

Student Mental Health Policy: Guidance for Students

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This guidance accompanies the University's Student Mental Health policy. It explains how the policy might affect you, what support you can expect if you are experiencing mental health difficulties, how you can access such support and what to do if agreed study support arrangements don't seem to be in place. There is also a guidance document for staff which explains how the policy should be implemented. You can access it and other related documents including the policy from <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=1892>

1.2 *Mental Health Difficulties*

1.2.1 As with physical health, most people expect to be generally 'well' and able to go about their daily business without disruption. 'Mental health difficulties' refers to times when your state of mind or behaviour has a negative impact on your ability to function in life. In terms of being at University it's not unusual for mental health difficulties to be linked to loss of concentration, sleeping too much or too little or inability to meet deadlines.

1.2.2 Mental health problems are more common among students than in the general population: according to the Association for University and College Counselling, between 3 and 10% of students will contact their counselling service each year. At Manchester, more than 1500 students visit the Counselling Service every year. You are definitely not alone.

1.2.3 Certain mental health difficulties are classed as a disability in the terms of the Equality Act 2010. These are usually conditions which are substantial, long-term and that have an adverse effect on your day to day life. Classification of your mental health difficulty as a disability entitles you to a certain level of support and 'reasonable adjustments' with respect to your participation in your chosen programme of study. The aim of this is to give you the same opportunity for success in your studies as any other student. You can be reassured that we will not lower our academic standards, and your achievements will not be lessened because of any support you receive.

1.2.4 At Manchester, we don't restrict ourselves to providing support only for those with long-term mental health difficulties. Anyone can experience mental health difficulties – a common example is bereavement, which we all probably encounter at some time in our lives, and which is likely to affect our mental wellbeing for a time - and all students are entitled to access our support services.

1.2.5 See Section 5 below to learn more about support with your studies.

1.3 *Common mental health difficulties*

1.3.1 You probably know when you're getting a cold or 'flu – that tell-tale dry throat, runny nose or thick head. But do you know the symptoms of mental health problems? Common experiences include: disrupted sleep patterns - you might be sleeping too much or too little; lack of interest in your person well being – it could be appearance, personal hygiene or an absolute disregard for personal safety; you might find you suddenly don't want to go out, or to talk to anyone. If that's a change from your normal behaviour, it could be a sign that something's wrong.

1.3.2 The NHS Livewell website describes some common problems which affect students and how to identify them.

1.3.3 For more information visit www.nhs.uk/Livewell/studenthealth/Pages/Mentalhealth.aspx.

Here's a brief summary:

1.3.4 *General signs of a mental health problem*

- weight loss or gain
- decline in personal hygiene
- poor attendance
- doing too much work
- becoming withdrawn
- speaking in an unusual manner – for example, more loudly or with more agitation than usual.

1.3.5 *Depression & Bipolar Disorder*

- Depression is when you feel sad or low for weeks or months, to such an extent that it interferes with your life and studies.
- Sometimes referred to as manic depression, bipolar disorder is a condition which affects your moods so that they swing from one extreme to another. If you have bipolar disorder you will have 'episodes' of depression or mania lasting several weeks or more.
- Signs of depression include: loss of interest in life; a feeling you can't enjoy anything; feeling tired; loss of appetite; finding it harder to make decisions; having problems getting to sleep; waking up too early; loss of interest in sex.

1.3.6 *Eating Disorders*

- Anorexia and bulimia are the main eating disorders that affect students. They are both more common in women.
- Anorexia involves severe, sometimes life-threatening, weight loss. Bulimia is more common, and involves bingeing then vomiting or purging with laxatives.

1.3.7 *Drugs, drink and mental health*

- If you're feeling low or stressed, you may be tempted to drown your sorrows in alcohol, or relax by smoking cannabis. However, this won't make you feel any better in the longer term, and it could make you feel a lot worse.
- Around 1 in 10 cannabis users has unpleasant experiences including confusion, hallucinations, anxiety or paranoia. There's also growing evidence that long-term cannabis use can double your risk of developing a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia.
- Any underlying mental disorder could be made worse by drug and alcohol use.

1.3.8 *Schizophrenia*

- Schizophrenia affects around one person in 100 and is equally common in men and women. More men seem to develop schizophrenia when they're between the ages of 15 – 25, whilst for women it's something that usually occurs later in life.

- Signs of schizophrenia may include: hallucinations (especially hearing voices); paranoid delusions (false beliefs); difficulty concentrating; difficulty find the motivation to do simple things – washing up, laundry, for example.

