

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Keele University is committed to creating a supportive working, learning and living environment. This policy is intended to support staff and students when a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviours are having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically at the University and seeks to ensure, wherever possible, that students can participate effectively in their academic studies and other aspects of their student experience.

1.2 The University has a duty of care to respond appropriately to situations where there are substantial concerns relating to a student's health and/or behaviour that is having a detrimental impact on themselves and/or other members of the University community. The University provides a comprehensive and well-established range of services which are available to support the health and wellbeing of students.

1.3 All members of the University community have a responsibility to support each other in creating a safe environment which is conducive to study, living and working. Staff are encouraged to address any student concerns through early intervention, positively supporting students through the academic mentoring system as well as through dedicated student support teams.

1.4 This policy acknowledges that other procedures, such as the University Discipline Procedure may need to be used in addition to supportive measures under this policy, in cases where student behaviour has actively disrupted the ability of other students or staff to learn and teach, or where the behaviour was demonstrably not in line with the University's values or included offences as set out in [Regulation B1 \(Student Discipline\)](#).

## 2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- a. provide a clear underpinning for the Support to Study Process for staff: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/intranet/supporttostudy/> and students: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/courseandstudychange/supporttostudy/> which can be used by staff when a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviours are having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically at the University.
- b. provide an effective framework to ensure an appropriate and coordinated response by academic and support staff to support students in cases where there is an adverse impact on the health, safety, wellbeing and/or academic progress of themselves and/or others.
- d. ensure a consistent and sensitive approach to managing situations or behaviours, which have become problematic.

- e. encourage early intervention and active collaboration between staff in managing situations where there are concerns regarding a student's fitness to study.
- f. ensure that the University has provided the student with appropriate, proportionate and reasonable support to assist them through their studies.

### 3 SCOPE

3.1 All students registered on an UG or PGT course of Keele University are subject to this policy which is outlined within Regulation B4 Fitness to Study, irrespective of their mode or place of study. (Students studying for an award from Keele University delivered by a partner institution and who are registered students of that institution do not come under this policy as student support will be designed and delivered by the partner institutions unless specified differently in the legal agreement).

3.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the University Regulations and policies, specifically:

- [University Regulation C2 - C10 \(Academic Awards\);](#)
- [University Regulation B4 \(Fitness to Study\);](#)
- [University Regulation B5 \(Fitness to Practise\);](#)
- [University Regulation B1 \(Student Discipline\);](#)
- [Academic Mentoring Code of Practice;](#)
- [Equality & Diversity Objectives;](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy.](#)

3.3 This policy and procedure does not cover those instances where recourse to Fitness to Practise procedures (Regulation B5) would be a more appropriate course of action. The decision as to the most appropriate course of action should be made by the student's Head of School or nominee in consultation with the Head of Student Wellbeing.

3.4 This policy does not replace the process or policy for academic warnings. Any action taken under this policy can be taken as soon as issues become apparent.

### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 This policy aims to encourage and foster independence, self-awareness, resilience and personal responsibility within our students. In this context it is also important that students take an active part in the process, together with appropriate steps to manage their own health and wellbeing in order to fulfil their academic potential. This policy makes provision for the management and wellbeing of students and members of the University and requires a collaborative approach to be taken by all parties to identify the most appropriate solution to the situation.

4.2 The starting point will be an informal risk assessment of the student's wellbeing, behaviour and/or academic performance by a member of staff (see section 3 for further details), considering the potential risks to the individual, their peers and the organisation. The University will take appropriate action as outlined in the four Stages of the Support to Study procedure to mitigate any potential risks at each Stage of the procedures.

4.3 The following instances, behaviours and circumstances may give rise to the use of this policy when the student's health or behaviour:

- a) poses a risk to their own health, safety and/or well-being and/or that of others.
- b) is at risk of disrupting or negatively affecting their own learning and/or student experience or that of other students.

- c) is at risk of negatively affecting the day-to-day activities of the University.
- d) is impacting adversely upon the health, safety or wellbeing of other students and/or staff.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 If you wish to discuss this policy or its contents, appropriate contacts include the Director of Student Services, Head of Student Wellbeing and the Student Experience and Support Managers.

