



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Support to Study Policy and Procedure

V1.2

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1. What to do if concerned about a student's mental health

Any person who has concerns that a student may need additional support should signpost the student to, or report concerns directly to, appropriate services as soon as possible. If you are unsure how to act in relation to concerns about a student, you can seek advice from the askUS team.

Immediate concern about risk

If you are concerned that there is an immediate risk from a student towards themselves or others, you should contact the emergency services on 999 and the University Security team (Emergency 0161 295 3333) immediately afterwards.

Support Services

Information about the support services available for students at the University, including askUS, Counselling & Wellbeing and Disability Inclusion Service can be found here: <https://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/support>

Who can students talk to?

If a student is worried about their own health or wellbeing or that of another student, they can talk to:

- A member of a relevant professional service, such as the Counselling & Wellbeing Service or the Disability Inclusion Service.
- A member of academic staff.
- An officer, student representative or staff member of the Students' Union.
- Another relevant person (such as a placement liaison or mentor or your GP).
- Professional body or Union representatives.

2. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) inform students and staff of what the support to study policy is;
- b) provide a clear, supportive and impartial procedure for staff to address concerns relating to a student's support requirements and fitness to study; having due regard to the principles of natural justice;
- c) encourage engagement with the student at an early stage and promote joint problem-solving and planning between the University and the student.

3. Policy Scope

This applies to all taught and research students registered at the University of Salford, including Apprentices taking an End-Point Assessment (EPA) provided by the University. It does not apply to students studying at collaborative partner organisations which are expected to have their own procedures in place.

4. Policy Statements

- i) The University has a duty of care to respond appropriately where there are concerns relating to a student's health and wellbeing and the impact that may have upon the individual and/or other members of the University community.
- ii) The University is committed to supporting student wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health is crucial to student learning and academic achievement.
- iii) The University aims to implement this policy through the associated procedure in a supportive manner. The policy does not aim to facilitate the withdrawal or expulsion of students for misconduct.
- iv) When implementing the Support to Study policy, all staff will have regard to the need to follow the principles of accessibility, clarity, proportionality, timeliness, fairness, independence, confidentiality, and the enhancement of the student experience. These principles are discussed in more detail in Appendix 4 of this policy.

5. Statement of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Our ambition is to be a university where inclusivity is deliberately designed and embedded into all that we do, where every student and colleague feels like they matter and belong. Our culture and institutional values will support an inspirational learning and working environment which empowers people to lead with creativity and innovation that advances equity for all.

We will be a university that dismantles those institutional structures and systems that lead to discrimination, removing barriers that stand in the way of achievement, and building our strengths in advancing equity.

6. Definitions and Interpretations

- i) When a student is 'fit to study', they are physically and mentally well enough so that, with any necessary and reasonable support and adjustments in place:
 - They can engage with and benefit from their academic studies and submit assessments with a reasonable chance of obtaining the qualification they have registered for;
 - Their behaviour does not unreasonably disrupt any other members of the University community or visitors to the University;

- They do not put their own health and safety at risk, or that of others.

- ii) A reference in this policy or associated procedure to an office-holder includes that office-holder's nominee.
- iii) A 'supporter' means a friend, relative or guardian, a fellow student at the University acting in a supporting capacity, or a member or staff member of the Students' Union. A supporter may support and assist the student but should not represent them or act on their behalf, including in a legal capacity.

7. Roles within the Procedure

Student Cases Manager

The Support to Study procedure is overseen by the Student Cases Manager, within Student Experience & Support, whose role it is to ensure that the procedure is followed in a fair and consistent way across Schools, facilitating peer support forums for Support to Study Case Officers and managing data regarding referrals to and outcomes from cases referred to Support to Study.

Support to Study Case Officer

Each School is required to appoint an appropriate number of Support to Study Case Officers. The number of Case Officers may vary depending on the size of each School and the likely number of cases which may come forward for consideration. All Case Officers are required to engage with ongoing Support to Study forums and development opportunities.

Representatives from Student Support

At each stage of the Procedure, Student Support may be called upon to offer support, guidance and advice or to help facilitate discussion. Representatives may be called upon from relevant teams within Student Support (e.g. Counselling and Wellbeing, Disability Inclusion Service, Respect Culture and Behaviours or Money and Funds Advice Service) depending on the nature of circumstances under review.