1.4 *Overview of Support for Students experiencing Mental Health Difficulties*

1.4.1 An important concern for any student experiencing mental health difficulties at University is for the effect it might have on their studies. We can help with that, as well as offering support such as one-to-one counselling, which you might want to take up, even if you feel you have your studies well under control.

1.4.2 *What we can offer*

- We can work with you to develop appropriate study support arrangements. Some examples (not exhaustive) are extra time in exams, alternative forms of assessment or extensions to deadlines. (You will need to provide evidence of the effect of your mental health difficulties, but this will be treated confidentially.)
- We're experts on our rules and regulations – so we can explain them to you and help you with things like filling in forms, or making phone calls and appointments.
- We have lots of knowledge about specialist support available, both within the University and externally so we can refer you to services which might help you.
- We are aware of our limitations and boundaries. We will listen to you and help you if we can, but we will also recognise when you need more specialist help, and we will try to refer you appropriately.
- Access to a free Counselling Service. As well as one-to-one counselling we can offer group workshops and relaxation classes provided by our own University of Manchester Counselling Service. The Counsellors are fully-qualified professionals and the service is, as you'd expect, confidential.

1.4.3 *What we can't do*

- Although we'll do our best to put in place study support arrangements and reasonable adjustments we won't compromise our academic standards – and we're sure you wouldn't want us to.
- If you're studying for a degree which is regulated by a professional body (see Appendix 1 for a list), there will be requirements and competency standards which you must meet, and which we won't be able to adjust.

1.4.4 *What we're not*

- We're not a health care service. We're here to support you through your academic studies, but if we think you're not well enough to benefit from them we will tell you and advise you to consider taking some time out. It's quite common – the procedure is called 'Interruption of Studies' and is used by students all the time for all sorts of reasons. It's called 'Interruption' for a reason – you can normally expect to come back.

1.4.5 *What to do next*

If you think that you may be experiencing mental health difficulties there are a number of ways you can access support – the one for you will depend on your circumstances and preferences. You could:

- If you already have a diagnosis, contact the Disability Support Office so that we can make sure study support arrangements are in place.
- Talk to your academic adviser or supervisor. He or she isn't a counsellor but will be able to give you some time to talk about what's wrong, and help you to identify the next steps.
- If there's a Student Support officer in your School, make an appointment to talk to them. (Or visit your School Office, or take a look in your programme handbook – there's sure to be a member of staff with a responsibility for student support). Student Support Officers are likely to have received some basic counselling skills training as well as having knowledge of the University's rules and procedures. Supporting students is their job, so make use of them.
- Ask about additional study support and reasonable adjustments to help you manage mental health difficulties. Your School or the DSO can provide information about what support arrangements might be available and what supporting evidence you would need to supply.
- If you don't feel comfortable talking to staff in your School you can go directly to the Counselling Service, Occupational Health, the Student Guidance Service or the Disability Support Office. You can find more information about these University services – what they do, how to contact them and where to find them – in the Useful Contacts and Resources Section.
- If you live in a Hall of Residence you might find it helpful to speak to your flat/corridor tutor, another member of the pastoral team, or the Warden of your Hall.
- Don't keep your family and friends in the dark – for many people they are the biggest source of help.
- Visit your GP. If you need referral to specialist mental health services available through the NHS you'll need a referral from your Doctor.

1.4.6 For more information about anything you've just read ... read on.

2. USEFUL CONTACTS & RESOURCES

2.1 *Key Internal Contacts*

2.1.1 *Student Support in Schools*

- Many Schools have a named student support officer or other member of staff with expertise in student support matters. Contact your School Office or check your programme handbook for further information.
- Visit www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/structure/academic/ for a list of academic Schools

2.1.2 *Counselling Service*

Tel : +44 (0)161 275 2864

Email : counsel.service@manchester.ac.uk

Web: www.manchester.ac.uk/counselling

2.1.3 *Disability Support Office*

Tel : +44 (0)161 275 7512/8518

Email : dso@manchester.ac.uk

Web : www.manchester.ac.uk/disability

Minicom: +44 (0)161 275 2794

Text: +44 (0)7899 663 512

Fax: +44 (0)161 275 7018

2.1.4 *Student Occupational Health*

Web: www.manchester.ac.uk/occupational-health

Tel: +44 (0)161 275 2858 (Oxford Road Site)

Tel: +44 (0) 161 306 5806 (Sackville Street Site)

2.1.5 *University Security*

Tel: +44 (0)161 306 9966

2.1.6 *Halls of Residence*

Residences General Manager for Pastoral Care

tel +44 (0)161 306 6102

email brendon.jones@manchester.ac.uk

If you live in a University Hall of Residence, you have a Warden and a 24 hour duty tutor system. Check your Hall Guide for the Duty Tutor's phone number.