## 6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- [University Regulation C2 - C10 \(Academic Awards\);](#)
- [University Regulation B4 \(Fitness to Study\);](#)
- [University Regulation B5 \(Fitness to Practise\);](#)
- [University Regulation B1 \(Student Discipline\);](#)
- [Academic Mentoring Code of Practice;](#)
- [Equality & Diversity Objectives;](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy.](#)

## 7. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

7.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years in accordance with university guidelines, or sooner where changes are required.

7.2 This policy will be approved by University Executive Committee, in accordance with university guidelines.

7.3 This document will be available to view within the Policy Zone on the University website.

## 8. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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<b>Administrative update</b>	7 Sept 2022; To replace personal tutor with academic mentor

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## **Support to Study Process**

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## 1. Introduction

The University strives to ensure that support is provided to Students through the Support to Study Policy. Both the Policy and Process are intended for use when a students' health, wellbeing and/or behaviours are being affected and impact on their (or others) ability to experience University life.

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/courseandstudychange/supporttostudy/>

## 2. Structure of this Process

2.1 The process has 4 Stages each of which represents the degree of concern and/or the perceived seriousness of the situation. The 3 main Stages are:

- **Risk Stage 1** - (Emerging concern or low risk situations)
- **Risk Stage 2** - (Enhanced Concern, medium risk situations where risk is on-going)
- **Risk Stage 3** - (Serious concern, high risk situations where a student's fitness to study may be in question: Support to Study Panel)
- **Return to Study Stage** - (Return to study after a period of leave)

2.2 A record of all informal meetings, and of agreed action plans should be maintained and kept in the student's academic mentoring notes. A central record will be kept of all Stage 2 and above meetings in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

2.3 If a student fails to engage or is unable or unwilling to cooperate with this procedure, the University is able to recommend an appropriate course of action without input from the student.

## 3. Who can instigate this Procedure?

3.1 **Stages 1 and 2** of the process can be invoked by a member of staff with a direct academic or support link to the student. For example:

- an appropriate member of staff from the student's School, e.g., Academic Mentor, Programme Director, Supervisor or relevant other member of staff such as Year Tutor, School Manager, etc.
- a member of staff from the University's Student Services.

3.2 Where other members of staff, e.g., other Professional Services staff, have concerns about a student's health, wellbeing and behaviour they should speak to their line manager and/or Student Services/Head of their School/Service to discuss concerns or levels of risk.

3.3 The circumstances can vary, however once concerns/risks have been raised about a student, the Head of School or nominee will assign a suitable equivalent lead which will normally be either the Academic Mentor, Programme Director, Supervisor or relevant other member of staff such as Year Tutor, School Manager etc.

3.4 In the case of a combined honours student, either School can instigate the procedure however the other School must be made aware of the instigation of the process by the instigating School and the process must include representation from the other School.

3.5 The procedure may be invoked and resolved at any Stage. In most cases this would be at **Stages 1 and 2** however, in cases of serious risk there may be a need to escalate to **Stage 3**. In cases where there is serious and significant concern for the welfare of the student or their university environment, or where the concerns are not remedied by the agreed actions at **Stage 1**, a decision should be taken following discussions with a Student Experience and Support Manager or Head of Student Wellbeing as to whether to escalate the case directly to **Stage 2** or in cases of high risk a possibility of **Stage 3**.

3.6 **Stage 3** can only be instigated by the Head of School or their nominee in agreement by the Head of Student Wellbeing or Director of Student Services, or their nominee. Alternatively, the Head of Student Wellbeing or Director of Student Services may instigate Stage 3 if the concerns have arisen outside of the school environment, and they will inform the Head of School or nominee.

#### 4. Timeframes

4.1 It is anticipated that the timeframes for action plans (agreed at Stage 1 and 2 meetings) specified within the process are sufficient but may be amended based on a reasonable judgement of the circumstances.

#### 5. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

5.1 At all times, staff operating this procedure will adhere to the guidelines laid down within GDPR to ensure that the appropriate level of confidentiality is maintained.

5.2 Where personal information is shared it is only released to those who are part of the University's Support to Study process and other relevant officers of the University as appropriate, this includes the storage of records and data and sharing of information for the purposes of dealing with the student case.

