

The University of Manchester

Policy on Supporting Health, Fitness and Return to Study

Note: any reference in this Policy to named officers should also be read as a reference in each case to a delegated nominee.

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1. Context

- 1.1 The University is committed to supporting students and recognises the impact that a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour and conduct can have on their academic progression and wider university experience. Issues with any of these may affect a student's fitness to study.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This Policy covers all students registered at the University with the exception of those listed in section 2.2 below.
- 2.2 This Policy does not apply to programmes of study leading directly to a professional qualification or eligibility for registration to practise, or the right to practise, a particular profession or calling and where the programme regulations include fitness to practise processes for managing concerns about the health and conduct of students. These programmes are listed in appendix 1.
- 2.3 This Policy must be used when concerns about a student's academic progress, behaviour, conduct and/or ability to function appropriately at the University are thought to be the result of mental and/or physical ill health.
- 2.4 This Policy must be used by staff when a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour and/or conduct is significantly impacting on their ability to progress academically and/or function at the University, and/or on other students/staff.
- 2.5 This Policy has been developed by the University to help manage the situations described in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 above. There may, however, be situations where it is appropriate to implement alternative University regulations, policies or procedures, such as the Fitness to Practise Procedure (or equivalent) (which, in summary, applies to students whose programme of study leads to a right to practise as a member of a profession and to students who are already registered with a relevant professional regulator) or Regulation XVII (Conduct & Discipline of Students), and the University reserves the right to do so notwithstanding concerns regarding the student's health, wellbeing, behaviour and/or conduct.
- 2.6 This Policy aims to ensure that:
 - 2.6.1 the best interests of the student are considered in relation to their personal situation, their health and/or wellbeing;
 - 2.6.2 students are supported to study and manage their behaviour and/or conduct to engage in university life and, wherever possible, to meet the required learning outcomes and

complete their programme;

2.6.3 students who are experiencing difficulties in relation to their health and/or wellbeing are supported to address their difficulties at the earliest appropriate point and have access to appropriate support services;

2.6.4 students are able to make informed decisions regarding options available to them; and

2.6.5 staff from Schools and support services work together where appropriate so that students experience a consistent and fair process.

2.7 This Policy should be used sensitively, focussing on the best interests of the student where there is sufficient belief that a student's behaviour, conduct, attendance and/or academic progress is thought to be the result of mental and/or physical ill health. This Policy may also be used when the University has concerns about the impact of a student's behaviour and/or conduct on their own safety and wellbeing or the safety and wellbeing of others.

3. Procedures

3.1 This Policy is supported by three procedures:

3.1.1 Procedure on Support to Study: the Procedure can be found [here](#). This Procedure is to be used to ensure that the University provides access to appropriate support to students with health and/or wellbeing difficulties. This will include School based support and University-wide support services, including the Occupational Health Service, the Counselling Service and/or Disability Advisory and Support Service.

3.1.2 Procedure on Fitness to Study: the Procedure can be found [here](#). This Procedure enables the University to focus expertise, advice and support on issues of health, wellbeing, behaviour and conduct which require additional support and monitoring which could include disciplinary action such as a temporary cessation of studies; and

3.1.3 Procedure on Supporting Return to Study: the Procedure can be found [here](#). This Procedure ensures students returning to study receive appropriate support to help them meet the required learning outcomes and complete their programme of study whilst taking account of their health and wellbeing going forward.

4. Confidentiality

4.1 At all stages of this Policy and the accompanying procedures, there is an expectation that all those involved will, where possible and appropriate, respect the confidentiality of the matters concerned; however, there may be circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be maintained which is covered in the Procedures.

