

Section 19 Support to Study policy

19.1 Purpose

- 19.1.1 Support to Study is, in the first instance, a supportive process used by academic staff to identify and implement measures to support a student when concerns about the student's performance or engagement have been identified through the University's systems for monitoring attendance and engagement. At later stages of the policy, it may be used to determine action in cases of persistent low or non-engagement or performance.
- 19.1.2 Where the process progresses to a formal stage (Stage 3 or Stage 4), decisions will be taken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, proportionality, transparency and natural justice. Enforced withdrawal will normally only be applied where lesser measures have been considered and determined to be insufficient.
- 19.1.3 It is also used by the Visa and Compliance Team to manage issues related to low or non-engagement or performance by sponsored international students. Where a decision results in withdrawal of sponsorship, the University will report this to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) in accordance with its sponsor duties. The student will be informed where such reporting is required.
- 19.1.4 If the emerging concern is a behavioural issue, and there are no performance or engagement concerns, the [Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy](#) should be followed. Where both behavioural and engagement/performance concerns are present, the University will determine the most appropriate process to follow or may run processes concurrently, ensuring procedural fairness.
- 19.1.5 Outstanding debt to the University is not dealt with under the Support to Study Policy. For further information on this matter refer to the [Student Financial Regulations](#).
- 19.1.6 If a student is on a programme of study leading to a professional and/or registrable award and the concern is related to the student's suitability for professional registration and practise with the public, the Fitness to Practise Policy should be followed (refer to [section 22](#)).
- 19.1.7 At any point through the Support to Study process it may be deemed necessary to implement the Fitness to Study Policy (refer to [section 21](#)). This is normally only after other support services have been used and where the behaviour, disruption or risk presented by a student is supported by credible evidence of a serious or potentially serious nature or where there are serious ongoing health concerns.

19.2 Scope

- 19.2.1 This policy applies to students enrolled as set out in [section 1](#).
- 19.2.2 The equivalent procedure to be followed in relation to programmes delivered by a franchise partner institution (franchise provision) or by a validated partner organisation (validated provision) will be set out in the programme documentation provided by the partner.

19.3 Stages of support to study

- 19.3.1 Support to Study consists of 4 stages of interventions designed to address concerns around student performance or engagement on their programmes. The stages are outlined below:

Stage 1: Emerging and/or moderate concern

- 19.3.2 This stage is managed by the student's Academic Tutor and/or their Module Director/Lead or Programme/Course Lead.
- 19.3.3 This is an informal, supportive stage to address emerging concerns around a student's performance and/or engagement in their programme of study following review of attendance or engagement data. As a minimum this stage of intervention should be enacted when a student's attendance falls below 60% during an attendance sample point.
- 19.3.4 Contact will be made with the student and noted on Engage, along with any further information on the concerns. The student will be signposted to available support services as relevant.

Stage 2: Continuing and significant concern

- 19.3.5 This stage is again managed by the student's Academic Tutor and/or Module Director/Lead or Programme/Course Lead.
- 19.3.6 This remains an informal supportive process which builds on contact made at Stage 1.
- 19.3.7 Contact will be made with the student again, reiterating the University's ongoing concerns and inviting the student to make contact with them. The student should be reassured of the supportive nature of this request but also made aware of the next steps should they not make contact (refer to **section 19.3.11** below).
- 19.3.8 Notes will be made in Engage. Any agreed actions should be noted along with timeframes.
- 19.3.9 The following recommendations may be made and documented in Engage:
- Opportunities for the student to access support (signposting).
 - Close and regular monitoring of the student's work, engagement, or participation.
 - An action plan, noting specific actions to be taken by specific dates. This might include completion of work and the staggering of deadlines leading up to the published deadline.
 - Other measures that the Academic Tutor and/or Module Director/Lead or Programme/Course Lead deems appropriate.
- 19.3.10 Students should be made aware that if they do not engage with this Stage and if the concerns about their engagement and/or performance continue, they will be invited to a formal meeting under Stage 3 or Stage 4, which may ultimately lead to enforced withdrawal from their programme.