5.3 If it is determined that an offence has been committed, the incident is normally referred for consideration by the University Discipline Committee. This, and notes on the Support to Study process will be placed on the student's file and shared with the relevant Head(s) of School and other relevant officers of the University.

#### 6. Available Support and Representation

6.1 Students have the right to be accompanied to any formal meetings by a member of the University community. A member of the University community is defined as being a member of staff, a fellow student, a member of the ASK team or an elected officer of the Students Union. Members of the University asked by the student to support and/or represent them may attend the whole meeting. Notification of the names and status of the friend or representative must be given to the Chair of the appropriate meeting/panel at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting for approval. A member of staff, if asked, are not required to attend and their consent would be required from the student.

6.2 In addition, students can be supported by a professional which would include sign language interpreter or Mental Health Worker/Disability Adviser as appropriate to their needs)

6.3 Where a student wishes to bring an external representative to a Support to Study meeting, they should make a request in advance of the meeting to the Chair of the meeting/panel which will be considered in consultation with the Academic Registrar.

## 7. Stage 1 – Initial Stage (emerging, low risk situations - early resolution)

7.1 **Stage 1** should be used when there are **emerging, low risk concerns** about a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, and the impact this is having on their academic engagement or on other students/staff.

7.2 Concerns/risks may include (but are not restricted to):

- a deterioration in physical or mental health.
- pronounced change in presentation and or behaviour.
- unexplained absence and/or engagement with the University environment.
- ability to engage with studies, for example meet deadlines and complete assessments.
- continuous submission of exceptional circumstances which would indicate a longer-term issue than a short-term extension.

7.3 **Stage 1** can be instigated by the lead person (see 3.1) who should contact the student via their Keele email address requesting an informal discussion and outlining their concerns. The student should be given clear information about the Support to Study process, with particular emphasis on the fact that it is intended to be a supportive process. If the student does not respond to the initial contact, it may be necessary to repeat this process.

7.4 As **Stage 1** is intended to be supportive and relatively informal, it is recommended that either **a face-to-face or virtual meeting with the member of staff and student normally takes place within 10 working days** to discuss the concerns. The student may be accompanied in a supportive capacity by a member of the university community or professional support worker (section 6 of this procedure) at the meeting. The lead person should provide the opportunity for the student to discuss any issues they have.

7.5 The student should be advised that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a concern which has arisen about their wellbeing, health or behaviour.

7.6 The student should be advised what action/behaviour has caused concern/and or potential risk giving clear description and examples:

7.7 It is important that factual language is used with the student to discuss the following:

- The nature of the concern will be identified, encouraging the student to reflect on the issues, including the potential impact on themselves and others.
- The student and staff member should discuss if change is needed and if the student is willing and able to make changes to address the concerns.
- The student should be supported in considering solutions and be guided towards obtaining additional support or reasonable adjustments.

7.8 The aim of the meeting will be to agree on the type, stage or extent of change the lead person expects to see and within what time frame. The student should be informed that if the concerns/risk continue, any additional cause for concern arises, or they refuse to engage in the process, this could result in further consideration of their issues within the **Stage 2** procedure. The member of staff should also consider and agree on what support is required from the University to support the resolution of the concern (if appropriate).

7.9 In the majority of cases, **Stage 1** should be adequate to enable the student to re-engage appropriately with their studies and the University community.

7.10 Review of the **Stage 1** action plan: The lead person should review the circumstances with the student within 2-4 weeks of the initial meeting. The review can be face-to-face or virtually, in a timely manner. Students should be reminded at this stage that a continuation of the same or any additional concerns/risks could result in escalation to **Stage 2** of this procedure.

7.11 Possible outcomes from the **Stage 1** process should include:

1. **No follow up action** necessary.
2. **Referral** to appropriate support services.
3. Following discussions with the Student Experience and Support Manager or Head of Student Wellbeing, **referral by the lead person, to Stage 2** of this process.

7.12 Automatic escalation: If the student fails to engage either by non-attendance at the meeting or by showing no commitment to the action plan, the lead person discusses the issues with the Student Experience and Support Manager or Head of Student Wellbeing to consider escalation of the case to **Stage 2** of the process.