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Related policies/procedures/ guidance etc:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing • Student Mental Health • Policy on Recording and Monitoring Attendance • Policy on Circumstances Leading to Changes to PGR Study • Procedure on Support to Study • Procedure on Fitness to Study • Procedure on Supporting Return to Study • Guidelines for monitoring student attendance
Policy Owner	The Director of Campus Life
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1.0	25 April 2018	Original document (New Policy)
2.0	October 2020	Update to insert a new paragraph 2.5 and Appendix following BMH Fitness to Practise review

Appendix 1

Fitness to Practise Programmes

The Policy on Supporting Health, Fitness and Return to Study does not apply to programmes of study leading directly to a professional qualification or eligibility for registration to practise, or the right to practise, a particular profession or calling and where the programme regulations include fitness to practise processes for managing concerns about the health and conduct of students. The students on these programmes undergo Fitness to Practise procedures within the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health and the programmes are as follows:

- BDS
- BNurs
- BMidWif
- BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology)
- BSc Oral Health Science
- BSc Speech and Language Therapy
- ClinPsyD
- MBChB
- MOptom
- MPharm
- MA Social Work
- MSc Audiology
- PG Dip Physician Associate

The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health also have registered professionals on some of their programmes. These are students who are already qualified to practise a particular profession and are undertaking postgraduate research programmes or programmes to enhance their current profession or which will allow them to practise an additional duty (i.e. Scientific Training Programme (STP) / Higher Specialist Scientific Training (HSST) or students taking Best Interest Assessor/Certificate of Clinical Competence CPD units). These students would also undergo Fitness to Practise procedures within the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health where it is deemed appropriate and necessary and so the Policy on Supporting Health, Fitness and Return to Study would also apply. There would, in addition, need to be a report to their regulator depending on the nature of the case.

Procedure on Support to Study

Note: any reference in this Procedure to named officers should also be read as a reference in each case to a delegated nominee.

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2. Key Roles and Responsibilities
3. School/Faculty Processes
4. University-Wide Services
5. Supporting Documents and Additional Sources of Support
6. Confidentiality

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This Procedure is one of three that underpins the Policy on Supporting Health, Fitness and Return to Study. It details the ways that the University may support a student where their health, wellbeing, behaviour and/or conduct is significantly impacting on their ability to progress academically and/or function at the University. Support can be provided and monitored in a way that mitigates the need for action to be taken under subsequent procedures. The other two procedures are the Procedure for Fitness to Study and the Procedure on Supporting Return to Study.
- 1.2 This Procedure is to be used to ensure that students with health and/or wellbeing issues receive appropriate information, signposting and referral to support services including the Occupational Health Service, the Counselling Service and/or the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS).

2. Key Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 As students are academically based in Schools, the first point of contact and/or support is normally to be found there. This will be referred to as their “School” whilst noting that some students’ registration may be held outside of the School structures¹.
- 2.2 Students may also seek advice and support from University-wide support services without reference to the School.
- 2.3 There may be occasions where concerns for the student are initially identified outside of their School/Faculty (e.g., within their Halls of Residence² or by Security staff). Such concerns should be raised through the School/Faculty as set out below.

3. School/Faculty Processes

- 3.1 Each student on a taught programme is allocated a named academic member of staff as an advisor³. These individuals will provide a point of contact and gateway to appropriate services for students experiencing personal difficulties.

¹ This has currently been written in this way to include International Programme/Study Abroad students who are registered with the Directorate for the Student Experience. It would also cover students in Centres for Doctoral Training.

² The decision for a case to be referred from the Halls of Residence would be made by the relevant Senior Residential Life Co-ordinators (there are three of these who cover different groups of halls) in conjunction with the Residential Life Manager.