Associate Dean (Student Experience)

Associate Deans (Student Experience) will be called upon as senior School representatives to consider concerns which may be serious enough to require the full range of actions available through this Procedure or where students do not comply with requirements set at an earlier stage of the Procedure. Associate Deans (Student Experience) are required to undergo regular training to support this Procedure.

8. When to use the Procedure

The procedure may be invoked at the appropriate stage when there are concerns that a student requires additional support successfully engage in their study or when a student's fitness to study is in question. Such a question may arise due to a range of circumstances including (but not limited to):

- Behaviour which would normally be dealt with as a disciplinary or fitness to practise matter, but which may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying

physical or mental health difficulty.

- A student's health difficulties are adversely affecting the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others.
- A student's academic performance and/or engagement is unsatisfactory and may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem.

9. Relationship to other Policies and Procedures

i) [Risk Review & Response Policy and Procedure](#)

The Risk Review and Response Policy may be invoked before the start of, or during, implementation of the Support to Study procedure. Application of the Risk Review and Response procedure will not necessarily impede the progress of the Support to Study policy.

ii) [Safeguarding Policy](#)

If there are any concerns that the student is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse as a 'vulnerable person', or is abusing someone else who is a 'vulnerable person' then this should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

iii) [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#)

Students in certain disciplines (e.g. Nursing or Midwifery, which are subject to the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies) may be subject to separate and overriding obligations to declare significant health issues. Where there is a Fitness to Practise issue, the Fitness to Practise procedure or the regulations of the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, as applicable, will take precedence.

iv) [Student Misconduct Procedure](#)

A student who has a mental, physical or emotional health issue is not exempt from following the University's [Student Code of Conduct](#). Where there is a Disciplinary issue, the Student Disciplinary procedure will take precedence, unless there is a reasonable belief by the School's nominee that the offending behaviour may be due partly or wholly to a physical, mental or emotional issue and that engagement with the student through the Support to Study procedure is the most constructive way to address the issue.

v) [Student Engagement, Interruption and Withdrawal Policy](#)

Under this policy a student will be offered support if they are struggling to engage with their studies. If it transpires that a student is not engaging due to mental or physical

health issues, referral to Support to Study policy and procedure should be considered. However, if a student has already missed a substantial proportion of their studies, it may be that interruption of studies (with potential for return to study in the following year) will be the only possible option for consideration.

vi) [Student Support Policy](#)

The policy should be considered alongside the Student Support Policy Framework.

- vii)** Use of the Support to Study policy and procedure will normally only be considered if the Safeguarding policy, Fitness to Practise policy, Student Disciplinary procedure and Student Engagement, Participation & Attendance policy either do not apply, have been completed, or have been considered/initiated and a recommendation made to engage the student with the Support to Study procedure, as relevant. The use of the Risk & Review policy will not affect the use of the Support to Study policy and procedure.

10. Stages of the Procedure

Raising concerns/initial referral

Any person who has concerns that a student may need additional support should signpost the student to, or report concerns directly to, appropriate services as soon as possible.

Where a student does not engage with support services or there are concerns about a student's fitness to study this should be referred to the Student Cases Manager using this form ([Support to Study: Notification of Concerns about a Student](#)).

The person making the referral may also gather additional data, including from other services, to help develop an informed view.

Initial Referral Triage and Exploratory

The submitted form is triaged by the Student Cases Manager or nominee. Where the referred student has not made any contact with the relevant support services, attempts will be made to contact the student directly in advance of any Support to Study meeting to explain the role and remit of the service.

The referral is shared with the School's Support to Study Case Officer using relevant information and data relating to the concerns. The School's Support to Study Case Officer and Student Cases Manager will decide whether to:

- Take no further action;
- Arrange to meet with the student (a Support to Study Meeting – stage 1);
- Refer the concerns to the Associate Dean (Student Experience) (a Support to Study Meeting – stage 2);
- Initiate a different policy/procedure.

Consideration will also be given by the Student Cases Manager, in collaboration with Student Support colleagues, the most appropriate Student Support representative to be assigned to support this case and attend subsequent meetings.