www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/home-life/halls/safety-security/

2.1.7 *Student Guidance Service*

Tel : +44 (0)161 275 3033

Email : sgs@manchester.ac.uk

2.1.8 *Students' Union Advice Centre*

Tel: +44 (0)161 275 2947

www.umsu.manchester.ac.uk/advice

2.1.9 *Nightline (Student-run listening service)*

8am – 8pm term time only

Tel: +44 (0)161 275 3983

Tel: +44 (0)161 275 3984

2.1.10 *St. Peter's Chaplaincy*

Tel: +44 (0)161 275 2894 (Oxford Road site)

Tel: +44 (0)161 306 2522 (Sackville Street Site)

Web: www.stpeters.org.uk

2.1.11 *International Students Advice Team*

Tel : +44 (0)161 275 8553/2110/2059/2972

Email : iat@manchester.ac.uk

Web : www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/academic-life/immigration/

2.1.12 *Online*

Log in to My Manchester where you will find the Crucial Guide Live. The 'Personal Life' section especially is packed full of useful resources and information:

<http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/personal-life/>

2.2 *External Sources of Support*

In an emergency, dial 999 for the Emergency Services (9999 from an internal phone). If you are on University premises, notify Security that the emergency services have been called - +44 (0)161 306 9966.

2.2.1 *Accident & Emergency – Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI)*

- Tel: +44 (0)161 276 4147
- Web: <http://www.cmft.nhs.uk/royal-infirmary/plan-your-visit>

2.2.2 *Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) Emergency Mental Health Team*

- Tel +44 (0)161 701 0313
- Web: <http://www.cmft.nhs.uk/royal-infirmary/plan-your-visit>

2.2.3 *Police*

Tel: +44 (0)161 872 5050 (to report a crime)

Tel: +44 (0)161 856 4466 (Greenheyes (local) Police Station)

Email : B4.npt@gmp.police.uk

Web: <http://bit.ly/rNMrV1> (Police)

Web : www.manchester.gov.uk/StudentSafety

2.2.4 General Practitioners

- Make sure you register with a local GP
- Find the nearest GP online by visiting the National Health Service (NHS) Choices website at www.nhs.uk and using the appropriate postcode to search for a GP.

2.2.5 National Health Service Direct

Tel: +44 (0)845 4647

Web: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

2.2.6 Crisis Point

Tel: +44 (0)161 225 9500

- Crisis point is a mental health crisis support centre. They can offer accommodation 'respite beds' for up to 10 consecutive days. They can also offer non-residential one to one sessions for up to 6 weeks. People can refer themselves or be referred by a professional. Referrals can be made over the telephone (8am to midday). When they are full they will run a waiting list.

2.2.7 Social Services

- Emergency Duty (Social Work) Team for Social Services and Mental Health in Manchester
- Tel: +44 (0)161 255 8250.

2.2.8 Help lines

		Telephone	Web
CALM	Campaign Against Living Miserably	0800 585858	www.thecalmzone.net/talk/
Drugsline	Free and confidential information and support for people with drugs and alcohol related issues, their families and friends.	0808 1 606 606	www.drugsline.org/
Mind helpline	For better Mental Health	0300 123 3393	www.mind.org.uk
Nightline	Student run listening service, term only	Students can find the telephone number of Nightline on the back of their library cards nightmail@nightline.manchester.ac.uk	www.umsu.manchester.ac.uk/nightline
Samaritans	Samaritans is a	0845 909090	www.samaritans.org/

	confidential emotional support service available 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.		
Saneline	SANEline is a national out-of-hours telephone helpline offering emotional support and information for people affected by mental health problems.	0845 767 8000	www.sane.org.uk

3. WHAT TO DO IN A CRISIS

3.1 *Is this an emergency?*

The answer is 'yes' if any of the following apply:

- You /your friend seems to be at risk of suicide
- You think you/your friend is going to hurt themselves or someone else
- Your friend is seriously physically ill
- Your friend's behaviour is extremely bizarre, distressed or out of character

3.2 *Action to take*

- Dial 999 (9999 from an internal phone) and ask for an ambulance.

3.2.1 *Are you on University premises?*

If yes, call Security and tell them an ambulance is on the way, giving details of your location

- 0161 306 9966 (69966 from an internal phone).

3.2.2 *Are you in a University Hall of Residence?*

- Contact the Duty Tutor.