- 3.2 Each student on a research programme is allocated a main supervisor⁴. The main supervisor will normally be part of a supervisory team consisting of one or more additional academic colleagues and/or clinical/industrial partners who act as co-supervisor(s) and an advisor providing pastoral support. Supervisors are expected to keep up to date with the progress of the research and to advise the student on academic and other pastoral matters. The student should have an advisor as part of the supervisory team to provide more general pastoral advice and support.
- 3.3 The School must have professional support services staff who will offer student support and make it clear to students (e.g., in programme handbooks) where they should go for support. At least one of these staff will take on the role of a “Fitness to Study officer⁵”.
- 3.4 The School is able to offer support to students in a number of ways, underpinned by a number of policies and procedures. These include:
- 3.4.1 the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances for Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Programmes of study (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=4271>) or for Postgraduate Research Programmes this is within the Policy on Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=8162>);
- 3.4.2 the Policy on Interruptions for Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Programmes of study (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=26092>) or for Postgraduate Research Programmes this is within the Policy on Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=8162>);
- 3.4.3 the Student Mental Health Policy (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=1892>)
- 3.4.4 the Academic Appeals Regulation (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=1872>) ; and
- 3.4.5 the Complaints Procedure (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=1893>).
- 3.5 The School may refer or signpost the student to one of a number of University-wide specialist services, although if a disability issue has been disclosed then the student must be referred to DASS. If the student does not consent to the referral to DASS, then a note of this must be made on the student’s file.
- 3.6 The School, through the student support staff including the Fitness to Study officer, may put in place a support plan (which will include a review process) in agreement with the student and in conjunction with the services listed below.

³ See the Policy on Advising Taught Students - <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=24234>

⁴ See the Supervision policy for PGR Degrees - <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=615>

⁵ A role description will be produced. It is expected that this role will be held alongside a pre-existing substantive role. Some Schools or Faculties may have more than one staff member taking on the role.

4. University-Wide Services

- 4.1 There are a number of specialist services to support students available at the University to which a student can be directed or to which a student can refer themselves directly. When issues are identified, Schools should, to the extent possible, liaise with one or all of the following to form and develop an action plan of support.
- 4.2 The Counselling Service: the Counselling Service offers confidential help with any personal issues affecting work, self-esteem, relationships, sexuality, mental health and general wellbeing. They mainly offer brief, focused counselling that encourages people to make the most of each session. They also offer a wide range of workshops and groups including managing anxiety, exam stress, procrastination, assertiveness, confidence and self-esteem, low mood, and speaking out in groups. The Counselling Service is part of a wider network of help and support and can advise on where else to seek help within the University and make referrals to NHS mental health services. Emotional, psychological and mental health difficulties should be directed to the Counselling Service via <http://pssweb.manchester.ac.uk/includes/html/counselling/>.
- 4.3 DASS: DASS provides a confidential advice service to students on issues related to disability and accessibility. A disability is any condition which has a significant, adverse and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This can include chronic medical conditions, mental health difficulties or a specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia). DASS can provide practical support and recommend reasonable adjustments to be made for the student, for example, organising alternative examination arrangements for students in need of additional support. The referral form is available at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=650> for the Service.
- 4.4 Occupational Health Service: the Occupational Health Service provides confidential services to protect the health of students and assesses and advises on fitness for training and study to ensure that health issues are effectively managed. Advice can be provided on how a student's health can impact on their studies and a student's fitness to undertake a programme of study. The referral form for the Service is available at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=650>.
- 4.5 Residential Life: the Residential Life team provides help and support to students living in the University's Halls of Residence.

5. Supporting Documents and Additional Sources of Support

- 5.1 [Students' Union Advice Service](#): the Students' Union Advice Service is a confidential service where students can get help and advice on personal and academic issues. It is run by professional advisors who are independent of the University.
- 5.2 Guidance has been issued (jointly by the Counselling Service, DASS and the Occupational Health Service) for dealing with students with any physical and/or mental health conditions at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=647>.
- 5.3 [My Learning Essentials](#) is the Library's award-winning skills programme including both online resources and face-to-face workshops (e.g. on topics such as self awareness and wellbeing).
- 5.4 The [Mediation Service](#) can help to resolve a disagreement or conflict.

5.5 The [Student Support and Advice](#) team offer support and advice on issues affecting student life, with signposting and referral to more specialist services. If it is not clear where to go, this is a good place to start.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 There is an expectation that all those involved will, where possible and appropriate, respect the confidentiality of the matters concerned; however, there may be circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be maintained.

6.2 A student's informed and express consent should be obtained in any circumstances (other than as set out at section 6.3 below) in which confidential information about the student is to be shared. Where a student decides not to provide their consent, this decision should, subject to section 6.3 below, be respected and any consequences of such non-disclosure, for example, in terms of providing additional support, should be explained to the student and recorded on the student's file.