8. Stage 2 – Enhanced Concern (medium risk situation)

8.1 **Stage 2** of this process may arise where there are more **enhanced** concerns/risks relating to the student's health and wellbeing or other concerns/risks affecting the student's ability to operate within the University context. Where other members of staff have concerns about a student's health, wellbeing and behaviour they should contact their line manager and/or Student Services/Head of their School/Service to discuss concerns or levels of risk.

**Stage 2** may be instigated in the following circumstances.

- as a direct referral to **Stage 2** as a result of where there are enhanced, more significant concerns/risk for the welfare of the student.
- where action taken under Support to Study **Stage 1** does not resolve the issue or where a student fails to engage with the process at **Stage 1** (after prompting and rescheduling the initial meeting) of this process.
- where there are on-going concerns/risk in relation to a student's health, wellbeing, behaviours, safety and/or ability to study.

8.2 The lead person should discuss the student's circumstances with their Head of School or nominee and Student Services. If appropriate, a decision can be taken by the lead person upon the advice of Student Services for a **Stage 2** meeting to be convened to address the concerns/risks.

8.3 **The Stage 2 meeting** should be convened by the students' School (ensuring appropriate liaison between Schools if combined honours) and should include the student; a representative from relevant support services (for example Disability, Mental Health or Student Services) - Student Services can advise on which member of staff is most appropriate, in addition to (two or more of) the following members of staff:

- the Programme Director, or appropriate designated senior member of staff to Chair the Panel.
- in the case of a combined honours student, representation from both Schools.
- the lead person from **Stage 1** (if this has been escalated from **Stage 1**).

NB: For professionally accredited programmes, the **Stage 2** panel may be replaced by the Health and Conduct Committee (this should be in consultation with the Head of School or Director of Student Services or nominee). The composition of the Health and Conduct Committee would be constituted in line with its normal terms of reference.

8.5 The student may be accompanied in a supportive capacity (section 6 of this process)

8.6 The lead person should provide the opportunity for the student to discuss any issues they have.

8.7 It is recommended that the **Stage 2** meeting takes place normally within 5 working days of the commencement of **Stage 2**.

8.8 The invitation should be sent to the student via their Keele email address normally providing at least 5 working days' notice and include the following additional information:

- an outline of the purpose of the meeting (to discuss a concern which has arisen about their wellbeing, health or behaviour and which is a supportive process).
- a request for any documentary evidence required for the meeting.
- a list of the members of staff present at the meeting.
- reference to the student's entitlement to be accompanied in a supportive capacity (see section 6 of this procedure).

8.9 The Case Review Panel should be a supportive process and should include:

- identification/explanation of the issue/concern/risk (providing clear and specific examples), and any past relevant information.
- an opportunity for the student to give their perspective on the issues and if appropriate a history of events, past experiences and helpful strategies or support for managing these issues.
- a review of the student's standing at the University (academic and in relation to other processes such as academic misconduct, student discipline, academic warnings/non-engagement) and the implications thereof.
- clarification of the student's responsibility at the University (e.g. to be 'well enough' to study and to be respectful of others).
- consideration of what would be helpful or make a difference to the student in relation to their support and in order to minimise the concerns/risks.
- information in relation to appropriate support available and, if necessary, referral to any support services as appropriate.
- consideration as to whether the case should be referred for consideration under Regulation B5 to the Fitness to Practise Committee if applicable.
- identification of an action plan to support the student with clear targets to be reviewed within 2-4 weeks.
- clear guidelines on the Support to Study Policy with possible outcomes (where appropriate) resulting from their case moving to **Stage 3**.

8.10 Stage 2 Meeting: possible outcomes:

The outcome from a **Stage 2** meeting would be one or more of the following:

1. **resolution**.
2. **drawing up of a Stage 2 action plan**, to be reviewed within 2-4 weeks to include details of the steps the student will need to take to improve the situation and the requirement to attend regular monitoring meetings during the period of review.
3. **referral** to appropriate support services.

4. **referral** to fitness to practise (if applicable).
5. **leave of absence** to be agreed with the student.
6. **no further action** at Schools discretion.
7. **escalation (if appropriate)** of the case to **Stage 3** of this process.

