

Support to Study Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This policy aims to support students and staff where it is believed there is an underlying physical disability or mental health condition impacting learning. Our primary concern will always be the student's wellbeing.

1.2 This policy aims to encourage a collaborative approach to support the student to move forward with their studies with the appropriate support in place.

1.3 This Policy uses the term 'student' or 'students' throughout. This refers to all learners at the university, including undergraduate and postgraduate students and apprentices. Where separate arrangements or rules apply, the target group or groups are named in the paragraph

1.4 HSU is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of gender, age, disability, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities, religious or political beliefs. Where a student or staff member working with this policy has specific protected characteristics under the Equality act 2010, all endeavours will be made to ensure that information is available in appropriate formats and reasonable adjustments are made to the proceedings and facilities to accommodate their needs. If you would like this document in a different format please contact Registry.

1.5 This policy aims to ensure that staff do not discriminate against any student because of their mental health difficulties or disability, and that students with underlying conditions are encouraged to access appropriate support. It should be remembered that mental health difficulties are legally defined disabilities and it is therefore unlawful under the Equality Act

1.6 This policy and its procedures are part of the Student Conduct Policy Framework. Students enrolled on courses leading to professional registration are subject to University policy and procedures in relation to academic assessment, progress and conduct, in addition to Fitness to Practise procedures. Students who have been found to have broken conduct rules under this policy or are unwilling to engage with this policy and other supportive measures will be referred for consideration under the Fitness to Practise Policy or Student Disciplinary Policy as appropriate.

1.7 Healthcare students will be expected to meet the requirements set out in the relevant PSRB (Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body) practice standards consistent with their stage of progression through their course. Such students who work with clients, service users and patients must have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and health required to practise within their profession safely and effectively. This policy therefore also aims to protect individuals seeking care as well as protecting the wider HSU community of students and staff.

2. Principles

2.1 HSU has a duty of care, to all students as a result of the 'proximate relationship' resulting from the relationship between the University and its students. This means that the University has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all its students.

2.2 There may be an enhanced duty of care owed to particular groups of students who are more vulnerable (for example, under 18s).

2.3 In exceptional cases, the University's duty of care may require the removal a student from the University if that student presents a risk to themselves or to other members of the HSU community.

2.4 The Support to Study Procedure is an internal procedure and is not intended to be a legal process. Nor is it intended to affect the terms and conditions of employment for those students in employment outside HSU. The University does not normally use legal professionals in the handling of cases, and therefore it is not expected that students would be required to do so either. As such the engagement of legal professionals by students in relation to the Support to Study procedure is normally not permitted, and would be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, in discussion with the Head of Student Services and Wellbeing.

3 Key responsibilities

3.1 The Head of Student Services and Wellbeing is responsible for the overall management and implementation of this policy and the accompanying procedures.

3.2 Members of staff are responsible for acting within the framework of this policy and the accompanying procedures where a student's behaviours or attitude gives them cause for concern.

3.3 Under this policy and associated procedures any HSU role may act through their appointed nominee.

3.4 Students are responsible for being fit for study at HSU and may self-refer to this policy. HSU encourages all students to disclose health needs so we can best support the student during their studies. Where a condition has not previously been disclosed, HSU encourage the student to make contact with the appropriate service at the earliest possible opportunity in order that they are provided with the support they need to realise their full potential and complete their course of study.

3.5 An apprentice's employer may contact HSU with their own concerns about their apprentice.

3.6 No member of HSU staff should go beyond their level of competence in trying to support or advise a student.

4. Stages of the Support to Study Policy

4.1 Stage 1 – Emerging Concern

4.1.1 Stage one is managed by the academic team. In this stage the member of staff with primary responsibility for the student (e.g. Personal Tutor) meets with the students to discuss the concerns

regarding their welfare, giving examples and explaining why this raises concerns. The student may choose to be accompanied by another student, friend, family member or SU representative. All stage one meetings which take place should be reported using the online form [here](#).

4.2 Stage 2 – Continued Concern

4.2.1 Should the issues not be resolved by the actions at Stage one or if there is a high level of concern for the Student and/or others a Stage 2 Support to Study referral should be made to the relevant campus Student Wellbeing Services Manager. They will arrange to meet with the student and course team representative to explore the concerns presented, understand the situation and agree next steps, including seeking appropriate help.

4.2.2 The name of the Student's GP will be noted.

4.2.3 The Student Wellbeing Services Manager will remind the student that HSU has a duty of reasonable care to all students and will note that it is the student's responsibility to be fit to study. The Student Wellbeing Services Manager will stress that there are doubts regarding the student's current fitness to study. If appropriate, attention will be drawn to the HSU Fitness to Practice / Attendance Policy / Student Disciplinary Policy.

4.3 Stage 3 – Acute Concern

4.3.1 Acute concern may very occasionally arise from a crisis situation, such as a sudden or violent breakdown in behaviour. If there has been a crisis incident on or offsite, or the student's behaviour persists following Stage 2 of the procedure, you should contact the Head of Student and Wellbeing Services.