Support to Study Meeting (Stage 1)

The student should be invited to a meeting with the School Support to Study Case Officer and a representative from Student Support. They may be accompanied by a supporter [Note Section 2.0 of the procedure]. A notetaker from the School will also be present.

The student should be given 5 working days' notice of a Support to Study meeting, with all relevant papers will be circulated to all parties.

The Support to Study Meeting (Stage 1) will be led by the Support to Study Case Officer, with Student Support acting in a supportive/advisory role. The role of the Student Support representative is to help facilitate discussion, provide advice and give guidance on the support available.

During the meeting, the Support to Study Case Officer, with the representative from Student Support, should:

- Review the nature of the concerns that have been raised;
- Hear and consider the student's views;
- Explore with the student any explanations for the behaviour that has caused support to study concerns to be raised;
- Discuss which actions may be required following the meeting;
- Explain the process by which the student will be informed of actions which will be **required** of them and/or those which are **recommended**; and the actions which the University commits to take (if relevant);
- Explain the arrangements for holding a review of progress; and the consequences if the required actions are not achieved (as relevant).

Support to Study Meeting (Stage 1) outcomes

Outcomes from a Support to Study Meeting (Stage 1) may include (but are not limited to):

1. No further action;
2. Creation of a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) for the student or enhancement of an existing RAP;
3. Arrangement of an assessment or additional support for a student;
4. Requirement or recommendation for the student to access specified support and/or show a pattern of engagement with specified forms of support;
5. Requirement or recommendation for the student to achieve a stated benchmark (e.g. for attendance) or a consistent achievement over a defined period of time or by a stated date (e.g. changes in behaviour).

At, or shortly after, the meeting, the School's Case Officer, guided by the representative from Student Support, should contact the student to explain:

- requirements and recommendations required by the student;
- actions which the University commits to take (if appropriate);
- arrangements for a review period, including required actions and the length of the review period (see Review Period section);
- recourse the student will have during the review period if e.g. the University does not fulfil its commitments or the student's circumstances change and they wish this to be considered and incorporated into the requirements.

The outcome should also be provided in writing to the student along with notes from the meeting.

Support to Study Meeting – Stage 2

Whilst cases would normally be considered in the first instance by the School's Support to Study Case Officer, if the Student Case's Manager or Case Officer believe that the concerns to be addressed are sufficiently serious as to require it, or the student does not comply with the requirements made following a Support to Study Meeting (Stage 1), then the matter should be referred to the School's Associate Dean (Student Experience).

The Associate Dean (Student Experience), and Student Cases Manager (or nominee) will arrange to meet with the student. A notetaker from the School will also be present.

The Support to Study Meeting will be led by the Associate Dean (Student Experience), with the Student Cases Manager (or nominee) normally in attendance. The role of the Student Experience and Support representative is to help facilitate discussion, provide advice and give guidance on support available.

The student may be accompanied by a supporter [note section 2.0 of the Procedure]. The student should be given 5 working days' notice of a Support to Study meeting, with all relevant papers will be circulated to all parties.

If the student does not attend the meeting, the meeting can proceed in their absence or be rescheduled to give another opportunity for the student to attend.

During the meeting, the Associate Dean (Student Experience) should:

- Review the nature of the concerns that have been raised;
- Hear and consider the student's views;
- Explore with the student any explanations for the behaviour that has caused support to study concerns to be raised;
- Discuss any actions that may be required following the meeting;
- Explain the process by which the student will be informed of actions which will be **required** of them and/or those which are **recommended**, and the actions which the University commits to take (if relevant);
- Explain the arrangements for holding a review of progress; and the consequences if the required actions are not achieved (as relevant). See section on Review Meetings.

The Associate Dean (Student Experience) may request further information or evidence to assist decision-making (see section on Factors to consider in relation to outcomes below). This may mean deferring decision making; however, a decision should be reached as soon as practically possible.