3.3 *Once help is on the way*

- Reassure your friend & wait with them until help arrives
- Take care of your own wellbeing

3.4 *After the incident*

- You may well find that you feel upset by what's happened
 - Talk about it with your friends or family
 - Talk about it with the Counselling Service
 - Tell your School what's happened – you might need to take a few days away from your studies, or arrange an extension, for example.

4. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

4.1 *Counselling Service.*

4.1.1 The Counselling service offers free, confidential help from trained counsellors with any personal problems affecting your work or wellbeing. They also run group sessions and workshops for those who feel uncomfortable with the idea of a one-to-one conversation, or simply want to arm themselves with some useful information on subjects such as reducing stress, coping with academic pressures, or building self-esteem.

4.2 *Disability Support Office (DSO).*

4.2.1 Many students are surprised to learn that the DSO can be a source of help in dealing with mental health difficulties, but in fact you can get a lot of very practical help by becoming registered with the DSO. Staff there will arrange assessments, assist you with applications for funding support and discuss study aids and special exam arrangements.

Example If you have depression, or a condition such as bipolar disorder, you may experience times when you have difficulty sleeping, motivating yourself or concentrating. Through the DSO you can access study support, or perhaps arrange to take your examinations in a quiet venue, where you won't be distracted by other students around you.

4.3 *Student Occupational Health Service (Occupational Health)*

4.3.1 The Occupational Health Service provides help and support with anything that is affecting your medical fitness to attend University, study and sit exams. The OH doctors and nurses will (with your consent) liaise with your existing GP or specialist.

4.4 *Chaplaincy*

4.4.1 St. Peter's House is the home of the Chaplaincy for Higher Education in Manchester, serving all the local Universities. Chaplains are available every weekday in term time, as well as at other times, for anyone wishing to talk through difficulties or problems. The Chaplains are available to you regardless of your personal religion or faith, including if you have no faith at all. There are Chaplains from the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches, contacts with other Christian churches and other faith communities, and a special ministry for international students.

4.5 *Your School*

Many Schools have a specialist student support officer or other member of staff with responsibility for student support matters. You will also have an academic adviser in your School. If you're not sure who your academic adviser is, or who else you could contact in your School, refer to the Useful Contacts section to find a link to lists of Schools.

4.6 *UK National Health Service (NHS)*

4.6.1 It really is worth talking to your doctor (GP). They can refer you to a whole range of specialist services provided by the NHS as well as discuss with you what medication is available to help you manage your condition.

4.6.2 If you don't have a GP in Manchester, visit the NHS Choices website (see 2.2.4) and enter your postcode to find a list of local GP surgeries.

4.6.3 International students are entitled to register with a GP and can access the same range of National Health Service (NHS) services as UK and EU students. You won't be charged for these services.

4.6.4 NHS Direct is a 24 hour nurse-led helpline providing confidential health advice and information. Calls are charged at local rate, or you can access it online at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

4.6.5 The accident and emergency (A & E) department at the nearest hospital provides 24 hour access to medical and psychiatric care and assessment. The nearest A&E to the University is at Manchester Royal Infirmary (see 2.2.1)

5. STUDY SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 To support you to manage a mental health condition whilst studying, we will work with you to identify and implement appropriate study support arrangements. We recommend that you visit the Disability Support Office for an assessment, following which the DSO will work with you and your School to put in place appropriate study support arrangements.

5.2 *I don't want to register with the DSO – can I still get support?*

5.2.1 To get some aspects of support with your studies you will need to register with the DSO and to provide evidence of your mental health difficulties (see Section 7). We treat your personal information confidentially and so will not divulge any information unnecessarily (see Section 10 for more information about confidentiality or disclosure.) Registering with the DSO gives us the best opportunity to provide you with the support you're entitled to and we would strongly encourage you to consider it. However, you don't need to register with the DSO to use the Counselling Service, for example, nor to ask your School to advise you on policies or procedures, or help you fill in forms.

5.3 *What do we mean by study support arrangements?*

5.3.1 Specific study support arrangements will depend on your personal circumstances. However, examples include: longer or more flexible deadlines; extensions to deadlines; being able to take exams in a separate room; having longer time to complete an exam; alternative forms of assessment. These are often called 'reasonable adjustments' and are aimed at making small changes which give you the same opportunity to succeed as other students who are not experiencing mental health difficulties.

5.4 *Exams and Assessment*

5.4.1 It is normal to be anxious and worried about exams. If your mental health difficulties affect your ability to undertake an exam or assessment in its standard form, we may give consideration to altering the form of the assessment, or making arrangements for you to take the exam in a different place, with longer time to do it.

