
Supported Study Procedures



1. Introduction

On occasions students experience difficulties which have an impact on their studies and require support beyond the remit of the standard University Mitigating Circumstances procedures. The supported study procedures will be invoked following serious concerns expressed over a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour, which has led to:

- Doubts from staff over the student's fitness to study at the University and/or within a placement, and/or
- The disruption of the teaching, learning or support of other students.

Students who present the University with difficulties due to their physical, mental or emotional wellbeing should wherever possible be considered from a supportive perspective rather than a disciplinary one. This procedure has been developed as an alternative to the Investigatory / Disciplinary Procedures. The University however reserves the right to invoke either the Investigative or Disciplinary procedures where students' health or behaviour poses a risk of harm to either themselves or others, or where students do not positively respond to more supportive interventions.

This procedure has three stages, based on the seriousness of risk posed by the behaviour or health of a student. The three stages reflect the level of difficulty or disruption highlighted, as well as the response of a student to any intervention.

An independent contact from Student Services will be offered to the student to act as a supportive mentor through the process.

It is possible that concerns raised over the health, safety, conduct or emotional wellbeing of a student are of such significance that these procedures can be commenced at any of Stages 1, 2 or 3. Should a student be unwilling to play a part in these procedures, then the process should continue in their absence, with the ultimate suspension in studies still being able to be invoked where it is deemed appropriate and necessary.

2. Stage 1 – Emerging Concerns

Emerging or initial concerns about an individual student's health, safety or mental or emotional wellbeing are raised.

A member of staff with primary responsibility and/or knowledge of the student (e.g. Tutor, Disability Adviser, Helpzone Adviser etc) should approach the student in a supportive and understanding manner.

The nature of the concerns should be clearly identified to the student and s/he should be encouraged to discuss the issues (it is possible that s/he will not have realised the impact of his/her actions). If appropriate, information should be provided about sources of support within the University that the student can access (e.g. Student Services, Student Helpzone, Medical Services etc).

It is likely that the student will respond positively, and where appropriate, co-operate fully, access the available support or modify behaviour.

Should the student be unable to respond positively then staff must discuss the situation with the Head of Student Advice and Guidance. It may then be an outcome that Stage 2 is invoked:

3. Stage 2 – Continuing Concerns

Continuing or serious concerns about an individual student's health, safety or mental or emotional wellbeing are raised.

The student will be invited to meet a Senior Tutor or member of Student Services staff from the following list to discuss the issues. Together they can assess the student's perception of the impact of his/her ill-health and /or behaviour is having upon him/her self and/or the University community.

Possible lead staff for Stage 2 of the procedures;

- Disability Services Manager
- Helpzone Manager
- Head of Student Housing and Welfare
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser
- Student Achievement Manager
- Senior Tutor

An Action Plan will be devised to put in place support for the student (where appropriate) and formally agree expectations for the student to observe. These may include academic expectations, the expectation to engage with support as well as conduct-related expectations.

This Action Plan will have a review date from the outset, and the consequences of not adhering to the Action Plan will be made clear.

A record of the meeting will be made, with a copy sent to the student and to the lead staff member for Stage 2. A copy of the agreed Action Plan will be submitted to the Head of Student Advice and Guidance and the student's Senior Tutor.

It is hoped and expected that the student will respond positively to the Action Plan and as such co-operate fully, access the outlined support or modify his/her behaviour accordingly.

Should the student not respond positively then staff must discuss the situation with the Head of Student Advice and Guidance. It is then likely that either Stage 2 needs to be revisited with the involvement of other staff or professionals or that Stage 3 is invoked:

4. Stage 3 – Significant or Unresolved Concerns

Significant or persistent concerns are raised about an individual student's actions or behaviour that are putting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of his/her self or other members of the University community at significant risk.

The Head of Student Advice and Guidance will discuss the matter with the Director of Student Support, and if in agreement, will call a 'Case Conference' to discuss the situation. Present at the Case Conference will be at least 4 from the following:

- The Head of Student Advice and Guidance
- Faculty Dean or Head of School
- Head of Student Housing and Welfare (as appropriate)
- Disability Services Manager (as appropriate)
- Helpzone Manager
- Medical Officer (as appropriate)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser (as appropriate)
- GP or other relevant professional (with student's consent)

As well as relevant staff from:

- Appropriate Students Union elected representative
- Other relevant Student Services staff members
- Other relevant staff members (e.g. Tutor; Senior Tutor etc)

The Case Conference will determine an agreed action from below:

- Development of an enhanced Action Plan
- Or
- Recommend to the Director of Student Support a suspension of the student's studies

The student will be invited to meet with the Head of Student Advice and Guidance to receive and discuss the recommended actions from the Case Conference. The student will be invited to bring along a person to support them at the meeting.

The Head of Student Advice and Guidance should inform the Director of Student Support of the outcome from the Case Conference.

If the recommended action is that of an enhanced Action Plan, this plan will have a review date from the outset, and the consequences of not adhering to the Action Plan will be made clear. A copy of the agreed Action Plan will be submitted to the Director of Student Support. It is likely that the members of the Case Conference panel will need to review the progress made once the enhanced action plan has been agreed and implemented. This review should take place at an appropriate time, based on the plan and the timings of the academic year.

If the agreed recommended action is a suspension in studies, the Head of Student Advice and Guidance will temporarily suspend the student with immediate effect. The Director of Student Support will then inform the student in writing of his/her decision in regards to the suspension; and subsequently inform University Executive and the Chair of Council within 10 working days.

In cases of suspension the following must be informed:

- Academic Registrar: to ensure that any student records are amended accordingly
- Associate Dean (Quality and Standards): to advise on academic status and any current module registrations
- Director of Finance and Planning
- Faculty Dean
- Head of LIS
- Head of School
- Head of Student Housing and Welfare
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Operations)
- Relevant Student Services Colleagues (e.g. Disability Services Manager as appropriate)
- SU Chief Executive

If the student wishes to appeal against the outcome from the Case Conference, s/he must write within 14 working days to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Operations).

Upon receipt of the letter the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Operations) will respond to the student within 10 working days. The decision of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Operations) (after consulting with expert opinion) will be final.

Any suspension in studies will be subject to periodic review by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Operations) in the light of any developments with reports made as appropriate to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Operations). Such periodic review will include

consideration of medical evidence from the University's Medical Officer and academic advice from the Associate Dean (Academic Frameworks).

5. Crisis Situations

It is possible that a student's mental wellbeing is so extreme that s/he needs emergency assistance outside of these procedures. In such cases staff should refer to the University's published 'Student Welfare Referral Guide for University Staff'.

6. Investigatory & Disciplinary Procedures

There are occasions where a student who is being supported through these procedures may break aspects of the 'Student Code of Conduct'. In such cases, they will not necessarily be exempt from investigatory procedures being invoked or from any subsequent disciplinary action being taken.