Support to Study (Stage 2) outcomes

Outcomes from a Support to Study Meeting (Stage 2) may include (but are not limited to):

1. No further action;
2. Creation of a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) for the student or enhancement of an existing RAP;
3. Arrangement of an assessment or additional support for a student;
4. Requirement or recommendation for the student to access specified support and/or show a pattern of engagement with specified forms of support;
5. Requirement or recommendation for the student to achieve a stated

benchmark(e.g. for attendance) or a consistent achievement over a defined period of time or by a stated date (e.g. changes in behaviour).

6. Altering the student's mode of attendance (full-time or part-time)
7. Postponing part of the student's course (for example, a placement)
8. Transferring to a different course
9. Interruption of the student's studies
10. Requirement that the student is withdrawn from study

At, or shortly after, the meeting, the Associate Dean (Student Experience), guided by the Student Cases Manager (or nominee), should contact the student to explain:

- requirements and recommendations required by the students;
- actions which the University commits to take (if appropriate);
- arrangements for a review period, including requirements, recommendations and the length of the review period (see Review Meeting section);
- recourse the student will have during the review period if e.g. the University does not fulfil its' commitments or the student's circumstances change and they wish this to be considered and incorporated into the requirements.

The outcome should also be provided in writing to the student along with notes from the meeting.

Factors to consider in relation to outcomes

Outcomes must be centred on the student's ability to become fit to study, and the potential for other impacts cannot be a primary consideration of the meeting. However, where there is the possibility to advise and support the student to mitigate these impacts, this should be attempted. Potential impacts to consider are likely to include:

- The student's visa status;
- The student's ability to progress on their course, either immediately or on return from suspension;
- The student's financial situation;
- Other consequential factors including right to remain in accommodation (note Section 5.0 of the procedure).

Recording of notes and distribution

A notetaker will be present at each Support to Study meeting and review meeting. The notetaker will be an appropriate colleague from the School's student experience team and will be responsible for ensuring that an accurate record of the meeting is captured, and all actions are noted.

Notes should be shared with the student within 5 working days of the meeting, with a copy sent to the Student Cases Manager for their records.

Review Meeting

Where appropriate, students will be invited to attend review meetings. The purpose of the Review Meeting will primarily be to determine whether the student is now fit to study or is making acceptable progress against agreed milestones (depending on requirements agreed at the earlier meeting).

Review meetings will be conducted by the Support to Study Case Officer and where relevant, with a representative from Student Support or the Associate Dean (Student Experience) and Student Cases Manager (or nominee).

If the student is not considered fit to study, or requirements have not been met, the case will either be referred to the School's Associate Dean (Student Experience) or re-considered by the School's Associate Dean (Student Experience).

11. Appeal Process

An appeal may be made only on one or more of the following grounds:

- 1) That new and relevant evidence is available which, for good and reasonable cause, was not available to a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Support to Study Meeting. Exceptional circumstances are needed to explain why any evidence could not have been made available.
- 2) That there was a relevant and significant defect, error or mistake at Stage 1 or 2 of this Procedure which casts reasonable doubt on the decision reached by the in that the decision might have been different if the defect, error or mistake had not occurred.
- 3) That the decision reached at Stage 1 or 2 of this Procedure is manifestly unreasonable. In this context, unreasonable will be taken to mean perverse, i.e. the decision was not one that a similar process of consideration might have reached.

This Appeal must be made using the [Support to Study Appeal Form](#) and sent via email to the Quality Management Office (academicappeals@salford.ac.uk) within 10 working days of the written confirmation of the decision and must specify the grounds on which the appeal is based, from the three specified above. In addition, a student must provide a rationale for their appeal, along with any relevant evidence to support their grounds for appeal.

A Senior Manager from a School which is not that in which the relevant student resides will consider an appeal, for example a Deputy Dean or an Associate Dean.

The appeal will normally consist of a review of the documentation in the case. In exceptional circumstances the Senior Manager may decide to meet with the student or other people involved in making the case.

The appeal will normally be reviewed, and a decision reached, and communicated to the student within 15 working days of receipt. An officer from the Quality Management Office will support the review.