5.4.2 Devising an alternative assessment is an academic matter; it must assess the same learning outcomes and meet the same academic standards as the standard assessment.

5.4.3 You will need to register with the DSO to access study support arrangements in connection with exams and assessment.

5.4.4 The DSO will review your study support arrangements at agreed intervals to make sure it's still appropriate.

5.5 *Problems with your study support arrangements*

5.5.1 If you experience any difficulties with your study support arrangements – for example they don't seem to be working as you'd hoped, or you're not getting the agreed support, contact the DSO. They can review the arrangements and/or approach your School on your behalf.

5.6 *New diagnoses*

5.6.1 If you have recently received a diagnosis of a mental health problem you are advised to notify the University about it in order that we can provide the appropriate support.

5.6.2. The easiest way is to register with the Disability Support Office. You will meet with an adviser to receive an assessment of need and to develop appropriate study support arrangements which will be implemented in partnership with your School.

5.6.3. You can also contact your School. Your School will discuss the matter with you in general terms. If you need additional study support arrangements they will refer you to the DSO. They can also advise you on whether you need to make an application for Mitigating Circumstances in respect of exams/assessment, and help you in practical ways, e.g. finding contact details and making calls.

6. REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

6.1 *Mitigating Circumstances*

6.1.1 Mitigating circumstances procedures enable you to notify us of an unexpected circumstance which might have affected your performance in an exam or assessment.

6.1.2 If arrangements have already been made with respect to your mental health, it shouldn't be necessary to make further use of the mitigating circumstances procedure. You may wish to use it however if you have recently received a diagnosis and your performance might have been affected before you received it, or if there has been a change in the impact of your mental health difficulties, or if there has been a specific event which has occurred which has had an additional impact on you.

6.1.3 Mitigating Circumstances procedures usually – at the most – allow you to take an exam or submit an assignment as a 'first-sit' rather than a 're-sit'. (The results of re-sits/re-submissions are sometimes restricted to a maximum of the pass mark, often 40% for UG or 50% for PGT).

6.1.4 To apply for the consideration of mitigating circumstances due to mental health difficulties, you will need to follow your School's published procedures. These should be in your Programme Handbook. If in doubt, contact your School office.

6.1.5 If you have concerns about disclosing confidential medical information to non-medical persons, you may consult Occupational Health or the Counselling Service, either of which will be able to advise your School on the likely impact of your condition.

6.1.6 Unless there's a very good reason, we expect you to apply for mitigating circumstances to be taken into consideration *before* you submit an assignment or take an examination.

6.1.7 We realise that some forms of mental health difficulties can make this very difficult, so in exceptional circumstances we will consider your mitigating circumstances application after the event – but it will be necessary for you to provide evidence that your mental health difficulties is likely to have affected your ability to make an application in advance. (See Section 7.)

6.1.8 If you make an application for the consideration of mitigating circumstances and this is the first time that your ill health has come to the attention of your School, we expect your School to contact you so that they can explore with you how best to support you in the future. This will be separate from their consideration of your mitigating circumstances. Your School may wish to refer you to the Occupational Health Service, Counselling Service or Disability Support Office.

6.2. *Interruption or cessation of studies*

6.2.1 In circumstances where your mental health difficulties are affecting your academic studies such that you are not able to maintain your progress, you have the option of applying (or your advisers may advise you to apply) for an 'interruption' of studies. Interruptions are usually granted for a period of up to one academic year at any one time, and repeated interruptions are not usually allowed. (Interruption is also known as Leave of Absence, Temporary Withdrawal or Non-Bursaried Leave).

6.2.2 Experience tells us that if you interrupt your studies for longer than a year it is very difficult to resume: if too much time elapses you will forget too much, or the content or structure of the course you were following will have developed and changed making your knowledge out of date. Degree Regulations stipulate the maximum amount of time allowable for completion of a programme of study, and professional bodies may also state limits.

6.2.3 If you find that you are seeking to interrupt your studies on more than one occasion it becomes increasingly unlikely that you will be able successfully to complete your programme. Repeated interruptions are granted only exceptionally. If your ill health is of a serious or long-term nature and seems likely to be longer than one academic year in duration, or likely to recur frequently, permanent withdrawal may be the best option.

6.2.4 Once your interruption period is complete, and assuming that your health has been stabilised so that you are considered able to study (see 6.2.7 below), you will resume your studies from the point where you interrupted them (the exact start date of your interruption, your resumption date and the point in your programme at which you resume will be agreed between you and your School when you apply for an interruption.)

