

Section 27 Support to Study policy

27.1 Purpose of the support to study process

- 27.1.1 Support to Study is a supportive process used by academic staff to identify and secure the implementation of measures to support a student, whilst noting concerns about the student's performance, or programme participation.
- 27.1.2 Support to Study is a staged approach designed to ensure early interventions with students are captured and monitored following concerning data emerging through the University's systems for attendance monitoring (Check-In) and engagement monitoring (Engage). The staged approach offers a supportive interaction with students who may be struggling with either attendance or engagement in their studies due to reasons otherwise unknown before reaching the point where the ability to continue is of serious concern.
- a) If the emerging concern is a behavioural issue, and there are no academic concerns, then the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#) should be followed.
- 27.1.3 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 (see [section 29](#)).
- 27.1.4 At any point through the Support to Study process it may be deemed necessary to implement the Fitness to Study Policy (see [section 28](#)). This is normally only after other support services have been used and where the behaviour, disruption or risk presented by a student is perceived to be of a serious or potentially serious nature or where there are serious ongoing health concerns.

27.2 Scope

- 27.2.1 This policy applies to students enrolled on programmes for assessments delivered in whole by the University.
- 27.2.2 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.

27.3 Stages of support to study

- 27.3.1 Support to Study consists of 3 stages of interventions designed to support students in seeking additional support and/or addressing concerns around their engagement and participation on their programmes. The stages of intervention are outlined below:

Stage 1: Emerging and/or moderate concern

- 27.3.2 This is an informal, supportive process to address emerging concerns around a student's attendance and/or engagement in their programme of study. This should be an early intervention with the student when concerns emerge following review of attendance monitoring and/or engagement monitoring data through Checkin and/or Engage.
- 27.3.3 A student's Academic Tutor and/or Module/Course Lead will make contact with the student by email or in person. Concerns and any actions to be taken will be noted using Engage, and the student will be signposted to available support services as relevant.
- 27.3.4 The attempt to contact should be noted on Engage.

Stage 2: Continuing and significant concern

- 27.3.5 This remains an informal and supportive process used to address continued concerns around a student's attendance and/or engagement. Contact should already have been made or attempted with a student when concerns were initially identified as outlined in the first stage of Support to Study.
- 27.3.6 At this point, the student's Academic Tutor and/or Module/Course Lead will make contact with the student once again, reiterating their ongoing concerns and invite the student to make contact with them either by

email, phone, Teams call or arrange a face-to-face meeting for a supportive dialogue. 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 (see below).

27.3.7 Notes will be made in Engage as part of the supportive dialogue. Any agreed actions should be noted along with timeframes.

27.3.8 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/Course Lead deems appropriate.

27.3.9 There should be sufficient reason to assume that the student is current and has not left the University without notifying (e.g., they are attending but this may be patchy, they may be engaging with Moodle/submitting assessments, etc.).

27.3.10 Students should be made aware that if they do not engage with this request for dialogue and the concerns about their attendance and/or engagement continue, they will be invited to a formal meeting with central departments and their place on their programme will be at risk of termination of enrolment.

Stage 3: Persistent and/or serious concern

27.3.11 When Support to Study reaches this point, it becomes a more formal process and may involve one or two separate meetings.

Phase 1 meeting

27.3.12 This is an *optional* stage in the Support to Study process. A Phase 1 meeting should only be used where it is felt the student would benefit from a more formal meeting with the Academic Tutor and/or Module/Course Lead, but a Phase 2 meeting is not clearly warranted.

27.3.13 Attendance at the meeting is as follows:

- One Academic (programme/course lead).
- Can include Academic Tutor/a second Academic if felt necessary.
- Student.
- Staff from professional partner services where appropriate (Wellbeing/Disability /Visa/Accommodation).

27.3.14 Examples of when an interim Phase 1 meeting should be held are:

- a) Where there are ongoing concerns around a student's ability to continue on the programme due to engagement and/or attendance issues and where the informal part of Support to Study has not resulted in improvements.
- b) A student can no longer succeed on their programme without formally considering options available.
- c) The Course and/or Module Lead considers a more formal action plan needs to be agreed for monitoring with the student.
- d) Concerns around exceptional circumstances have been raised (in which case, previous informal interventions may not have been carried out).

27.3.15 In cases (a) to (c) above there must be evidence of the informal Support to Study process having been followed (notes on Engage, email correspondence, etc). Students should be made aware in advance of a Phase 1 meeting the reasons for it being called. Additional concerns should not be raised in the meeting of which the student has not been made aware.

27.3.16 If the meeting is called due to lack of attendance and/or engagement issues, and the student does not attend the meeting, a further meeting should not be arranged.

27.3.17 Monitoring of outcomes from Phase 1 meetings should be undertaken by the Academic Tutor and/or Module/Course Lead. These outcomes may include arranging ongoing meetings. However, it would not normally be suggested that a second Phase 1 meeting should be held to review progress. Should sufficient progress against actions not be made the Academic Tutor and/or Module/Course Lead may recommend a Phase 2 meeting.

