

Early Alert System in Post-Secondary Campuses

Research indicates that high attrition rates are mainly caused by stress, burnout, and mental health issues. It is especially prominent amongst first year students and international students in their transition period into post secondary life who have not developed a sense of belonging and do not feel connected yet to campus life.

Factors affecting student retention and academic success:

Academic Factors

- In-progress course grade

Behavioral Factors

- Engagement
- Attendance
- Financial Aid Applications

Non-cognitive Factors

- Motivation
- Goal Orientation
- Self-efficiency

University of Calgary Thrive Priority Support Network (2016)

What is a Campus Early Alert Program?

The early alert program is a proactive outreach initiative to identify students in-need and connect them to the right resources at the appropriate time. The program has been established in colleges and universities across Canada.

Identification

Students in-need are identified through:

Predictive Modelling Software

The software scans electronic gradebooks and flags students who have significant academic drops in exams, quizzes, papers, and assignments.

Faculty/Staff concern form

A short academic behavior checklist to indicate low attendance, low participation, decreased work quality, and/or repeated request for extension.

Intervention

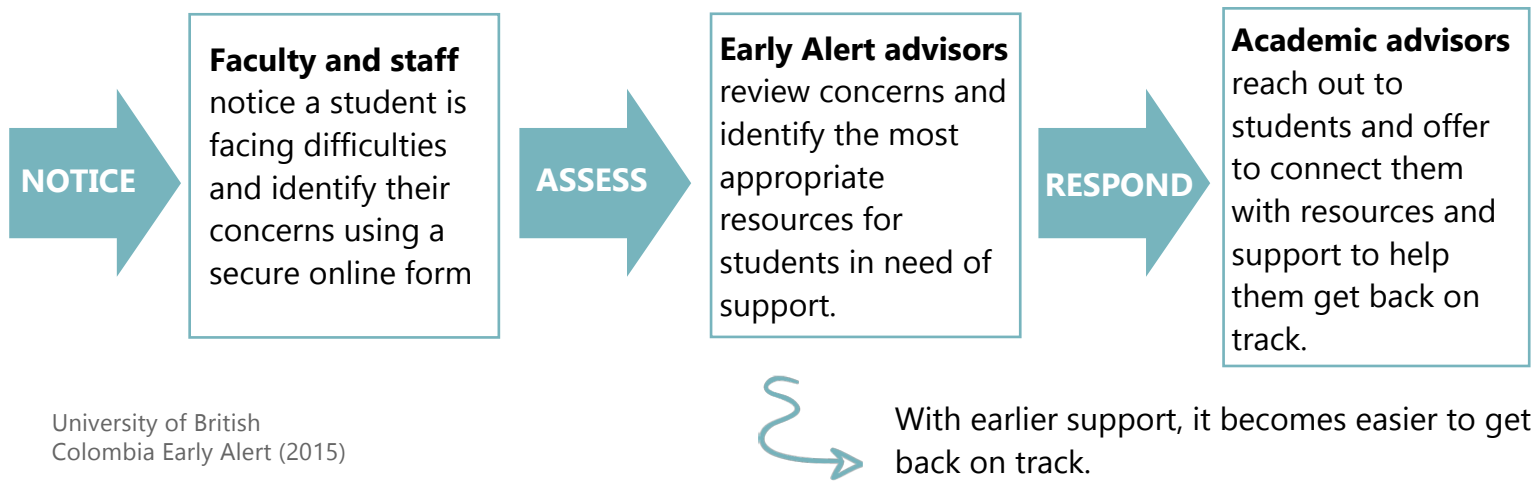
Identified students receive:

Alert Email

The email notifies students that a concern has been detected and invites students to come for a voluntary appointment at the Student Support Centre. Follow up emails are sent regularly if the student fail to respond.

1:1 Academic Support

Students receive individualized support from Academic Advisors on learning strategy, help seeking, organization, time management, and work-life balance, as well as referral to other campus support resources, e.g. counselling, tutoring, accessibility, legal/financial aid, and employment.



How to Set Up a Campus Early Alert Program

Here are some guiding questions if you are interested in starting your own Early Alert Program:

What are your financial/human resources?

Who are your allies/champions? (admin, student affairs, wellness, IT)

What is your institutional context? (size, teaching/assessment practices, institutional strategy documents)

Who is best placed to offer this support in your institution?

What is your referral network once you connect with a student?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

What kinds of outreach are already taking place at your institution?

Do you take a centralized approach to student support or is it handled by faculties or smaller units?

How will you communicate your system to students and faculty/staff?

How will you evaluate your system's effectiveness?

Watch the Webinar

To learn more about how the University of Calgary launched their early alert program, watch the webinar <https://campusmentalhealth.ca/webinars/developing-a-campus-early-alert-system/>

Credit for this webinar and content go to Shermin Murji, the Early Alert Coordinator and Roxanne Ross, Director of Student Success Centre at the University of Calgary.