6.2.5 *Finance*

- During your interruption you will not be liable for tuition fees, nor eligible for fee or grant loans, but will still have access to the University library, your email and your 'My Manchester' profile. This enables you to remain in touch with your School and *vice versa*. **You are strongly advised** to contact the Student Services Centre for detailed advice on the possible financial implications of interrupting your study. Financial options can vary

significantly. External sponsors/ Research Councils may not allow interruptions or extensions to a sponsored programme of study.

6.2.6. *Immigration Status*

- **If you are an international student you MUST contact the International Advice Team to check how interrupting your studies would affect your immigration status.**

6.2.7 *Resumption of Studies*

- Your return from interruption is likely to be made conditional on you providing evidence from a relevant healthcare professional that you are considered to be in sufficient health to study. You may be expected to attend for an assessment by the University's Student Occupational Health Service.

6.2.8 *Your Accommodation*

- If you are living in University Accommodation, the accommodation office will be able to advise you on any liabilities under your tenancy agreement. Manchester Student Homes can advise on liabilities to private landlords.

6.2.9 Information on how to apply for an interruption will be available from your School. We **strongly recommend** that you obtain advice from your School before you decide to apply for an interruption. The University's Student Guidance Service is also available to any student for advice on interruption or withdrawal.

6.2.10 If all this seems too overwhelming, ask a friend or family member to help you, or contact your School Office or the Students' Union Advice Centre. Staff will be happy to help you obtain or complete forms, or make appointments and phone calls.

6.3 *Conduct & Discipline*

6.3.1 If your behavior (whatever causes it) is in breach of the University's Regulation XVII, Conduct and Discipline of Students, you may be liable to disciplinary action. Mental health difficulties don't exclude you from the requirement to comply with our Conduct and Discipline Regulations, e.g. in respect of your behavior in Halls, or if you commit academic malpractice such as cheating in exams or plagiarism.

6.3.2 Disciplinary procedures may be suspended if you are not fit to participate in them. The DSO, Counselling Service and Occupational Health can all provide advice about your fitness to participate in a disciplinary process. Occupational Health may be asked to carry out a formal assessment of your fitness to participate.

6.4. *Fitness to Practise*

6.4.1 Some professional programmes (see Appendix 1) have specific requirements in which your 'Fitness to Practise' (i.e. to do the work which you are being trained to do) might be affected by mental health difficulties. This may mean that you are unable to practice your chosen profession, at least until your ill health is treated and/or your condition stabilized. Normally, fitness to practise procedures act to support students in continuing with their programme of studies, and many

students have successfully completed their programmes at the same time as managing mental health difficulties. In exceptional circumstances, however, it is possible that fitness to practise procedures may terminate your studies.

6.4.2 The DSO, Counselling Service and Occupational Health can all provide advice about your fitness to practise. Occupational Health may be asked to carry out a formal assessment of your fitness to practise.

6.4.3 For further information on Fitness to Practise procedures for your course, see your Programme Handbook or contact your School Office.

7. REQUIREMENT FOR EVIDENCE

7.1 Documentary evidence of the way your mental health difficulties impact on your studies is necessary for most study support arrangements and reasonable adjustments, and for consideration of mitigating circumstances.

7.2 Any evidence you submit will be treated confidentially and only divulged on a 'need to know' basis and in support of the purpose for which it was submitted.

7.3 Evidence of mental ill health is personal information which is protected by the Data Protection Act. If you don't wish to divulge information about your health to a person who is not a medical professional your School may refer you to Occupational Health or to the Counselling Service either of which will be able to tell your School the likely impact on your studies

7.4 We realise that it is sometimes difficult to obtain appointments with appropriate professionals and that this can lead to delays, so we will try to be flexible in our approach. Ultimately however evidence from a recognised source will be necessary.

8. BEHAVIOUR WHICH WORRIES US

8.1 If your behavior or appearance causes us concern, we will bring it to your attention and we may refer you to the Occupational Health Service, Disability Support Office or Counselling Service. We hope that such early intervention will give you the opportunity to either alter your behavior (for example, if you didn't realize it was a problem) and/or to seek appropriate help and support.

8.2 Examples of situations which might worry us include one or a combination of:

- a change in your appearance or demeanor – e.g. you are unkempt and don't appear to be taking care of yourself
- you appear to be drunk or under the influence of drugs
- there's a change in the quality of your work/you're suddenly missing deadlines
- you appear withdrawn
- you are not attending class/other academic appointments
- you are behaving aggressively or apparently irrationally

8.3 If our concern continues or the situation becomes more serious we may convene a case conference of staff from the different areas of the University that are involved in supporting you. We would normally tell you that this was happening.