6.3 If it is not possible for consent to be obtained from the student (e.g., because the student is incapacitated) or if consent is refused, in very exceptional circumstances the University may still go ahead and share confidential information about that student. Examples of circumstances when such a decision might be taken to share confidential information include where a:

- (i) student's health has deteriorated to the extent that it is threatening their personal safety;
- (ii) student is at risk of serious abuse and/or exploitation; and
- (iii) student's behaviour and/or conduct is adversely affecting the rights or safety of others.

6.4 Where the consent of the student has not been obtained, it will be the responsibility of the Director of Campus Life, informed by advice from the Head of Data Protection, to decide whether or not to share confidential information about that student. If the decision is taken that confidential information should be shared without the student's consent, the student must be informed of this unless it is determined that to do so will increase the risk of harm to the student or others.

6.5 Where a decision is made to share confidential information about a student without the student's consent, a record will be kept stating the nature of the information shared, with whom the information has been shared and the time and date of the disclosure.

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Policy Owner	The Director of Campus Life
Lead contact:	The Director of Campus Life

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Version	Date	Reason for change
1.0	25 April 2018	Original document (New Procedure)

The University of Manchester

Procedure on Fitness to Study

Note: any reference in this Procedure to named officers should also be read as a reference in each case to a delegated nominee.

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3. Circumstances under which a student's Fitness to Study may be called into question
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5. Stage 1 – Outcomes
6. Stage 1 – Review
7. Stage 2 – University Consideration under Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students)
8. Approval of Return to Study
9. Confidentiality

1 Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The University has a duty of care to its staff and students and must comply with health and safety legislation. If there are significant concerns about the health, wellbeing, behaviour and/or conduct of a student, or their impact on others, the University is obliged to take action. If these concerns have not been resolved by the Procedure on Support to Study, they may be considered under this Procedure. The case will be assessed by a two stage process, which will include an assessment of the impact of the student's behaviour and/or conduct on both them and others.
- 1.2 A student's health, wellbeing, behaviour and conduct can have an impact on their academic progression and wider university experience. Issues with any of these may affect a student's fitness to study. This Procedure is intended for use in cases in which:
 - (i) the behaviour, conduct, disruption and/or risk presented by the student whilst the student is studying at the University; and/or
 - (ii) the student's behaviour and/or conduct and its impact on the wider community (be that a University community or external community),is perceived to be of a serious or potentially serious nature.
- 1.3 This Procedure is not designed to be used to address mitigating circumstances; the latter are dealt with under the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=4271>) or the Policy on Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Degrees (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=8162>).
- 1.4 This Procedure has two stages and, depending upon the perceived severity of the situation, action may be initiated at either of the two stages without the need to follow the stages sequentially.

2 Key roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 When a student's fitness to study is called into question, the student's School¹ must refer the matter to its Fitness to Study Panel². The Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel should be the Head of School.
- 2.2 The Panel will be chaired by the Head of School. Membership will consist of 7 experienced members of academic staff (including the Chair) with normally 2 each with suitable experience of the UG, PGT and PGR areas. There will be a quorum of three members. The Fitness to Study Panel will be supported by a PSS member of staff taking on the "Fitness to Study officer" role. The School may have more than one Fitness to Study Panel to reflect School circumstances but students must be informed of the structure within their School.
- 2.3 It is the responsibility of the Fitness to Study officer to consult with the Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel in order for the Chair to decide whether to invoke Stage 1 of the Procedure. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel may consult with the Director of Campus Life to discuss whether an immediate referral to Stage 2 of the Procedure should be made.
- 2.4 The Division of Campus Life oversees the operation of this Procedure and can offer advice and support including from the Counselling Service, Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) and Occupational Health Service. Other sources of advice and input could come from the Office of the General Counsel, Residential Services, Security Services and/ or any other individual who may be deemed appropriate.