4.3.2 The Head of Student and Wellbeing Services, or in their absence, the Student Wellbeing Services Manager will arrange to meet the student with a member of their course team and conduct a risk assessment to identify formally the level of risk to the student and / or others.

4.3.3 For apprentices, their employer must be informed and where the student holds part time positions in the University, the Head of People and Development.

4.3.4 The risk assessment will result in one of two possible outcomes:

- a) The level of risk to the student and/or others currently posed by the student is within acceptable levels. In this case, Stage 2 of these procedures should (continue to) be followed.
- b) The level of risk to the student and/or others currently posed by the student is unacceptable. In this case, Stage 3 of these procedures will continue to be followed.

4.3.5 If the risk assessment highlights an unacceptable level of risk, the Head of Student Services or Student Wellbeing Services Manager will call an urgent case conference. Attendees at the conference will include the Head of Student Services or Student Wellbeing Services Manager, the Course Leader (or their nominee), the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) and other staff as are necessary and appropriate to consider the case (e.g. the unit leaders, appropriate healthcare professionals, or welfare staff). The student will normally be invited to attend the case conference and may be advised to be accompanied by a pastoral staff member, another student, friend, family member or representative. The following should be noted:

- There may be some occasions where it is appropriate to hold the case conference without the student in attendance. In this case a written statement will be invited where appropriate.

- Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to contact the student's emergency contact. The student would always be advised that this action is being considered, to ensure that if their circumstances have changed, they can request an alternative contact.
- If there are concerns regarding the safety of the student, referral to external agencies will be considered.

4.3.6 The case conference may consider various options in relation to the student, including additional support strategies, suspension from study or a recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor that the student be withdrawn from the University

4.3.7 The Head of Student Services or Student Wellbeing Services Manager will confirm that the student's presence at the University at the current time represents an unacceptable risk to themselves and / or to others, and the conference will discuss what options are open to the student. If appropriate, the student will be informed that, under HSU regulations, their studies are suspended. The Academic Registrar will explain any implications for academic progression / award. Any decision will be communicated to the student in writing, whether or not they are present at the meeting.

5. Return to Study

5.1 Following any period of suspension from the University under these procedures, it may be appropriate for the student to return to resume their studies. The University reserves the right to request medical and/or occupational health reports by way of evidence to support a student's return to study.

5.2 The decision to permit a student to return to study will be made by the members of the original case conference who may impose such conditions as they deem appropriate to the relevant case (such as a return to study plan or a requirement for the student to attend regular review meetings). The Academic Registrar (or their nominee) will communicate the decision to the student

6. Appeal/complaint

6.1 Appeals against suspension

6.1.1 Students have the right to appeal against any decision taken under Stage 3 of these procedures, if they have evidence that:

- they have further material evidence which could not reasonably have been expected to have been submitted for consideration at the Stage 3 case conference
- there was procedural irregularity, bias or failure to reach a reasonable decision.

6.1.2 Appeals against suspension must be made in writing to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days of notification of the suspension clearly outlining the grounds for request.

6.1.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominated representative will review the appeal and after consulting with the relevant Course Leader and the Head of School and any other relevant staff, may overturn the decision to suspend a student if they believe it appropriate. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor's decision will be final.

6.2 Appeals against withdrawal

6.2.1 Appeals against withdrawal must be made in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor within 10 working days of notification of the withdrawal clearly outlining the grounds for request.

6.2.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominated representative will review the appeal and after consulting with the relevant Course Leader and/or Head of School and any other relevant staff, may overturn the decision to withdraw a student if they believe it appropriate. The Deputy Vice Chancellor's decision will be final.

6.2.3 At the completion of the appeals stage the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) will issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter.

7. Complaints

7.1 If a student is not satisfied with any decision made by HSU or a member of University College staff in accordance with any stage of these procedures, the student should follow the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

8. Referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

8.1 If, after exhausting the Appeals Stages, the student remains dissatisfied, they may refer their case to the OIA. Students wishing to make a case to the OIA must do so within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter using the OIA complaint form. Further information is available from the OIA website. Students may also contact the OIA by post or telephone and request to be sent a form. The OIA will determine whether the student's case is eligible for consideration under its rules.

Contact details for the Independent Adjudicator are:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator
OIA Second Floor, Abbey
Wharf
57-75 Kings Road Reading
RG1 3AB
Tel: 01189 599813
Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

Version:	2.0
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Head of Student and Wellbeing Services
Policy Owner	Head of Student and Wellbeing Services
Reference/ source	Internal & Bournemouth University, AUB and Southampton University
Date approved	13 August 2025
Effective from	September 2025
Review date	2028/29
Target	All staff and all students and apprentices
Policy location	VLE, SIP, public website
Equality analysis	No direct impact. The policy provides for reasonable adjustments to be made, where appropriate for students with specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Monitoring will be undertaken to assess whether there is any differential impact in the handling of cases.