Stage 3: Persistent concern not meeting the threshold for Stage 4

- 19.3.11 This formal stage should be used where a Stage 4 meeting and any potential outcomes (refer to **section 19.3.28** below) are not yet warranted. Examples of a Stage 3 might include:
- Where there are ongoing concerns around a student's ability to continue the programme due to engagement and/or performance issues and where Stages 1 and 2 have not resulted in improvements.
 - Where a student can no longer succeed on their programme without formally considering options available.
 - Where the academic member of staff considers a more formal action plan needs to be agreed for monitoring with the student.
 - Where concerns around exceptional circumstances have been raised.
- 19.3.12 This stage is not suitable for sponsored international students – instead Stage 4 (sponsored international students) should be used.
- 19.3.13 This stage is not suitable in cases where a student has not engaged with their programme for 4 consecutive weeks and has not responded to or engaged with Stage 2 interventions – instead Stage 4 (presumed withdrawal) should be used.
- 19.3.14 This stage is again managed by a student's Academic Tutor and/or their Module Director/Lead or Programme/Course Lead.
- 19.3.15 The student must be given at least **3 working days' notice** of a Stage 3 meeting. This must be given in writing. The student must be informed of the reasons for the meeting and be provided with any relevant evidence in advance.
- 19.3.16 It is expected that Stage 3 meetings will take place on Microsoft Teams unless there is a reason for holding these in person. Attendance at a Stage 3 meeting may include:
- One Academic (Programme/Course Lead).
 - Academic Tutor/a second academic if felt necessary.
 - Student.
 - Staff from professional services where appropriate.
 - Staff from the Student Wellbeing, Disability and Inclusion teams if the student has previously engaged with one of these support services.
- 19.3.17 The student may choose to be accompanied by a supporter at the meeting as defined in [section 2.1.11](#).
- 19.3.18 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made by the student or any accompanying person. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting by the student or any accompanying person.

- 19.3.19 If a student does not attend the meeting without good reason, the University may proceed in their absence or consider whether escalation to Stage 4, (Presumed withdrawal) is appropriate. .
- 19.3.20 Actions arising from a Stage 3 meeting will be confirmed at the meeting where possible. Where this is not possible, they should be conveyed in writing to the student as soon as practicable. A summary of the recommendations and actions agreed will be noted in Engage.
- 19.3.21 Monitoring of outcomes from Stage 3 meetings should be undertaken by the Academic Tutor and/or Module Director/Lead or Programme/Course Lead within a specified timeframe (normally 4-6 weeks). If sufficient progress is not made, Stage 4 may be instigated.

Stage 4: Presumed withdrawal

- 19.3.22 The School should follow the Presumed Withdrawal process (refer to [section 23.5](#)) where:

- a student has not engaged with their programme for 4 consecutive weeks; **and**
- has not responded to or engaged with Stage 2 or Stage 3 interventions; **and**
- is not a sponsored international student.

Stage 4: Standard: persistent and/or serious concerns not suitable for Stage 3 or not resolved at Stage 3

Note: for sponsored students on a Student Visa please refer to Stage 4 (sponsored international students)