3 Circumstances under which a student's fitness to study may be called into question and should be referred to the Fitness to Study officer

- 3.1 A student's fitness to study may be brought into question through a wide range of circumstances, which include, but are not restricted to, the following:
 - (i) the student has informed the University of problems and/or has provided information which indicates that there is a need to address their fitness to study;
 - (ii) the student's academic performance, their behaviour and/or their conduct is a cause for concern and is thought to be as a result of an underlying mental and/or physical health condition;
 - (iii) the student's behaviour and/or conduct is having a significant impact on others; and/or
 - (iv) serious concerns are raised by a third party (e.g., housemate, colleague, placement provider or medical professional) which indicate a need to address a student's fitness to study.
- 3.2 It is expected that the support detailed in the Procedure on Support to Study will have been explored before referral to Stage 1. The Procedure on Support to Study can be found [here](#).

¹ Or equivalent structure for incoming Study Abroad students (who are overseen by the International Programmes Office rather than a specific School but will delegate to a specific School depending on the course units being studied) or for students in Centres for Doctoral Training.

² Further details about the Panel (e.g. terms of reference) will be covered within an appendix.

- 3.3 During the referral process, the Fitness to Study officer should explain to the student that concerns about their fitness to study have been raised. It should be explained that referral to Stage 1 has been recommended because the student is or has been unwilling to co-operate with support provided by the School or the support plan put in place has not been effective.
- 3.4 The conversation with the student should be approached in a supportive and understanding fashion. The student should be made aware of the precise nature of the behaviour and/or concerns that have resulted in the referral to Stage 1 of this Procedure. The student should be:
- (i) encouraged to co-operate fully with the Procedure;
 - (ii) offered an opportunity to explain their own view of the matter; and
 - (iii) referred to the School's Fitness to Study Panel.

The discussion should culminate with the student having a clear understanding of why they have been referred to the School's Fitness to Study Panel under this Procedure and the Fitness to Study officer should carefully document on the student's file the reasons for referral and support offered to date.

4 Stage 1 – Action

- 4.1 The decision to invoke Stage 1 will be taken by the Fitness to Study officer in consultation with the Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel and with advice from colleagues in the Division of Campus Life if required.
- 4.2 Once the decision has been made to invoke Stage 1 of this Procedure, a Fitness to Study Panel meeting will be convened by the School.
- 4.3 The student will normally be given at least 10 working days' notice of the meeting and will be informed of its purpose and provided with any documents to be considered at the meeting. The student will be asked to provide, at least 5 working days before the meeting, any documents the student wishes to be considered.
- 4.4 The student may be accompanied at the meeting by a Students' Union representative, a fellow student or a member of staff of their choosing.
- 4.5 Should a student decide not to participate, the meeting will normally proceed in their absence.
- 4.6 The meeting is convened in order for the School to assess the fitness to study of the student and suggest arrangements to further support the student, to address their behaviour and/or conduct appropriately and set up formal review mechanisms. During the meeting, the School will consider:
- (i) the nature and extent of any health condition from which the student may be suffering;
 - (ii) the prognosis of such a condition and its implications for the student;
 - (iii) the extent to which any condition may affect the student's fitness to study and ability to manage the demands of student life;

- (iv) any impact that the condition may have on or risk it may pose to others;
 - (v) whether any additional steps should be taken by the University to enable the student to study effectively; and
 - (vi) whether the student will require any ongoing medical treatment or support.
- 4.7 Where necessary, additional specialist advice and/or an opinion from the student's own GP or specialist may be sought and the student will be asked to sign a consent form to authorise disclosure of the results of the assessment to relevant individuals involved in the process.
- 4.8 Should the student refuse to participate in a medical assessment, the University will continue the process under this Procedure based on the information already in its possession or use another appropriate means to address the issue. The student should be informed of this and of any potential consequences, for example, that a decision may be made under this Procedure without full medical information, or that the matter may be escalated to Stage 2 of this Procedure due to a lack of engagement by the student. The student's refusal to participate in the medical assessment, and any potential consequences, will be recorded on the student's file.
- 4.9 Those present at the meeting will have the discretion to consider the issues as they see fit. This may include calling witnesses and making further enquiries to assist their deliberations.
- 4.10 A record of the discussions, and any actions agreed with the student, should be made and sent to the student within 10 working days of the date of the meeting by way of an outcome letter. The student will be asked to agree to the record of the discussions and any actions attributed and to respond to this effect within 10 working days of receipt. A copy will be kept on the student's file. In the absence of a response, the University will confirm the record and implement accordingly.