NB: Where the case has not already been referred to the Health and Conduct Committee or Fitness to Practise Committee (only on programmes where applicable), a referral can be made (in consultation with the Head of School or Director of Student Services or nominee) as one of the possible outcomes at this Stage.

#### 8.11 Review of the **Stage 2** action plan:

The review of the **Stage 2** action plan will be undertaken by the lead person, in collaboration with the Chair of the **Stage 2** review panel. If the situation is not resolved, one of the following options should be considered:

- recommendation for additional support services to enable the student to resolve the situation.
- recommendation for a specific academic arrangement, for example extended deadlines, alternative assessments (such recommendations should be agreed and actioned by the student's School and where appropriate the student).
- referral to **Stage 3** Support to Study Panel. This should be agreed with the Head of Student Wellbeing or Director of Student Services and will only be appropriate in serious cases. Examples can include where there is evidence of a high risk to the health and safety of the student or others in the University community.
- referral, if appropriate and applicable, to the Fitness to Practise or Health and Conduct Committee under Regulation B5. This should be agreed in liaison with the Head of the student's School to ensure it is the right course of action (this course of action would be used when it is considered that a temporary leave of absence or termination of studies may be the appropriate course of action or if the student has not agreed to a recommendation or action plan made under **Stage 2**). Through the Fitness to Practice outcome, consideration of alternative courses, depending on the circumstances and risk may be considered.
- No further action if student is no longer engaging. This may be either due to the student terminating their studies or taking a leave of absence or that they are no longer engaging but poses no risk to themselves or others.

#### 9. Stage 3 – Serious Concerns and Support to Study Panel (high risk situations)

9.1 **Stage 3** of the process should be used where there is **serious** or persistent concern/risk regarding a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviours, safety and/or ability to study and cope at the University. In most cases escalation to this Stage will follow attempts to address concerns through **Stages 1 and 2**. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to proceed directly to **Stage 3**; examples of a circumstance where a direct referral to **Stage 3** is appropriate are listed below (9.2). Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to refer a student under Regulation B1 for consideration by the Discipline Committee.

9.2 Examples of when it may be appropriate to either proceed directly to **Stage 3** or be referred to by the Discipline Committee are:

- where a health care professional/occupational health advisor considers that the health, wellbeing and ability to study is significantly affected by the students' condition.
- where there are serious concerns regarding risk to the health and safety of the student and/or where there is a perceived threat and risk to others.

- where an immediate temporary suspension is considered to be in the best interests of the student or the University.
- where a student falsifies or provides falsified documents as part of the support to study process
- where a students' behaviour towards staff during the process is not conducive to continue with the supportive process at that time.

9.3 In all cases the decision to convene a **Stage 3** Support to Study Panel will ordinarily be made by the Head of the student's School in partnership with the Head of Student Wellbeing or Director of Student Services.

9.4 The objective of a **Stage 3** Support to Study Panel is to ensure that the University considers all possible options to support the student to ensure their safety and others'.

9.5 The student will be invited to meet with the panel and may be accompanied in a supportive capacity, (section 6 of this procedure). If the student does not wish to attend, the panel may make a decision in their absence. In extreme cases where there is immediate significant risk and the student is unable to engage with the process, the panel will make a decision using the information provided.

9.6 The lead person should provide the opportunity for the student to discuss any issues they have.

9.7 The panel should include:

- Head of Student Wellbeing or Director of Student Services (Chair).
- Head of the student's School (possibly chair in certain circumstances) or nominee.
- in the case of a combined honours student, representation from both Schools.
- the lead person from **Stage 1 or 2**.

9.8 The Head of Student Wellbeing/Director of Student Services will convene a **Support to Study Panel normally within 5 working days** (or sooner if perceived a higher risk) of the case being escalated to Stage 3. The student will be guided to the Support to Study Policy and University Support links. The invitation will normally provide **5 working days' notice** and include the following additional information:

- the purpose of the meeting.
- a request for any specific documentary evidence (e.g., medical evidence);
- an outline of the members of staff present at the meeting.
- reference to the student's entitlement to be accompanied by a member of the University community (see section 6 for more details).