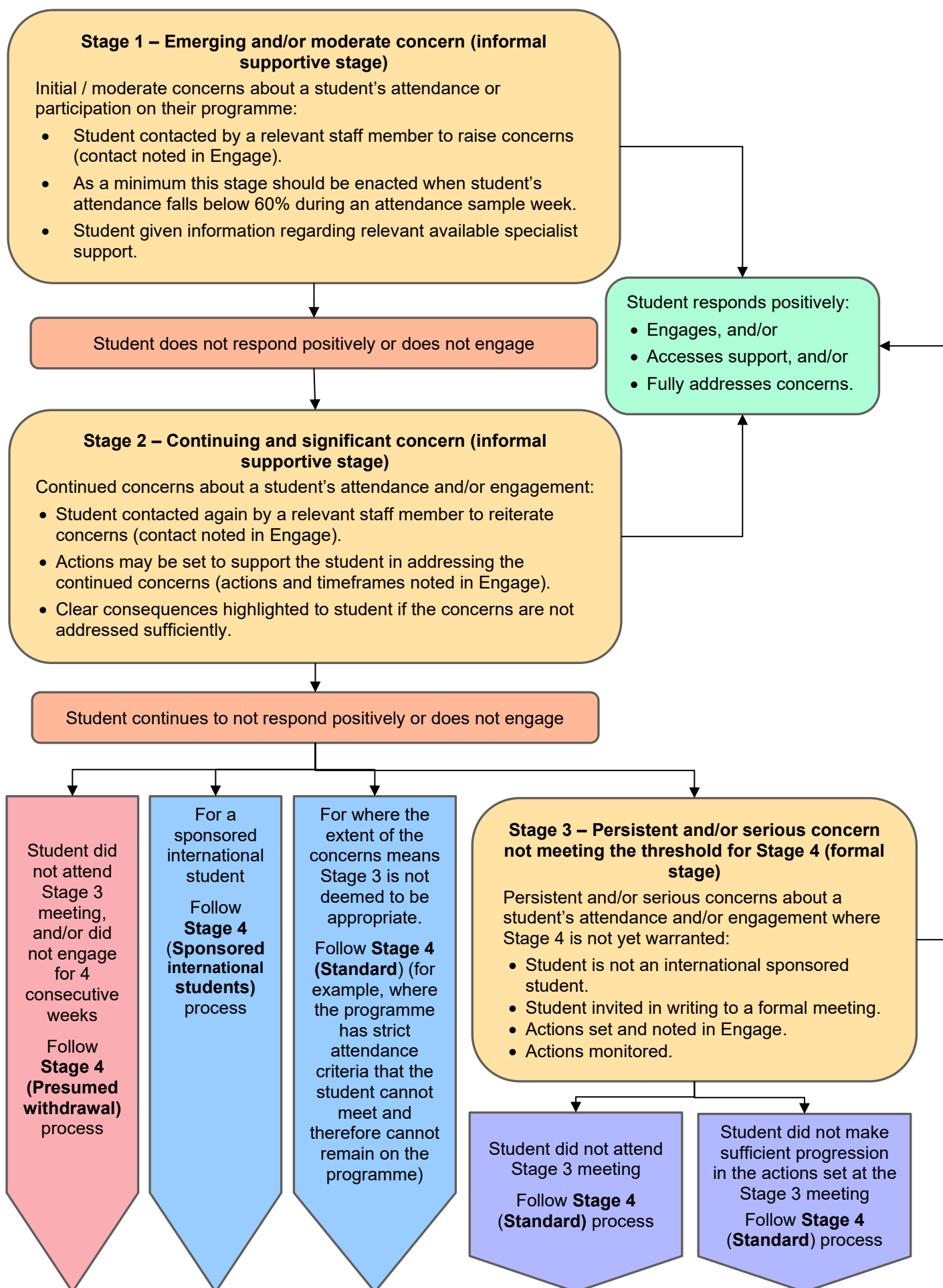
- 19.3.23 The purpose of Stage 4 is to consider serious and persistent concerns around student performance or engagement that have not been resolved at previous stages, or where the extent of the concern means Stage 3 is not appropriate. Examples include:
- A student who has been presumed withdrawn and has contacted the University to say they wish to continue their programme.
 - Student performance and/or engagement are of serious and sustained concern, and the student has failed to fulfil actions previously agreed in Stage 3 interventions.
 - There are ongoing academic concerns around a student's ability to continue their programme that have been unable to be addressed via engagement with their Academic Tutor, Module Director/Lead or Programme/Course Lead and do not meet requirements for a Fitness to Study or Fitness to Practise meeting.
- 19.3.24 An Associate Head/Dean of School or other appropriate staff member may convene a Stage 4 meeting. The student must be given at least **3 working days' written notice**, including:
- The specific concerns to be considered.
 - Copies of all evidence to be relied upon (including attendance, engagement, or performance records).
 - Possible outcomes of the meeting.
- 19.3.25 Attendees will include:
- Associate Head/Dean of School or nominated representative (Chair).
 - Other academic staff relevant to the case.
 - Registry representative.
 - Administrative support (PASS team).
 - Staff from professional services, where appropriate.
 - Staff from the Student Wellbeing, Disability and Inclusion teams where appropriate and if the student has previously engaged with one of these support services.
 - External stakeholders as relevant (Employers for Degree Apprenticeships or School Direct partners).
- 19.3.26 The student may choose to be accompanied by a supporter at the meeting as defined in [section 2.1.11](#).
- 19.3.27 Audio or video recordings of the meeting must not be made by the student or any accompanying person. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting by the student or any accompanying person.
- 19.3.28 Outcomes may be (but are not limited to):
- Enforced external resit.
 - Enforced suspension of studies.
 - Enforced withdrawal of enrolment.
 - Referral to another process, for example, Fitness to Study.

