

Early Alert System

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)—Faculty

Why has EIU created an Early Alert System (EAS)?

On average, 80% of Eastern's freshmen return as sophomores, a rate that is higher than the average retention rate at institutions in our Carnegie classification. However, the University's goal is to achieve 85% retention. Eastern's Early Alert System (EAS) was developed by the Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) in conjunction with colleagues at ITS in support of this goal. Based on a system that has been successful at Mississippi State University, the EAS provides us with a simple means to identify at-risk students early in their academic careers and to direct them to needed support services. It joins CORE's ongoing retention strategies, which include identifying and intervening with students who earn Ds and Fs at midterm, have registration holds, and/or fail to register.

Who should participate in the EAS?

The system is available to any instructor who wishes to submit a student to the alert. Because CORE hopes to focus on students early in their academic career, it especially encourages 1000- and 2000-level course instructors to participate.

How does the system work?

Log in to PAWS as you would to access your roster or submit grades. Click on the "Early Alert Reporting System" link and your roster will appear. You may submit alerts for student absences, missing or incomplete assignments, low grades or poor performance, and/or other issues related to your class. You may check both "absences" and "assignments" for the same student if applicable. Comments are optional, but please do check one box or the other. The checked box triggers the emails.

Once an alert is submitted, an email will go to the student named in the alert and to staff working with the EAS. Submitting a student to the EAS in no way obligates an instructor to allow late work to be completed or to change the course absence policy. It is designed so that academic affairs and student affairs staff may have conversations with students about the importance of attendance and timely submission of coursework.

What will happen if I submit an alert to the EAS?

The student will be notified via email that an alert has been submitted. You will receive a confirmation email from CORE that action will take place. Staff members from CORE and graduate student interns will contact students via email, phone, or in person to discuss their academic progress. Referrals may be made to other on-campus support services. While students are contacted as soon as possible, they may choose to delay their own actions, so they may not contact the instructor as advised.

Will the student know I submitted his/her name?

Yes, the student will know the course for which the alert was generated and that the instructor for this course sent the notification.

When should I submit an alert?

Ideally, you would submit an alert in the first 3-6 weeks of the semester, but you may do so at any time. Depending on how often your class meets, you may submit an absence alert after one absence (for a class that meets once a week or on the weekend) or after several absences (for a class that meets every MWF or TR). For missing assignments, the earlier a student is alerted, the better. You may want to talk to a student about a single missing assignment rather than submitting an alert; however, if the student is missing several assignments, you may want to submit an alert. If a student is experiencing multiple at-risk behaviors (e.g., failing to attend *and* to turn in assignments), you may submit simultaneous alerts.

If a student has not attended a traditional course by the 5th day of the semester and has not contacted the instructor to explain his/her absence, the appropriate department chair should be notified of the absence so an administrative drop may be initiated. If the student has never attended and it is past the 5th day of the semester, send an email to registra@eiu.edu to alert the Office of the Registrar.

Can I submit an alert for a student more than once each semester?

Yes, you can. CORE will contact students as many times as necessary to help them with their academic challenges. CORE will be tracking the number of alerts for each student to build predictions for future semesters.

For information about the EAS, visit CORE's Web site: <http://castle.eiu.edu/~core/index.php>