



# Support for Study Policy

## Purpose of Policy

The Support for Study Policy outlines the University's approach to supporting students who may be struggling with their studies due to health issues.

## Overview

The University of Edinburgh welcomes a diverse student body and aims to support all students throughout their studies. This includes students who have temporary or long-term physical or mental health conditions which may have an adverse impact on their ability to study.

The University takes seriously its duty of care to all members of the University community. This policy and procedures are to be followed by staff where the behaviour of a student is giving cause for concern, and where it is believed this may be caused by a mental health problem. The Support for Study Policy applies to all students and to all aspects of University life.

Occasionally, physical or mental ill-health and/or a disability may lead to a student behaving in a way which has an adverse impact on the student or on others. This policy is intended to provide an effective framework to support students in cases where such circumstances are having an adverse impact on an individual student's studies, or are impacting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of others.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy applies to all students of the University and is used by staff to handle cases where students need additional support due to health issues. Specific roles are outlined for Support for Study panels in each College.

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## Document control

Dates	Approved: 23.4.15	Starts: 1.8.15	Equality impact assessment: 3.6.15	Amendments: 11.09.2015	Next Review: 2018/19
Approving authority	Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee				
Consultation undertaken	The policy was developed on behalf of the Mental Health Strategy Group and had widespread consultation within the University and Edinburgh University Students' Association, including Student Disability and Student Counselling Services.				
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Code of Student Conduct: <a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline">http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline</a>				
UK Quality Code	n/a				
Policies superseded by this policy	n/a				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
Keywords	Student support, support for study, fitness for study, fit to study				



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## 1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The University of Edinburgh welcomes a diverse student body and aims to support all students throughout their studies. This includes students who have temporary or long-term physical or mental conditions which may have an adverse impact on their ability to study. Students who are aware of such conditions are encouraged to seek support at an early stage – through the Student Disability Service, Student Counselling, Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team, or Edinburgh University Students Association - Advice Place; a list of support agencies is available in the Guide for Staff on Helping Distressed Students <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/help-distressed-students> .
- 1.2 The University takes seriously its duty of care to all members of the University community. This policy and procedures are to be followed by staff where the behaviour of a student is giving cause for concern, and where it is believed this may be caused by a health problem. The Support for Study Policy applies to all students and to all aspects of University life.
- 1.3 Occasionally, physical or mental ill-health and/or a disability may lead to a student behaving in a way which has an adverse impact on the student or on others. This policy is intended to provide an effective framework to support students in cases where such circumstances are having an adverse impact on an individual student's studies, or are impacting on the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of others.
- 1.4 Students are responsible for the management of their own wellbeing wherever possible, and the aim of staff throughout is to support the student in a collaborative manner. However, where a student is unable or unwilling to cooperate in the management of their wellbeing, this policy makes provision for proceeding without input from the student.

## 2 OPERATION OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 There are two stages to the policy, which are described below. It is possible for a case to start at either stage of the policy; it is not necessary to work sequentially through Stages 1 and 2.
- 2.2 Use of the Support for Study Policy should be considered in the following range of circumstances:
  - The student raises concerns about their wellbeing and the impact this is having on their studies
  - A third party raises concerns about the student's wellbeing or behaviour and its impact. The third party (who may be academic staff, another student, housemate, support staff – the list is not exhaustive) believes the underlying cause is ill health or disability
  - A student's behaviour is impacting adversely on the health, safety or wellbeing of other students and/or staff and it is thought this behaviour may stem from ill-health or disability



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- Unacceptable behaviour which would normally be regarded as a disciplinary matter is considered to be due to an underlying health issue or disability.

## 3 INTERACTION WITH OTHER POLICIES

3.1 The Support for Study policy is designed to be a supportive way of assisting the small number of students whose behaviour gives cause for concern. It offers an alternative to disciplinary action when a student's behaviour may be affected by health conditions or disabilities. However, the University has a duty to ensure that members of the University community are not subjected to unacceptable behaviour and therefore any allegations of inappropriate behaviour may still be investigated and action taken under the Code of Student Conduct.