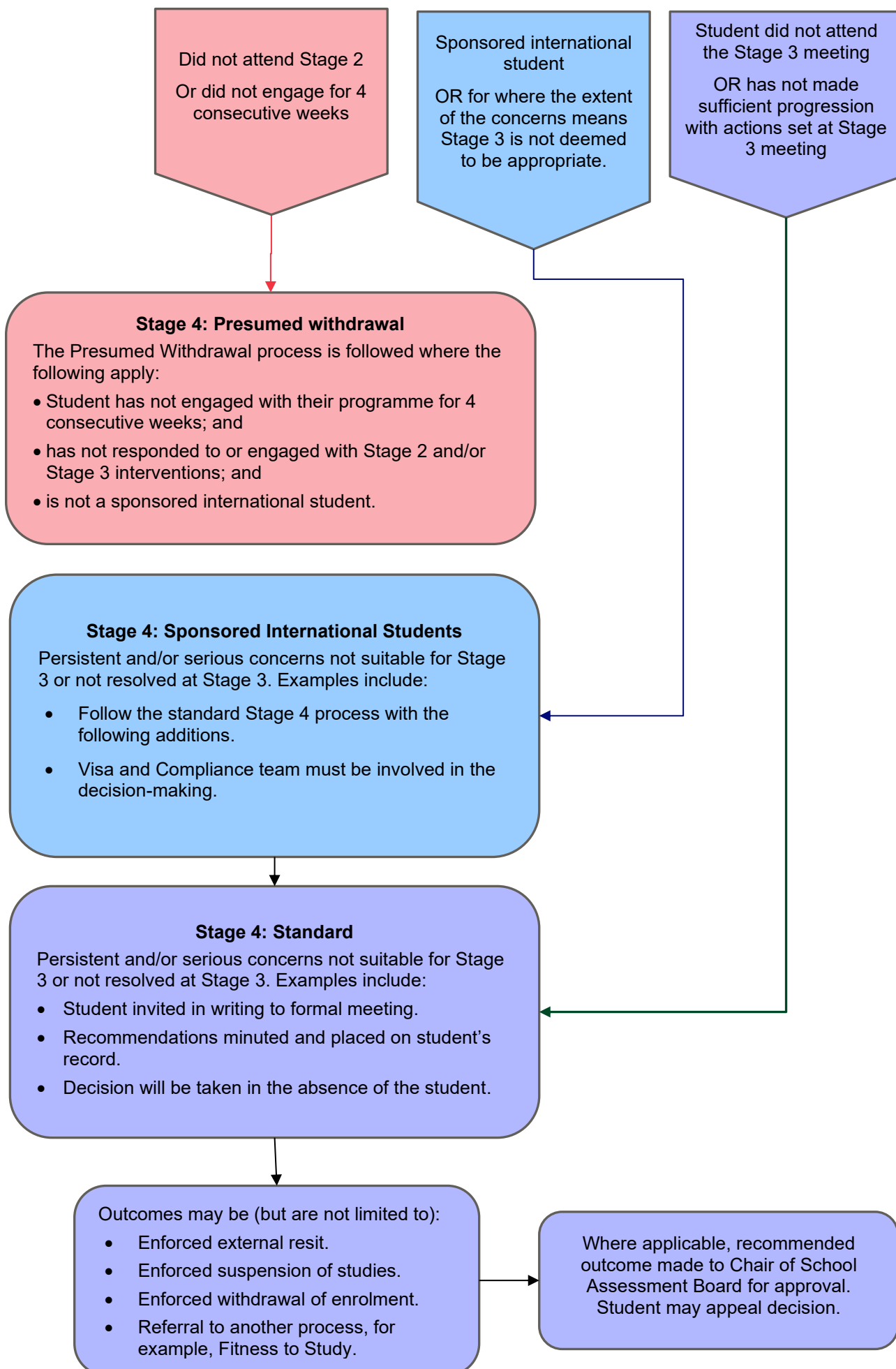
- 19.3.29 The Panel will consider the proportionality of any outcome and record its rationale in the minutes. Enforced withdrawal will normally only be applied where lesser measures are insufficient.
- 19.3.30 If it is subsequently considered a Stage 4 meeting should not have been held, recommendations or actions from previous stages can be used as an outcome to the meeting.
- 19.3.31 If the student is a Degree Apprentice and the Stage 4 meeting is being convened as the student has not gone through Gateway approval one year after their planned practical end date, please refer to [section 38.6.2](#) for additional information.
- 19.3.32 Recommendations arising from a Stage 4 meeting will be confirmed at the meeting where possible. Where this is not possible, they should be conveyed to the student as soon as practicable. It should be noted that recommendations are subject to approval by the Chair of the School Assessment Board (SAB). If there is a conflict of interest due to the SAB Chair attending the meeting where the recommendation was made, the recommendation would be subject to approval by the Academic Registrar.
- 19.3.33 The meeting will be minuted by the Panel member providing administrative support and normally shared **within 5 working days**. The student will receive a copy of the minutes of the meeting, which will be emailed to their university email address; the minutes will also be placed on the student's record.
- 19.3.34 If the student does not attend decisions will be taken by the Panel in their absence.
- 19.3.35 Students may appeal against a decision of the School Assessment Board arising from a recommendation from a Stage 4 meeting within **10 working days**. The Appeals and Conduct Committee will hear the appeal. Full information about the appeals procedure is available in [section 48](#).
- 19.3.36 Upon conclusion of the appeal process, a Completion of Procedures letter may be issued, enabling the student to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Stage 4 – sponsored international students