5 Stage 1 – Outcomes

- 5.1 Following consideration of all the evidence, the Fitness to Study Panel may recommend one or more of the following outcomes:
- (i) no further action is required;
 - (ii) that the School (through the Fitness to Study officer) will monitor the student's fitness to study for a specified period of time. To enable such monitoring, a support plan shall be agreed with the student to outline any steps that the student will need to take and/or any support to be provided to the student to address the concerns identified. Any support plan will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Fitness to Study officer in consultation with the student. The student will be informed that any breach of the support plan will normally result in their fitness to study being considered further under stage 2 of this Procedure;
 - (iii) the Fitness to Study Panel would support the student's request for an interruption to their studies or an extension to the prescribed programme period or the thesis submission/resubmission deadline; and/or
 - (iv) the case will be referred for consideration under Stage 2 of this Procedure. This will only be appropriate in the most serious of cases, for example, where the student may pose a serious risk to their own health and safety or that of others,

and it is thought that the suspension or exclusion of the student may be necessary, where the student has not agreed to a recommended course of action proposed as a result of a Stage 1 meeting or despite completing the recommendations at Stage 1 the situation has not sufficiently improved.

6 Stage 1 – Review

- 6.1 A review period should be agreed at the meeting, to allow the student to consider their behaviour and/or conduct and seek further advice and support as necessary. At the end of the review period, the Fitness to Study officer will arrange a follow up meeting between the student and the School.
- 6.2 If the concerns have been addressed appropriately, this will be noted and no further action taken. If the concerns have not been fully addressed, then:
- 6.2.1 meetings with the School may be scheduled to ensure that appropriate support to study continues to be provided at School level; and
- 6.2.2 the Fitness to Study Panel may:
- (i) set a further review period; and/or
 - (ii) recommend that the case be progressed to Stage 2 of this Procedure as appropriate.
- 6.3 If a student is unable or unwilling to co-operate at this point, the student will be informed by the School that action under Stage 2 of the Procedure will be taken.
- 6.4 The outcome of the review should be sent to the student within 5 working days of the date of the end of the review period in the form of a letter. The student will be asked to agree the record and any actions attributed and respond to that effect within 5 working days of receipt. A copy will be kept on the student's file.

7 Stage 2 – University consideration under Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students)

- 7.1 Stage 2 of this Procedure will be implemented by the Director of Campus Life following a referral from the School's Fitness to Study Panel if any or all of the following apply:
- (i) the initial concerns raised about a student are sufficiently serious to warrant suspension or exclusion - for example, if the student poses a potential threat to their own health and safety and wellbeing or that of others, or disruption to the University;
 - (ii) the student is unwilling to co-operate with Stage 1;
 - (iii) the action taken under Stage 1 has not remedied the identified behaviours and/or conduct; and/or
 - (iv) the student's condition deteriorates to such an extent during Stage 1 of this Procedure that, in the best interests of the student and/or others, it is felt appropriate to escalate the case.
- 7.2 Subsequent parts of this Procedure will be dealt with under Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students).

8 Approval of Return to Study

- 8.1 A student will only be permitted to return to study if, on the basis of medical assessments and other relevant evidence, the University is satisfied that the student is fit to study and understands and can comply with any conditions imposed for their return.
- 8.2 The Procedure on Supporting Return to Study can be found at: XXXX.

