

Support to Study Procedure

(Guidance supporting the Support to Study Policy)

This document outlines the steps in the Support to Study procedure.

1. Background

- 1.1 Health Sciences University (HSU) is committed to supporting all students to fulfil their potential. Occasionally a student's physical health or mental health condition may impact upon their own, or others', ability to fulfil that potential; alternatively a student's behaviour may give cause for concern.
- 1.2 It should be remembered that mental health difficulties are legally defined disabilities and it is therefore unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 to discriminate against a student on the grounds of their disability. The University are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable students experiencing mental health difficulties or a disability to undertake their academic studies and all staff members are required to ensure these are in place for students they are working with.
- 1.3 The procedures below are to be followed by University staff where a student's behaviours or attitude give cause for concern, and where it is believed either that there is an underlying disability, physical or mental health condition. The actions below will ensure that issues can be dealt with in a clear, transparent and supportive fashion.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 These procedures are not intended to give guidance on wider matters relating to students with physical or mental health issues, but intended to ensure a consistent approach to managing situations in which a student's behaviours or attitude is giving cause for concern.
- 1.6 Health Sciences University has access to a variety of resources which students and staff may find useful in supporting students with physical or mental health issues. For more information contact Student Services – studentservices@aecc.ac.uk
- 1.7 For apprentices, they are also often able to access support in their workplace provided by their employer. This does not prevent an apprentice from accessing all of the support and resource available for students.

2. Applying the Support to Study Procedures

- 2.1 You may develop concern about a student for a number of reasons. It may be that the

student themselves raises their concerns with you. Otherwise, typical signs that a student is in difficulty include, but are not limited to:

- i. Significant changes in appearance such as noticeable loss or gain of weight, deteriorated personal care and hygiene, or signs of sleeplessness.
- ii. Changes of mood or out of character behaviour from previous experience of the student.
- iii. Other people, such as friends, housemates or other colleagues expressing concern.
- iv. Talk or evidence of self-harming behaviour.
- v. Evidence of increased use of alcohol or non-prescription drugs.
- vi. Inappropriate responses which are disproportionate to the causal situation.
- vii. Where a student has not attended or engaged with study for a period of time without a reason given.

2.2 For Students, absence may be a cause for concern, often in line with one or more of the above signs, and staff should be aware of the wellbeing of the students on their courses. Course staff should in the first instance make contact with the student and explore the reasons for absence. Should they then have concerns about the student's wellbeing they should follow the stages below and refer to Student Services for support as necessary. Please refer to the [Academic Engagement Policy](#) for further information.

2.3 These procedures should in no way distract from any emergency situation where it is believed that a student's behaviour presents an immediate risk to themselves or others.

2.4 For Apprentices, any unplanned absence from learning **must** be followed up immediately by the Course Leader or course administration with the apprentice, and the learning replaced. Every apprentice must undertake some planned learning activity every calendar month. This is an apprenticeship compliance requirement. If they do not do this, the apprentice must be placed on a Break in Learning, backdated to the last learning activity. This requires liaison with the employer to pause the apprenticeship record, stops payments and sets in motion a range of evidence collection and plan requirements.

2.5 It is important to act on concerns, using the following procedures. These procedures provide a staged approach, based on the perceived level of risk to the health and safety of the student and/or others. The cause for concern can be brought under these procedures at any one of the three levels, depending on the severity of the situation. Staff are encouraged to discuss their concerns with Student Services in all instances.

3. Implementing Stage 1 – Emerging Concern

3.1 Record any concerns or signs the student may be struggling, including specific incidents and dates. It may be that you have witnessed an isolated incident; maintaining a detailed record will enable you to monitor and assess the situation more objectively.

3.2 Speak informally to immediate colleagues (such as your line manager or Course Leader) to identify any additional concerns.

3.3 The member of staff with primary responsibility for the student (e.g. personal tutor / course tutor) should arrange to meet with the student. The aim of the meeting is to inform the student, in a sympathetic and understanding way, explaining that there are concerns regarding their welfare. Some students may lack insight into their own situation and you

should be explicit about the causes for concern, giving clear examples and explaining why this presents a concern.

- 3.4 The student may be accompanied by a staff member, another student, friend, family member or representative to the Stage 1 meeting.
- 3.5 Offer the student an opportunity to disclose any underlying disability or mental health condition. For conditions disclosed, ask the student if they are happy for you to refer them to student services. Where consent is given email Student Services after the meeting explaining the reason for referral, copying the student in.
- 3.6 Listen carefully – the aim is to understand the situation from the student’s perspective. Ask if there is anything that the student considers would help them to manage their difficulties. Note that you are not expected to counsel the student – the aim of the meeting is to focus on the student’s behaviour, not to explore their emotional state in depth. You should take notes of the meeting and explain to the student that this will provide a record of your concerns.
- 3.7 For apprentices, there may be an impact in their workplace and on their day-to-day role – as above, the aim is to understand clearly whether there are support mechanisms in place and assist the apprentice in identifying and using these where appropriate.
- 3.8 As a result of the meeting, there are a range of likely outcomes:
 - a. The student acknowledges there is a problem and is willing to seek help: Refer to Student Services where consent is given or advise them to contact their GP. For apprentices, advise to use their organisation’s support programme if they wish as appropriate. Follow up one week later to ensure that the student has acted.
 - b. You are convinced that your concerns are unfounded: The student may give a plausible explanation for their behaviour and you are reassured that there is no cause for concern. No further action is required.
 - c. The student is aware of the problem but does not want to seek assistance OR denies there is a problem. In this case you should move to Stage 2 of the procedure. If there is a failure to resolve the situation at stage 1, the student should be informed that the case will be progressed to Stage 2.
- 3.9 Even if no referral to student services is required, please notify Student Services that a Stage One meeting has taken place using the [electronic form](#) provided. This allows us to collate concerns and have an overview of separate discussions which may be happening.