9.9 In some cases where an immediate risk of harm is presented, it may be appropriate to undertake immediate action to safeguard the student/others at risk (see section 11). This can be approved and implemented by the Head of Student Wellbeing or Director of Student Services. This action may include contacting an external party, including (but not limited to) the Police, relevant NHS service and/or the student's emergency contact (please see <https://www.keele.ac.uk/legalgovernancecompliance/legalandinformationcompliance/informationgovernance/checkyourinformationisbeinghandledcorrectly/students/> for further information) This action will only be undertaken when it is deemed necessary to prevent harm. It may also be appropriate to refer to the University's Safeguarding Policy (see section 3.2 of the policy). In these cases, the Head of Student Wellbeing or Director of Student Services may call an immediate case conference to ensure a thorough risk assessment is undertaken and key colleagues are able to have input and are informed. This can be carried out prior to the Support to Study Panel but does not replace it.

9.10 Prior to the meeting the University may seek additional evidence where appropriate in relation to the student's circumstances which will be provided to the student before the meeting.

9.11 The student should be encouraged to prepare in advance for the meeting by speaking to key staff, including Advice and Support at Keele SU (ASK). The student may additionally wish to write a short summary report for the meeting.

9.12 The Panel will convene prior to arrival of the student to familiarise members with the circumstances. Once the student (with their representative and/or support worker as detailed in section 6) is present, the panel will consider the following:

- (i) a summary of presenting situation, concern(s) being raised, and past relevant information.
- (ii) the perspective of the student to include the summary written report by the student outlining the current issues, history of events, past experiences and helpful strategies or support for managing the issues.
- (iii) identification of achievements made from a previous action plan(s) relating to this process.
- (iv) the expectations of the student's personal responsibility at the University.
- (v) any further information such as medical evidence.
- (vi) options available to the student at this stage e.g., part-time study with support, a voluntary leave of absence, or a recommendation for termination of studies of the student, and their implications.
- (vii) referral to any relevant University Support Services from which they may benefit.
- (vii) explicit clarification of the consequences of failing to complete the agreed actions, and/or a continuation of the causes for concern.
- (ix) agreement of any interim monitoring or measures, if appropriate.
- (x) the agreement of a date to meet again to review the situation.

### 9.13 Stage 3 Support to Study Panel: Possible Outcomes

The panel will make a recommendation to the Academic Registrar and Deputy Vice Chancellor where appropriate for the final outcome of the **Stage 3** panel. Possible outcomes are as follows:

**(1) resolution** no follow up action necessary.

**(2) temporary suspension in line with Regulation B4** until such time as the student has been assessed by a medical professional, accessed support services both within and outside of the University; evidence provided is deemed appropriate by the panel or until the University has obtained further information where necessary.

A student who is suspended from the University may be prohibited from participating in university activities and may either be prohibited from entering the University premises or have restricted rights to enter the premises.

**(3) compulsory leave of absence with conditions in line with Regulation B4.**

The terms of the period of any compulsory leave of absence will be notified to the student in writing, depending on the circumstances of the case. If a leave of absence is recommended the panel should make sure that both they and the student are fully aware of the implications (this may include visa issues). The student should be given a clear indication of the proposed return date and regular reviews should be built in.

Any leave of absence under these circumstances should be greater than 15 days' duration but normally no more than 12 months' duration, during which time a student is not undertaking any study. The student will be required to complete their award within the maximum period of registration set out in Regulation C1;

**(4) termination of studies.** If the **Stage 3** Support to Study Panel concludes, considering the individual circumstances of the case and any supporting medical evidence, that there is no reasonable prospect of the student re-engaging with their programme, a recommendation will be made to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor that the student is permanently terminated from their studies from the University. This recommendation should only be made in the most serious cases and be based on a risk assessment conducted by the Stage 3 Support to Study Panel.

**(5) recommendation for additional support services** to enable the student to resolve the situation. This would be in the form of an action plan as in previous stages.

**(6) any other action** considered to be appropriate and proportionate.

NB: In cases where the cause for concern is raised which has possible implications regarding a student's fitness to practise in line with their professional registration, the Chair of the **Stage 3** committee will refer the decision to the Fitness to Practice Committee to make a recommendation for the final outcome to be made.