- 27.3.18 At least **3 working days** before a Phase 1 meeting, the student will receive an email from their Academic Tutor or Module/Course Lead to their university email address clearly setting out the reasons for convening the meeting and informing them of the date and time of the meeting. It is advised these meetings take place over Teams unless the student requests an in-person meeting, or it is felt by staff that an in-person meeting would be more beneficial to the student.
- 27.3.19 The student may choose to be accompanied by a supporter at any meeting conducted, but not to speak on their behalf. This person should be a current member of staff, a current registered student at the University, or a Students' Union representative. The supporter's role is to observe and provide moral support. They cannot ask questions, interpret the student's responses, or speak on the student's behalf. If the student's supporter behaves inappropriately at any stage while the hearing is being dealt with, this person will be asked to withdraw involvement. The student will be asked to provide the name and capacity in which the supporter is attending in advance.
- 27.3.20 The meeting will discuss the student's performance on their programme and any other concerns that have arisen. These discussions may draw on relevant reports from academic staff but should not raise fresh concerns.
- 27.3.21 The student will have the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised.
- 27.3.22 Recommendations of the Panel will be given at the meeting where possible. Where this is not possible, they should be conveyed to the student as soon as practicable. A summary of the recommendations and actions agreed, will be noted in Engage.

Phase 2 meeting

- 27.3.23 The purpose of a Phase 2 meeting is to investigate serious and exceptional shortcomings in student performance or programme participation, and to instigate or recommend help, remedial measures, or disciplinary action relating to academic matters such as non-attendance or non-submission of work. Any such actions will be taken in concert with the University's Progress and Award Examination Panel (PAEP). The PAEP will ensure the application of academic regulations relating to progress and award, which may result in termination of a student's enrolment. Matters relating to student health which come to light in the course of a Phase 2 meeting may be referred for further consideration under the Fitness to Study procedures if this is deemed appropriate (refer to [section 28](#)).
- 27.3.24 An Associate Head or other appropriate staff member may convene a Phase 2 meeting in connection with any serious deficiency of an academic nature on the part of a student, including poor participation. This initiation would normally only happen after other interventions within the Support to Study policy have been carried out.
- 27.3.25 If the meeting is being convened due to non-attendance and there is reason to believe that the student may have withdrawn from the University, the School in question should normally follow the Presumed Withdrawal process prior to convening the meeting (refer to [section 26](#)). For sponsored students on a Student Visa Route, a meeting should always be convened to ensure the requirements of their visa and UK immigration rules are being adhered to.
- 27.3.26 Outstanding debt to the University is not dealt with under the Study to Support policy. For further information on this matter refer to the [Student Financial Regulations](#).
- 27.3.27 Attendance at the meeting is as follows:
- Associate Head or nominated representative.
 - Other academic staff relevant to the case.
 - Registry representative.
 - Administrative support (PASS).
 - Staff from professional partner services where appropriate (Wellbeing/Disability /Visa/Accommodation, etc).
 - External Stakeholders as relevant (Employers for Degree Apprenticeships/School Direct Partners).
- 27.3.28 Examples of when a Phase 2 meeting should be held are:
- a) A student who has been 'presumed withdrawn' has contacted the University to say they wish to continue on their programme. (In this case, evidence of earlier intervention is not required but would be helpful if available).
 - b) Student performance and/or programme participation is of serious and sustained concern and the student has failed to meet actions previously agreed.

- c) There are ongoing academic concerns around a student's ability to continue on their programme that have been unable to be addressed via engagement with their Academic Tutor/Module Lead/Course Lead and do not meet requirements for a Fitness to Study or Fitness to Practise meeting. (Registry's input is required to advise on next steps in cases such as this).
 - d) Breach of visa-related obligations (dependent on the breach and severity, there may not be evidence of earlier interventions).
- 27.3.29 A Phase 2 meeting should only be called where previous actions have been carried out through the Support to Study process (unless otherwise stated). A Phase 2 meeting should give a clear and unequivocal recommendation for action. Outcomes may be (but are not limited to):
- Enforced external resit
 - Enforced suspension of studies
 - Termination of the student's enrolment
- 27.3.30 Recommendations are subject to approval by the Chair of the Progress and Award Examination Panel (PAEP).
- 27.3.31 For sponsored students on a Student Visa Route, recommendation should be made in consultation with the Visa and Compliance Team, particularly in the case of enforced suspension due to lack of attendance and engagement issues as the University may not be willing to sponsor a further visa. If a member of the Visa and Compliance Team is not in attendance the final decision may be made post-meeting. This would be communicated to the student.
- 27.3.32 In less serious cases, such as a student wanting to re-engage after suspected presumed withdrawal outcomes could be, but are not limited to:
- A written warning
 - Close and regular monitoring of the student's work, engagement and participation
 - Opportunities for the student to access support
- 27.3.33 If the meeting is called due to lack of attendance and engagement issues, and the student does not attend the meeting, the School concerned may recommend termination of the student's enrolment.
- 27.3.34 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 deems relevant and appropriate to the meeting before the meeting takes place.
- 27.3.35 The student may choose to bring a supporter with them to a Phase 2 meeting to provide moral support, but not to speak on their behalf. This person should be a current member of staff, a current registered student at the University, or a Students' Union representative. The supporter's role is to observe and provide moral support. They cannot ask questions, interpret the student's responses, or speak on the student's behalf. The student will be asked to provide the name and capacity in which the supporter is attending in advance. If the student's supporter behaves inappropriately at any stage during the meeting, that person will be asked to withdraw their involvement.
- 27.3.36 The Phase 2 meeting itself will discuss the student's performance, including drawing on relevant reports from academic staff. The representative from Registry is present to advise on progression (i.e., whether the student will be able to continue to the next level of their programme) and the regulations underpinning this.
- 27.3.37 The student will have the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised.
- 27.3.38 Recommendations of the Panel will normally be given at the meeting.
- 27.3.39 If the student does not attend a meeting to which they have been invited, decisions will be taken by the Panel in their absence.
- 27.3.40 The Phase 2 meeting and the resulting recommendations will always be minuted by the Panel member providing administrative support; draft minutes are typically approved **within 3 working days**, and normally shared **within 5 working days**. In some cases, the Visa and Compliance Team will need to be consulted post-meeting and minutes will not be released until any such consultation has taken place. 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.
- 27.3.41 Students may appeal against the decision of the Panel and the Progress and Award Examination Panel within **20 working days**. The Appeals and Conduct Committee will hear the appeal. Full information about the appeals procedure is available in [section 58](#).