4. Stage 2 – Continued Concern

- 4.1 If the issues have not been resolved by the actions in Stage 1 (including non-engagement with the Support to Study process), or if there is a high level of concern for the student and / or others, you should contact the Student Wellbeing Services Manager to discuss your concerns and to explain any steps you have already taken to address the situation.
- 4.2 The Student Wellbeing Services Manager or their nominee will invite you and the student to attend a meeting to discuss the issues you have raised. It is important such meetings have representation from the course team. The Student Wellbeing Services Manager may invite a Wellbeing Adviser or other member of the Student Services team to attend the meeting depending on the nature of the Cause for Concern.
- 4.3 The meeting aims to encourage the student to acknowledge their difficulties, understand their situation and to seek appropriate help. The Student Wellbeing Services Manager will summarise the issues and, if appropriate, will remind the student that the University has a duty of reasonable care to all students. Although stressing that the aim is to support the

student, the Student Wellbeing Services Manager will note that it is the student's responsibility to be fit to study and stress that there are doubts regarding the student's current fitness to study. If appropriate, attention will be drawn to the University College Regulations / [Academic Engagement Policy](#)/ [Fitness to Practice Policy](#)/ [Student Disciplinary Policy](#).

- 4.4 The Student Wellbeing Services Manager will strongly recommend that the student seeks help from support services within the University and/or from appropriate external professionals. The name of the student's GP will be noted. If the student is not registered with a local GP, a link to a registration form for a local surgery will be provided. GP registration is a required condition to use the wellbeing services.
- 4.5 All parties will liaise to agree an action plan for the student to bring about changes in presenting behaviour. This may include requiring the student to have weekly discussions with a Student Wellbeing Adviser for regular monitoring. An appropriate date for review will be set. This plan will be emailed to the student following the meeting and added to the Student record on the Student Record System.
- 4.6 The Student Wellbeing Services Manager will inform the student of the consequences of not following the agreed action plan (moving to Stage 3). –The action plan will be monitored regularly, and agreed with the student, until there is no further Cause for Concern. Review meetings may be held as necessary to review targets and progress. Notes will be filed on the student's record.
- 4.7 Should actions not be met, the Student Wellbeing Services Manager will agree with the academic team the next steps – whether to move to Stage 3, or whether referral is needed to Fitness to Practice or the Student Disciplinary Process. If referral is needed to another policy, the academic lead will contact the Student Governance team to take this forward.

5. Stage 3 – Acute Concern

5.1 Acute concern may very occasionally arise from a crisis situation, such as a sudden or violent breakdown in behaviour. The student may appear very agitated and volatile, and difficult to engage in discussion. Although these situations are rare (it is unusual for someone with a mental health issue to be violent towards others) staff are advised to deal with any such situation in the following way:

- Create a calm environment. Adopt a non-threatening approach – sit at an equal level to the student and do not block their exit route
- Ask other students and staff to leave the area – it will feel calmer with few people present. However, try to ensure that a colleague is within earshot, leaving the door ajar if necessary. In office hours, you may wish to request a Mental Health First Aider attends to provide support.
- Allow the student time to express their views, listen patiently and allow the student personal space
- If the student decides to leave, do not attempt to stop them, but do offer to accompany them
- If someone is hurt, there is evidence that the student has taken an overdose or if someone appears to pose a significant threat of violence, telephone the emergency services. See the Student Death, Serious Injury or Serious Illness procedure for further guidance.

If possible telephone:

- Main Reception to let them know in order to direct the emergency services upon arrival

(Bournemouth Campus: +44 (0)1202 436 200, London Campus: + 44 (0)20 7407 0222)

- Student Services (+44 (0)1202 436359 during office hours)
- Security (outside office hours), Bournemouth 07841 022368, London TBC.

Once the emergency situation is resolved, alert your line manager and ensure the Head of Student Services and Wellbeing is aware of the situation.

5.2 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.

5.3 The Head of Student and Wellbeing Services or the Wellbeing Services Manager will arrange to meet the student with a member of the course team and conduct a risk assessment to identify formally the level of risk to the student and / or others. The aim of the risk assessment is to consider whether continued study may put the student and / or others at unacceptable risk or exacerbate the student's difficulties. In addition to the student's course-related activities, their level of engagement with their studies and the quality of social interactions, consideration will also be given to the student's domestic situation. For apprentices, their employer must be informed and where the student holds part time positions in the University, the Head of People and Development.

5.4 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. If the risk assessment highlights an unacceptable level of risk, the Head of Student Services or Student Services and Wellbeing Manager will call an urgent case conference. Attendees will include the Head of Student Services or Student Wellbeing Services Manager, the Course Leader, the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) and other staff as necessary and appropriate to consider the case (e.g. unit leaders, 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 staff member, another student, friend, family member or representative. There may be some occasions where it is appropriate to hold the case conference without the student in attendance.

5.5 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.

5.6 If there are concerns regarding the safety of the student, referral to external agencies will be considered.

5.7 The Head of Student Services or Student Wellbeing Services Manager will confirm that the student's presence at HSU 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 University 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.

5.8 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.

- 5.9 The decision of the case conference will be communicated to the student in writing (normally within 5 working days of the conference).
- 5.10 If it is deemed appropriate that the student should be suspended from studies then the student will also be informed in writing of the general procedure for return to study below and any arrangements specific to their case.

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Policy Owner	Head of Student and Wellbeing Services
Reference/ source	
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.