9 Confidentiality

- 9.1 There is an expectation that all those involved will, where possible and appropriate, respect the confidentiality of the matters concerned; however, there may be circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be maintained.
- 9.2 A student's informed and express consent should be obtained in any circumstances (other than as set out at section 9.3 below) in which confidential information about the student is to be shared. Where a student decides not to provide their consent, this decision should, subject to section 9.3 below, be respected and any consequences of such non-disclosure, for example, in terms of providing additional support, should be explained to the student and recorded on the student's file.
- 9.3 If it is not possible for consent to be obtained from the student (e.g., because the student is incapacitated) or if consent is refused, in very exceptional circumstances the University may still go ahead and share confidential information about that student. Examples of circumstances when such a decision might be taken to share confidential information include where a:
- (i) student's health has deteriorated to the extent that it is threatening their personal safety;
 - (ii) student is at risk of serious abuse and/or exploitation; and
 - (iii) student's behaviour and/or conduct is adversely affecting the rights or safety of others.
- 9.4 Where the consent of the student has not been obtained, it will be the responsibility of the Director of Campus Life, informed by advice from the Head of Data Protection, to decide whether or not to share confidential information about that student. If the decision is taken that confidential information should be shared without the student's consent, the student must be informed of this unless it is determined that to do so will increase the risk of harm to the student or others.
- 9.5 Where a decision is made to share confidential information about a student without the student's consent, a record will be kept stating the nature of the information shared, with whom the information has been shared and the time and date of the disclosure.

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Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students) Regulation XX – Monitoring Attendance and Wellbeing of Students
Related policies/procedures/guidance etc:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on Supporting Health, Fitness and Return to Study • Wellbeing • Student Mental Health • Policy on Recording and Monitoring Attendance • Policy on Circumstances Leading to Changes to PGR Study • Procedure on Support to Study • Procedure on Supporting Return to Study • Guidelines for monitoring student attendance
Policy Owner	The Director of Campus Life
Lead contact:	The Director of Campus Life

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The University of Manchester**Procedure on Supporting Return to Study**

Note: any reference in this Procedure to named officers should also be read as a reference in each case to a delegated nominee.

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1 Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this Procedure is to ensure that all students who have been suspended or excluded under the Procedure on Fitness to Study and in accordance with Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students) have been assessed and confirmed as fit to return to study, relevant information is shared (e.g., with residences) and appropriate support is made available upon their return.
- 1.2 This Procedure allows subsequent action to be taken should the behaviours and/or conduct identified as a result of the Procedure on Fitness to Study reoccur.

2 Key Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The School's Fitness to Study Panel (as set out in the Procedure on Fitness to Study section 2) will oversee the return of students who have been suspended or excluded under the Procedure on Fitness to Study and in accordance with Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students).
- 2.2 The Occupational Health Service will medically assess the student's ability to manage the demands of studying at University, taking account of the nature and extent of the student's previous problems and the University's concerns about them. Where necessary, additional specialist advice and/or an opinion from the student's own GP or specialist may be sought by the Occupational Health Service.

3 During Suspension/Exclusion

- 3.1 Students will be encouraged to maintain contact with the Fitness to Study officer in the School during their period of suspension or exclusion to advise on their progress and to facilitate a return to study when the student is well enough. This may not be possible for some students depending on their condition.

4 Returning to Study

- 4.1 Where possible, students will return from a suspension or exclusion once deemed fit to study, but the return may only be practical at certain times of the year (for example at the start of an academic year for taught students).

- 4.2 Students will normally be expected to return to the same mode of study as they were originally undertaking, i.e., full-time or part-time. Where a request to return to studies includes a request to change the mode of study or return to a previous year of study, this may be considered by the Head of School.

5 Notice of Return

- 5.1 All students who have been suspended or excluded under the Procedure on Fitness to Study in accordance with Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students) should indicate their intention to return to study by completing a 'Return to Study Form' and returning it to the School Fitness to Study officer at least one month before they are due to return. If the period of suspension or exclusion is less than one month, then the Fitness to Study officer will agree with the student the timescale for submission of the Form. The School will attempt to contact the student and will offer support in relation to a potential return to study.
- 5.2 The return to study process can take some time (e.g., due to the need for additional information from the Occupational Health Service or other specialists). Students should, therefore, begin the return to study process as early as possible and comply with any deadlines given to them.
- 5.3 If no 'Return to Study Form' is received, students will be contacted 1 month prior to the agreed return date (or such other time as agreed if the period of suspension, exclusion or interruption is less than one month).