27.3.42 Examples of when a Phase 1 meeting and a Phase 2 meeting should not be held are as follows:

- a) For behavioural concerns in which case the [Student Disciplinary procedure](#) should be followed.
- b) For cases where the Fitness to Study ([section 28](#)) or Fitness to Practise ([section 29](#)) policy is relevant.
- c) For non-attendance i.e., the student has not attended anything. If attempts to contact the student have led to continued non-attendance, the presumed withdrawal policy should be followed. If a student, then makes contact a Phase 2 meeting should be called as there may be an impact on the student being able to re-engage.
- d) Due to failed non-compulsory modules.
- e) Due to failed assessments.
- f) In the first 6 weeks of a semester (conversations should be happening prior to getting to the point of a formal meeting).
- g) To satisfy Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements.

27.4 Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body Requirements (PSRB)

27.4.1 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 and Fitness to Practise policy ([section 29](#)) in order to meet PSRB requirements. It is up to the School to determine the requirements of those meetings. Involvement in any such process and outcomes and/or decisions should be clearly noted in Engage.

27.5 Visa compliance review for visa breaches

27.5.1 Students who are sponsored by the University under the Student Visa Route must adhere to their visa obligations and to all other immigration-based requirements. These obligations include the requirement to comply with the University's policies, including its disciplinary procedures. Specific codes of conduct may also apply, such as that of international partners.

27.5.2 Where there is an academic or attendance concern related to a visa-holding student, the Support to Study process should be followed. A Visa Compliance Review is to be called only when there is a breach of visa conditions which is not related to normal university functions (for example, if a student is working illegally, or a student has started their own business). This will relate to something which contravenes UKVI guidance but is not part of academic studies).

Further information can be found on our [Visa and immigration webpages](#).

27.5.3 Where concerns arise that any of these obligations have been breached, the student will be invited to a Visa Compliance Review. The Support to Study Phase 2 meeting procedure will be followed, with the following specific arrangements:

The Visa Compliance Review will normally be convened and chaired by a Visa and Compliance Team member or delegate. The Associate Head or other appropriate academic staff member will normally also attend, alongside a representative from Registry and administrative support (PASS).

- a) The student will be given information about the alleged breach of visa obligations in advance of the meeting and will have the opportunity to respond to these concerns.
- b) In serious cases, including cases where the visa breach may place the University in default of its own obligations as a sponsor, the Panel may recommend withdrawal of sponsorship. The consequence of this visa withdrawal is that the student's enrolment will also be terminated, as the student will no longer be able to meet participation requirements.
- c) The timing of any visa withdrawal will reflect the University's obligations as a sponsor. In deciding on the timing of the termination of enrolment, consideration will be given to the student's current academic status, including whether the student should, for example, be allowed to complete any assessment opportunities from abroad. Assessment from abroad will normally only be permitted where the student has attended teaching for the relevant modules and the assessment is imminent at time of the visa withdrawal.
- d) Where the Panel recommends a visa withdrawal, the recommendation will be forwarded to the University's Authorising Officer (or delegate), who approves the final decision to terminate the student's studies.

27.5.4 The student may appeal **within 20 working days** of the decision on the basis that:

- a) There has been a procedural irregularity.
- b) New evidence material to the case is available, and the student can demonstrate a good reason why it was not previously available.
- c) The decision is unreasonable and/or disproportionate.
- d) The University will follow its standard appeal procedures for such appeals. If the Appeals and Conduct Committee upholds the appeal, the case will be referred back to a new Visa Compliance Review to be considered afresh (see [section 58](#)).