8.4 *Disruptive Behaviour*

8.4.1 It is recognized that some mental health difficulties can cause disruptive behaviour (i.e. your behavior has a negative impact on the experience of the majority). Lecturers and other members of staff will first ask you to moderate your behavior, and may refer you to one of the University's support services. Lecturers are entitled to ask you to leave their class if your behavior is deemed to be disruptive.

8.4.2 The University's support services can help you to find advice and support that will address behavior issues and enable you to manage them so that they are no longer disruptive.

8.5 *Violent Behaviour*

If your behavior seems to be a threat either to yourself or to others, University staff will treat this as a crisis and may involve the emergency services or the University Security Services. Their priority will be to ensure your safety and that of others around you.

9. DIFFICULT DECISIONS

9.1 'Difficult decisions' include:

- Decision to call a case conference (see 8.3)
- Decision to disclose your personal information without your consent (See 10.4)
- Decision to initiate Fit to Practise procedures (see 6.4)

9.2 The procedures and consequences following from these decisions will involve senior members of University staff and are not the sole responsibility of one individual. They are governed by the University's policies and regulations which are there to ensure that you are not treated unfairly or inconsistently.

9.3 When arriving at such decisions we will consider:

- Your 'best interests', in terms of your ability to manage your life and your academic study. Normally, a judgement of what is in your best interest would be your privilege, not ours. However, there are rare occasions when mental health difficulties affect your ability to make a reasonable judgement. If this is judged to be the case by an appropriate professional we may make a decision on your behalf.
- The interests of the wider community of students and staff at the University

9.4 We will record the reasons for our decisions, and these will be available to you.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

10.1 We ask you to tell us about mental health difficulties you are experiencing to enable us to provide you with information and support that you may be entitled to so that you can benefit from being a student at Manchester.

10.2 Details about your health, mental or physical, are protected by the Data Protection Act. We will share this information within the University normally only with your consent, and only to the extent to which it is necessary to enable you to receive the support you need.

10.3 As with all matters of a personal nature, we will respect the confidentiality of the information you provide us with unless we have good reason not to do so (see 10.4). We will not normally disclose personal information about individual students to external agencies or 3rd parties without your express permission. In normal circumstances, 3rd parties includes a sponsor, your doctor, your family, friends or equivalent. (If you would like us to be able to discuss your health and academic progress with a 3rd party, you will need to give us permission in writing to do so.)

10.4 *Disclosure without consent*

10.4.1 In exceptional circumstances, we will disclose personal information about you without your consent. Situations where this might happen would include those where you are at risk of personal harm, or where you pose a risk to others.

10.4.2 Fitness to Practise requirements (see 6.4) may also impose obligations on us to disclose information about you, but if this is the case you will be informed and we will also advise you about possible sources of support.

10.4.3 Any decision to divulge your personal information to a third party without your consent will not be taken lightly nor, except in an emergency, will it be taken by a member of staff in isolation or without consultation with more senior members of staff.

11. COMPLAINTS AND DISAGREEMENTS

11.1 *Student Complaint Procedure*

11.1.1 If you have a complaint about the way we have handled your personal information we would hope that you could raise it with the person or persons who seem to have mishandled it first. If that does not satisfy you, or you are unwilling to approach them, we have a Student Complaints Procedure: <http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/academic-life/formal-procedures/complaints/>

11.1.2 If arrangements for study support do not appear to be being implemented, we suggest you first raise it with your School and then, if that does not achieve an improvement, contact the DSO.

11.2 *Academic Appeals*

11.2.1 The Academic Appeals procedure is available to you in respect of academic decisions, including fitness to practise decisions: <http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/academic-life/formal-procedures/academic-appeals/>

11.3 The Student Guidance Service provides advice on University regulations, policies and procedures, including Complaints, Conduct & Discipline and Academic Appeals.

11.4 The Students' Union Advice Centre can offer similar advice to the Student Guidance Service, and can support you through these processes, e.g. by accompanying you to meetings.

12. STUDYING AWAY FROM THE UNIVERSITY

12.1 If you're on placement, or a year abroad, or are studying away from campus for any other reason, you can still get support and advice from the University – either from staff in your School, or from the University's support services (Counselling, DSO, Occupational Health), although the action we can take will depend on your location.

12.2 If you have mental health difficulties that are already known about by the University, then arrangements for managing them should be made before you go. Arrangements might include contact details locally and back in Manchester, and details of any local support services that you can access. If you have any concerns that such arrangements are not in place, contact your School, the DSO (especially if you are already registered with the DSO) or Occupational Health.