- 19.3.37 The Stage 4 (sponsored international students) process mirrors the Stage 4 (Standard) process with the following additions:
- The Visa and Compliance Team must be involved in any decision-making.
 - The Stage 4 (presumed withdrawal) process should not be used.

19.4 Support to study procedure flowchart





19.5 Return to Study meeting and Return to Study Plan

- 19.5.1 Following a successful appeal, the Appeals and Conduct Committee may approve the immediate resumption of a student's enrolment on their programme. In exceptional cases this may mean that a student resumes study having missed a significant period of teaching. In cases such as this the Appeals and Conduct Committee may request that a Return to Study (RtS) meeting is arranged to put a Return to Study Plan in place for the student. The purpose of the RtS process is supportive and remedial.
- 19.5.2 Attendance at the meeting is as follows:
- Associate Head/Dean of School or nominated representative.
 - Other academic staff relevant to the case.
 - Registry representative.
 - Administrative support (PASS).
 - Staff from professional services where appropriate.
 - Staff from the Student Wellbeing, Disability and Inclusion teams, if the student has previously engaged with one of these support services.
 - External stakeholders as relevant (Employers for Degree Apprenticeships or School Direct Partners).
- 19.5.3 At least **3 working days** before the meeting, the student will receive an email to their university email address setting out the reasons for the meeting being convened, and specifying the date, time, and venue for the meeting. The student should be provided with a copy of any evidence the Panel considers relevant and appropriate before the meeting takes place.
- 19.5.4 The student may choose to be accompanied by a supporter at the meeting as defined in [section 2.1.11](#).
- 19.5.5 Audio or video recording of the meeting must not be made by the student or any accompanying person. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting by the student or any accompanying person.
- 19.5.6 The purpose of the Return to Study meeting is to put in place a Return to Study Plan to support the student due to the missed period of teaching. Support may include, but is not limited to:
- Confirmation of any teaching that is to be repeated in the forthcoming semester or tutorial sessions that will be offered.
 - Directing the student to materials and/or information to read to assist with catching up on missed teaching.
 - If applicable, the following additional support measures may be implemented:
 - Extensions to submission deadlines.
 - The rearrangement of in-class tests, scheduled assessments, or the deferment of an examination to the next opportunity (normally the reassessment period - refer to table in [section 13.16](#)).
 - The arrangement of an alternative assessment where the original assessment cannot be completed due to the period of missed teaching (for example, due to group work).
- 19.5.7 In determining appropriate measures, the Panel will consider applicable Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. Where concerns relate to disability or long-term health conditions, reasonable adjustments will be considered.
- 19.5.8 The Assessment team in Registry has the delegated authority on behalf of the Special Cases Panel to approve extensions to deadlines and repeat teaching as part of a Return to Study Plan.
- 19.5.9 The Return to Study meeting and the resulting Return to Study Plan will be minuted by the Panel member providing administrative support; minutes are normally shared within **5 working days**. Where consultation with the Visa and Compliance team is required, minutes may be finalised following such consultation. The student will receive a copy of the minutes via their university email address; the minutes will also be placed on the student's record.
- 19.5.10 All approved extensions to deadlines and/or repeat teaching will be documented on the Return to Study Plan; a copy of which will be sent to the student's university email address and to the Module Directors/Leads.
- 19.5.11 Once the Return to Study Plan has been finalised and sent to the student any further requests for extensions to deadlines must be made through the exceptional circumstances process and this request should only be considered for additional circumstances (that is, something other than the student's return to study).

- 19.5.12 The Return to Study Plan is designed to mitigate disadvantage arising from the student's immediate return to study and missed teaching. Matters explicitly addressed within the Return to Study Plan will not normally constitute grounds for further extensions through the exceptional circumstances process, nor form the basis of a subsequent appeal.

19.6 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body Requirements (PSRB)

- 19.6.1 It is recognised that some professional programmes will be required to hold formal meetings with students to address concerns outside of the Support to Study Policy (refer to [section 19](#)) and Fitness to Practise Policy (refer to [section 22](#)) to meet PSRB requirements. It is the responsibility of the School to determine the requirements of such meetings, having regard to the relevant PSRB standards and codes. Any such process will be clearly distinguished from Support to Study and Fitness to Practise procedures and must comply with the principles of procedural fairness, proportionality and transparency. Students will be informed in writing which policy or regulatory framework applies to their case. Where PSRB requirements impose additional or more stringent standards (for example, attendance thresholds, placement requirements, or professional suitability standards), these will be clearly communicated to students in advance through programme documentation. Involvement in any such process and outcomes and/or decisions should be clearly noted in Engage.