On consideration of an appeal, one of the following decisions will be reached:

- a) Fully or partially uphold the appeal and amend any actions or outcomes determined OR
- b) Reject the appeal;

Where an appeal has been rejected, the letter will also constitute a 'Completion of Procedures' letter, outlining the scheme of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The 'completion of procedures' letter will explain that if a student remains dissatisfied at the end of the University's internal Support to Study Procedure,

they may ask the OIA to review their case. This will require completion of an OIA scheme application form upon receipt of the 'completion of procedures' letter. The scheme application form must be submitted within twelve months of the date that the completion of procedures letter was issued. The OIA website provides further information regarding the scheme and its eligibility criteria: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

12. Student status during an appeal

Should a student be required to interrupt studies or be required to withdraw, the University will ensure that a student remains registered during any period of appeal and students are required to engage during this period.

13. Suspension/withdrawal and Campus Living Villages (CLV)

If a decision to suspend/withdraw a student who is known to be a tenant in CLV accommodation, CLV will be informed (as tenancies are intended to be for current students).

Under the contract of tenancy with CLV, a student will usually continue to be liable for their contract for the remainder of the year, or until another tenant can be found to take over the tenancy. This will apply even if the student has become unwell and cannot continue with their studies and / or is excluded from the University premises either temporarily or permanently. Students should be advised accordingly by University staff.

If a decision to suspend / withdraw a student who is a resident of CLV accommodation is made, CLV should be advised in order that they can appropriately judge impact on other students in relation to having a non-student resident in the accommodation, as well as any other considerations which they need to take.

14. Assistance during suspension

Students who have interrupted their studies / been suspended may, subject to any restrictions, access several University services including money advice, accommodation advice and counselling and wellbeing services. (www.salford.ac.uk/support).

Students who have withdrawn from study / had their study terminated will not normally be eligible to access University services other than Careers and Alumni services.

15. Support for students using this Procedure

The Students' Union Advice Centre can provide independent support and advice relating to the Student Support to Study Procedure. Contact them via advicecentre-ussu@salford.ac.uk.

The University Counselling & Wellbeing team can provide support for emotional and mental health issues. Contact them via wellbeing@salford.ac.uk or 0161 295 0023.

16. If the process is interrupted

It may become apparent that another procedure is more appropriate to address concerns which have been raised. In this case the student should be clearly and formally advised that the Support to Study process is being paused or terminated.

If a student elects to interrupt their study part-way through Support to Study procedure

or does not re-register at an appropriate stage and wishes to return in the future, the procedure will resume at the university's discretion when the student decides to seek to return to study.

The University's [Engagement, Interruption and Withdrawals Policy](#) covers students interrupting or suspending study.

From time to time there may be a situation where a student finds themselves severely incapacitated, e.g. through injury or critical illness. If a student is incapacitated or detained for treatment, then the University may pause the Support to Study procedure and resume it, if appropriate, when the student is sufficiently recovered.

Document Control Information			
Status and reason for development			
This document is an amendment of the previous Fitness to Study Policy & Procedures, incorporating the procedure back into the policy document to ensure the support for study framework is clear.			
Revision History: (most recent first)			
Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised & Date
Helen Sharman	<u>Paragraph 3 (Page 5) Text added</u> This applies to all taught and research students registered at the University of Salford, <i>including Apprentices taking an End-Point Assessment (EPA) provided by the University.</i> <u>Information added following July 2024 external review of the University's readiness for an OfS external review of its integrated End-Point Assessments (EPAs)</u> <u>Minor editorial corrections</u>	1.2	<u>Emma French Chair's Action on behalf of the Quality and Standards Committee</u> <u>Approved 19.9.24</u>
Julia Lumb	Change to name of policy, incorporation of procedure and update to procedure.	1	Initial consideration by LTC July 2023 then signed off by Chair's Action 12 October 2023
Annette Cooke	Editorial amendments to the appeal process		8 August 2024
Policy Management and Responsibilities:			
Owner:	Julia Lumb, Student Experience and Support		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	Associate Deans (Student Experience)		
Have you completed consultation / formal assessment with the following advisory teams:			
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR)	EIA approved <u>EIA2023-51</u>		
Legal implications (LPG)	19 Sept 2023		
Information Governance (LPG)			
Student facing procedures (QEO)			
Staff Trades Unions via HR	N/A		
Students via USSU	USSU consulted as part of Policy development		
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Document dissemination and communications plan: Sent to key admissions contacts across the University.