative tool called transition rate is used. The transition rate is calculated to measure the proportion of students or pupils that continue from the last grade of a lower level to the first grade of the next higher level.
- 4.10 **Retention.** This is a measure of students' success and satisfaction which is a superior objective of the university. From the students' perspective, non-completion of a programme or degree is classified as a lost life, lost time, lost money, and loss of social and economic benefits the students would have enjoyed.
- 4.11 **Retention rate.** This is used to measure the degree of persistence of students in the university. It is the rate of return of students to the university at the beginning of a new semester or academic year in pursuance of their course. This is a measure of the university's ability to retain its students. This is calculated thus:

$$\text{Retention Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of students that withdraw before the completion of their course}}{\text{Total Enrolment at the level under consideration}} \times 100$$

- 4.12 **Progression rate.** Progression is the enrolment in two successive levels and two subsequent academic years. Progression rate measures the relationship between students enrolled in a particular level, in an academic year and the number enrolled in a previous level, in a preceding academic year.
- 4.13 **Attrition rate.** This is the proportion of students or staff who leave the university permanently before graduation or retirement. The attrition rate measures the degree to which students or staff leave the university. It is used to measure the ability of students to persist in their studies and staff persistence in their jobs.
- 4.14 **Withdrawal rate.** This is the percentage of students who withdraw from a course or programme before completion. Different reasons could lead to this. It could be personal circumstances, or inability to cope with academics. It has cost implications for the student and the university.
- 4.15 **Age-specific enrolment rate.** This is the proportion (percentage) of individuals within a specific age group who are enrolled in a particular level of the university in a particular year. It is a statistical measure used to assess the

extent of educational participation among different age groups.

4.16 **EMIS.** Educational Management Information System.

4.17 **Gross enrolment rates.** This refers to the number of students in the university either as a whole or by faculty, department, or programme as a percentage of the total population of those who applied for admission or a population of related school age in the country.

4.18 **Student-year.** This is the statutory maximum number of years a student is to spend in an academic programme. In NOUN, for a 4-year programme, the maximum number of years is eight (8).

4.19 **Student workload.** This refers to the amount of course credit units which is expressed in hours and the number of hours for self-study and taking assignments.

4.20 **Course registration.** This refers to a student being committed by fulfilling the conditions to take the course.

4.21 **Registered courses.** These are the courses the students are committed to and can be examined in the courses.

4.22 **Feedback.** This refers to getting responses to an activity or task. Students receive feedback through facilitators' comments, examination scores/grades/results. Also, the

university and staff get feedback from students on their opinion of the service received.

4.23 **Teacher-Student ratio.** This refers to the number of students that are taught by a facilitator or being attended to by an academic at a particular time. The question of how many students can a facilitator attend to at a particular time is addressed in this instance. The same goes for practical sessions, counselling, and mentorship. This indicator is very useful in facility planning, enrolment forecasting, and budget preparation.

5.0 Principles

5.1 One of the strategic plans of NOUN is to enhance student enrolment in programmes being offered by the university.

5.2 NOUN Objectives focus on:

5.2.1 Enhancing education for All and life-long learning.

5.2.2 providing the entrenchment of a global learning culture.

5.2.3 providing instructional resources via an intensive use of information and communication technology.

5.2.4 providing flexible, but qualitative education; and

5.2.5 reduceing the cost, inconveniences, and hassles of easy access to education and its delivery.

5.3 NOUN provides the structure that supports students' learning at their pace and time.

5.4 NOUN has adequate learning infrastructure, and it's committed to continuous improvement of the infrastructure.

6.0 Policy Statements

6.1 Students' admission shall be monitored with the use of technology to determine admission rates by faculty, department, programme, gender, country, state, and age.

6.2 To retain students, NOUN shall:

6.2.1 establish retention measures to address the needs of NOUN students.

6.2.2 support students to take responsibility for their learning.

6.2.3 provide mentorship and guidance from faculty and counsellors.

6.2.4 identify and provide support by developing computer literacy courses that shall be self-directed to help students improve their digital usage. The courses shall be non-credit courses.

6.2.5 Ensure that students do not carry excessive workloads.

6.2.6 Ensure seamless course registration.

6.2.7 Ensure that students receive mentorship and guidance from faculty and counsellors.

6.2.8 Determine students' progression rates by approved pass rates.

7.0 Policy Implementation

7.1 Faculties shall be responsible for:

7.1.1 Developing, implementing, and evaluating curricula that support students to evolve into being highly intellectual to identify and solve challenges in society, confident, solution-driven, and innovative.

7.1.2 Engaging in the university-wide student orientation programme for first-year students and other cohorts to guide the students.

7.1.3 Providing appropriate professional support for retention of academic staff.

7.1.4 Providing accurate academic advice that will assist the students in defining achievable goals and strategies for achieving them.

7.1.5 Monitoring academic achievement of students. Where the students are falling behind the requirements, it is the duty of the assigned academic staff to advise and guide them. The counsellors shall provide a supporting role by assisting in monitoring students' progress and liaising with faculty to provide necessary counsel.

7.2 NOUN shall ensure:

- 7.2.1 Access to learning: The university shall ensure an increase in the number of students enrolment by ensuring quality in the curricula, and course delivery with adequate infrastructure and support.
- 7.2.2 Efficiency of learning: Due consideration will be given to student-teacher ratios and dropout rates.
- 7.2.3 Equity of education: Special attention will be given to gender parity, access to education for those with special needs, and the distribution of resources.
- 7.2.4 Quality in education: This will be monitored through student achievement, teacher qualifications, curriculum content, impact of online facilitation and counselling on students' achievements.
- 7.2.5 Ensure students' retainership: This shall be achieved by constant follow-up on students by counsellors, the use of findings from learning analytics, flexibility in learning, giving quick attention to student's inquiries and complaints, ensuring quality curricula that address the needs of the students and employers' demands, and the use of catching words to advertise programmes and courses. The university shall also ensure seamless delivery.

- 7.2.6 Monitoring and evaluation of students' retention, progression, and retention.
- 7.2.7 Adequate clarification of the terms, stop-out, dropout, withdrawal, and attrition. These terms are closely used. So, the length of time can be used to differentiate these terms. Questions to provide answers to: did the student decide to interrupt his/her studies? Is the interruption temporary or permanent? Did the student disengage from the education system? Is the disengagement permanent or temporary? Some scholars say attrition is holistic, it affects the whole school while dropout and withdrawal are specific to a student or a course. Some academic advisers to advice students to drop or withdraw from a course mostly when the academic performance of the students is not moving well.

7.3 Students are responsible for:

- 7.3.1 Taking responsibility for their learning and be self-motivated.
- 7.3.2 Preparing and attending facilitation as required. Also participate in course discussion forums, chat, TMAs, and examinations including the authentic assessments.

8.0 Sanctions on Violating this Policy

Any staff that violates this policy may receive written warning, denial of three months' salary, suspension from duty that may last one year, being released from holding administrative position as may be decided by the University Management.

9.0 Policy Alignment

- 9.1 NOUN Open, Distance and eLearning Policy.
- 9.2 Policy on Programme and Course Deferment
- 9.3 Policy on Orientation of New Students
- 9.4 Policy on Course Design and Development

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