9.14 All **Stage 3** outcomes must have a final outcome letter. In cases of a temporary suspension, an interim letter should be sent.

## 10. Returning to Study Stage

10.1 If it is agreed with the student that a leave of absence is appropriate, the process for considering a return to study should be made clear to the student at the time of them being notified of their leave of absence.

10.2 Students should also be advised that periods of any leave of absence (voluntary or compulsory) do count towards their allowed maximum period of registration (Regulation C1) and that they may not normally be allowed to return to the University to complete their studies once they have reached their maximum period of registration.

10.3 Re-engagement with studies should only be allowed following a meeting with Student Services.

10.4 The student will be required to provide satisfactory evidence, to include medical evidence from a registered healthcare professional/occupational health, who may be nominated by the University, to confirm the student has overcome the original difficulties and is well enough to return to their studies.

10.5 The precise nature of the evidence required from the student will be dependent on the individual circumstances in each case, but in all cases, it is expected that this will involve a report from a recognised independent professional with sufficient knowledge about the health and wellbeing of the student during the period of leave, and the potential impact that returning to study might have.

## 11. Temporary Restrictions and Exclusions

11.1 Where there is concern in relation to student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour, the University may impose immediate conditions on that student to ensure that a full and proper investigation can be carried out and/or to safeguard the student or others whilst the concerns are being considered.

11.2 In the event that the University believes that a student presents a threat of harm to themselves, other students and/or members of the University or to university property, the University may temporarily suspend the student. Temporary suspensions are precautionary for the safety of the student wellbeing or that of university staff or students.

11.3 For the purposes of this process, temporary suspension is defined as a partial or total ban on attendance at the University, including all learning, teaching and assessment activities, including placements; and/or participation in University activities, and/or on attendance at or access to specified facilities or parts of the University (including residential accommodation); and/or on exercising the functions or duties of any office or committee membership in the University or the Students' Union.

11.4 A temporary suspension will be based upon the outcome of a risk assessment through the **Stage 3** Support to Study panel, authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or their nominee.

11.5 Students enrolled on a course that requires them to undertake practical training in a professional role involving patients, pupils, clients or service users, or where the end qualification provides a direct license to practise or is a requirement for a license to practise may also be temporarily excluded from their studies by a Health and Conduct Committee or Fitness to Practise Committee under Fitness to Practise (Regulation B5).

11.6 In each case of temporary suspension, the student will be informed in writing of the specific restrictions placed upon them, of the timescale and manner by which the suspension will be reviewed and of their right to appeal.

11.7 All reasonable efforts will be made to reduce the impact of any temporary suspension on the student's studies.

11.8 A temporary suspension will be reviewed 4 weeks from the date that it came into effect or earlier upon receipt of the outcome of an internal investigation, evidence of external developments or significantly altered circumstances of the student.

11.9 The temporary suspension shall normally remain in place until such time as any investigation and or confirmation from a healthcare professional has been obtained.

11.10 Where a student who is also an employee of the University or the Students' Union has been temporarily excluded, the Director of Human Resources and/or the Students' Union will be notified to consider whether any further action is required under their procedures.

## 12 Permanent Termination of Studies

12.1 In rare cases, following a risk assessment within the Support to Study procedure, a temporary suspension may lead to a permanent termination of studies from the University. A permanent termination of studies must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

## 13 Appealing Against Support to Study Decisions

13.1 A student has the right of appeal against the final decision of the **Stage 3** process and any penalties that are imposed. Such an appeal should normally be lodged in writing to the Director of Student Services within 10 working days from the date of the letter informing them of the panel decision. Appeals may only be made on one or both of the following grounds:

- i) procedural irregularity in the conduct of the case.
- ii) if there is new evidence that can be substantiated, including exceptional circumstances, which were not known at the time, and may have affected the outcome had it been known to the Support to Study Panel and there is a valid reason for not making it known at the time.

13.2 Appeals against the decision of the Support to Study panel will be heard by an Appeals Panel. The composition of the Appeals Panel hearing must be different to the original Support to Study Panel and Chaired by the Director of Student Services.