6 Return to Study Approval Process

- 6.1 The School's Fitness to Study Panel will oversee the Return to Study Approval process.
- 6.2 The University will have defined the conditions of return to study after a suspension or exclusion under the Procedure on Fitness to Study.
- 6.3 In order to assure the University that the conditions have been met, the student may be referred to an Occupational Health physician. With the student's permission, the Occupational Health physician may need to contact their medical practitioner/specialist for updated information regarding their health issues/current condition.
- 6.4 Where conditions were placed upon the return of a student, the Fitness to Study Panel will consider the Occupational Health report and any additional information, including any information which may be provided directly by the student.
- 6.5 The student will be asked to provide the Fitness to Study Panel with a written statement of their views and any independent medical evidence they wish to be taken into account. The decision to allow the return of the student is the responsibility of the School's Fitness to Study Panel in consultation with colleagues from the Division of Campus Life. If the School's Fitness to Study Panel determines that the student is not fit to return, the Fitness to Study Panel will refer the case back to Stage 2 of the Procedure on Fitness to Study. The decision will be issued to the student in writing in advance of their return date.
- 6.6 In making the decision, the School's Fitness to Study Panel will consider the student's individual support needs, including the requirement for any reasonable adjustments and may impose such conditions which they deem appropriate to the relevant case, such as a return to study plan or a requirement for regular progress checks.
- 6.7 If the student does not consent to referral to Occupational Health, or will not provide medical evidence, the School's Fitness to Study Panel will decide whether there is sufficient information on which to assess whether the student is fit to return to study.

- 6.8 Where the period of suspension or exclusion is greater than one month, the student will receive a notification of eligibility to return to study, one month prior to the originally agreed return date, from the School's Fitness to Study officer.

7 Support to Study after Returning

- 7.1 Once return to study has been approved, all students must attend a return to study meeting with relevant staff within the School, including the Fitness to Study officer. This meeting would normally be within one month of the return date and a record would be kept of the meeting. The on-going support of this student will be dealt with under the Procedure on Support to Study.
- 7.2 Any further health, wellbeing, behaviour and/or conduct issues, related to the same condition, which arise once a student has returned to study will be immediately referred back to the Procedure on Fitness to Study.
- 7.3 New health, wellbeing, behaviour and/or conduct issues will initially be dealt with under the Procedure on Support to Study.

8 Confidentiality

- 8.1 There is an expectation that all those involved will, where possible and appropriate, respect the confidentiality of the matters concerned; however, there may be circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be maintained.
- 8.2 A student's informed and express consent should be obtained in any circumstances (other than as set out at section 8.3 below) in which confidential information about the student is to be shared. Where a student decides not to provide their consent, this decision should, subject to section 8.3 below, be respected and any consequences of such non-disclosure, for example, in terms of providing additional support, should be explained to the student and recorded on the student's file.
- 8.3 If it is not possible for consent to be obtained from the student (e.g., because the student is incapacitated) or if consent is refused, in very exceptional circumstances the University may still go ahead and share confidential information about that student. Examples of circumstances when such a decision might be taken to share confidential information include where a:
- (i) student's health has deteriorated to the extent that it is threatening their personal safety;
 - (ii) student is at risk of serious abuse and/or exploitation; and
 - (iii) student's behaviour and/or conduct is adversely affecting the rights or safety of others.
- 8.4 Where the consent of the student has not been obtained, it will be the responsibility of the Director of Campus Life, informed by advice from the Head of Data Protection, to decide whether or not to share confidential information about that student. If the decision is taken that confidential information should be shared without the student's consent, the student must be informed of this unless it is determined that to do so will increase the risk of harm to the student or others.
- 8.5 Where a decision is made to share confidential information about a student without the student's consent, a record will be kept stating the nature of the information shared, with whom the information has been shared and the time and date of the disclosure.

Document control box	
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