12.3 If you have mental health difficulties that you have not told us about, we would strongly encourage you to let us know so that appropriate arrangements can be put in place to support you during your placement or study away. Contact your School, the DSO, or Occupational Health.

12.4 If mental health difficulties affect you for the first time whilst you are studying away from the University, you are recommended to seek support locally, but should also contact your adviser at Manchester about it. You still have access to the Counselling Service and Disability Support Office back in Manchester. Advisers from these services will respond to emails and telephone messages (bearing in mind time differences) and are often able to provide advice over the phone or *via* Skype.

12.5 There may be some circumstances where, after consultation with the Student Occupational Health Service/DSO your mental health difficulties mean that certain activities are not available to you, either to safeguard your own health and safety or that of others.

12.5.1 *Field Trips*

Students going on Field Trips are usually asked to complete a Health Declaration Form and you may be required to attend Occupational Health for medical screening to obtain a 'Fitness for Field Trip' certificate.

12.5.2 Information about special support needs will only be given with your consent, but refusal of consent may prevent the issue of a Fitness for Field Trip certificate on grounds of health and safety.

12.5.3 A decision to exclude you from field studies will not be taken lightly and certainly not before extensive consultation with relevant parties and consideration of any reasonable adjustments that could be made.

12.6 If mental health difficulties mean that you are unable to take part in placements, study abroad, field trips or other similar activities which are an assessed part of your programme of study it may be necessary to consider alternative forms of assessment, or other action such as an interruption of study. Alternative forms of assessment that achieve the same learning outcomes as the original activity are not always available and if the original activity forms part of the competency standards for a professional programme of study, the situation may need to be reviewed in terms of Fitness to Practice.

13. EMPLOYMENT & REFERENCES

13.1 So that we can give you the most appropriate advice when you visit the Careers Service, we recommend that you tell your adviser if you have mental health difficulties. This information will remain confidential.

13.2 It's entirely your decision what you divulge to a potential employer. Our 'Guidance on Writing References for Students' advises staff that your health is personal information which should not be referred to in a reference unless you have specifically asked for it to be mentioned – for example, you might want to demonstrate qualities such as determination, which could be demonstrated by reference to how you have managed your health. We recommend that you discuss with a Careers Adviser whether including such information in a reference would be likely to support your application for employment.

14. FEEDBACK FROM YOU

14.1 The aim of the Student Mental Health Policy and associated guidance for staff and for students is to help us to support you so that you have the opportunity to fulfil your potential in relation to your academic studies. If you have any comments to make – either positive or negative – or have experienced good practice from our staff which you think other parts of the University could learn from, we would be delighted to hear from you. You can provide your feedback by emailing studentexperience@manchester.ac.uk. (If you have experienced poor practice from our staff and would like to complain, we don't suggest you use this email address, but instead follow the advice about complaints given in section 11.)

Document control box: documents available online from: http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/list.aspx	
Policy / Procedure title:	Student Mental Health Policy: Guidance for Students
Date approved:	December 2011
Approving body:	
Version:	2.1
Supersedes:	v 2
Previous review dates:	2010 - 2011
Next review date:	2013 - 2014
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	Degree Regulations. Regulation XVII, Conduct & Discipline of Students.
Equality relevance outcome:	High
Related policies:	Student Mental Health Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Dignity at Work and Study Policy, Admissions Policy, Mitigating Circumstances Policy, Data Protection Statement, Policy on Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study
Related procedures:	Referral of Students to University Support Services for Medical or Mental Health Reasons, Procedure for admitting applicants for courses requiring Medical Fitness Assessment & Procedure for Applicants with a Disability
Related guidance and or codes of practice:	Guidance for Staff Guidance on writing references for students
Related information:	N/A
Policy owner:	Head of Student Support and Services (Pat Sponder)
Lead contact:	Student Experience Officer (Jenny Wragge)

Appendix 1: List of Professional Courses

- BA in Community Justice
- BA in Social Work
- BDS
- BMidwif
- BNurs
- BSc in Audiology
- BSc in Nursing Practice
- BSc in Oral Health Science
- BSc in Speech and Language Therapy
- ClinPsyD
- MBChB
- MOptom
- MPharm
- MSc in Audiology
- MSc in Educational Psychology
- MSc in Genetic Counselling
- PGCE
- Dip in Professional Studies in Midwifery
- Dip in Professional Studies in Nursing
- MA in Social Work
- Dip in Social Policy and Social Work
- Dip/MSc in Psychiatric Social Work
- MA in Counselling