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline>

3.2 Student conduct may also be considered at the same time but separately as part of professional Fitness to Practise policies

3.3 Any case which is considered under the Support for Study Policy but which cannot be resolved through the policy is likely to be referred for action under the Code of Student Conduct. Similarly, where urgent concerns arise, a case may be referred for immediate action under the Code of Student Conduct.

## 4. EMERGENCIES

4.1 Where a student's behaviour presents an immediate risk to themselves or others, the Emergency Services should be contacted by dialling 999. For matters arising on University premises, University Security should also be alerted by dialling 650 2222.

4.2 Urgent concerns should be raised with the University Secretary or one of the Deputy Secretaries with a view to immediate suspension under the Code of Student Conduct.

4.3 Further information on handling emergencies is available online.

<http://www.health-service.ed.ac.uk/out-of-hours-58661-htm>

[www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy/support/emergencies](http://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy/support/emergencies)

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/help-distressed-students](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/help-distressed-students)

## 5 SUPPORT FOR STUDY STAGE 1 – EMERGING CONCERNS

5.1 When initial or moderate concerns arise about a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour and the impact this is having on their academic engagement or on staff or other students, these should be dealt with locally by the appropriate member of staff. This will usually be the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team, who may wish to discuss the issues with the Senior Tutor or other appropriate staff member. In some cases, concerns will arise in residential accommodation, and should be dealt with by the warden, ResLife team or others as appropriate, who may discuss the issue with the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team.



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- 5.2 The concerns should then be discussed with the student in an informal and supportive manner. The student should be given the opportunity to explain their perception of the matter. Possible outcomes from such a discussion might include:
- No follow-up action necessary
  - Referral to appropriate support service – e.g. Health Service, Student Counselling, Student Disability Service, etc.
  - Application for an appropriate concession – e.g. interruption of studies or a transfer to part-time study
  - An agreement about changes to behaviour, with a review period agreed, and a review undertaken by the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team
  - An agreement about a review period/further discussion undertaken by the student's Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team.
- 5.3 Where an interruption of studies is under consideration, the student should be referred to the Advice Place for advice on funding arrangements and any other relevant issues, and/or to the International office where immigration issues are relevant.
- 5.4 In the majority of cases, Support for Study Stage 1 should be adequate to enable the student to re-engage appropriately with their studies and the University community. The staff member responsible for handling the case at Support for Study Stage 1 is responsible for keeping appropriate notes on the student's record. If the student is unable or unwilling to discuss the concerns at Support for Study Stage 1, the case should be referred to Stage 2 for consideration.
- 6 SUPPORT FOR STUDY STAGE 2 – ONGOING, REPEATED OR MORE SERIOUS CONCERNS**
- 6.1 Where actions taken under Support for Study Stage 1 do not resolve the issue (or where concerns are more acute and/or reappear at a later date), the case should be referred to the Support for Study Panel in the student's College. Cases may also be referred to this Panel under the Code of Student Conduct by Conduct Investigators or Discipline Officers investigating allegations of misconduct. Each Support for Study Panel comprises two members of staff from the College, one of whom will normally be the Dean of Students, who will chair the Panel, and a member of staff from the Student Counselling Service or the Student Disability Service (depending on the situation). College Panels consider cases relating to students studying in that College, whether the issues are academic-based or are related to non-academic activities (e.g. concerns about behaviour in halls of residence).
- 6.2 The Panel will review the concerns reported, and will then seek to meet with the student. The student is entitled to be accompanied at any meeting by their Students' Association adviser, a fellow student or a member of staff. Other members of staff may be invited to attend, for example a member of staff from Residence Life if the student is in University accommodation.
- 6.3 If the student is unable or unwilling to attend such a meeting, the Panel may proceed in the absence of the student.



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- 6.4 The College Support for Study Panel will discuss the issues with the student in a supportive manner. The student should be given the opportunity to explain their perception of the matter. Possible outcomes from such a meeting may include:
- No follow-up action necessary
  - Referral to appropriate support service – e.g. Health Service, Student Counselling Service, Student Disability Service, etc.
  - Application for an appropriate concession – e.g. interruption of studies or a transfer to part-time study
  - Adopting a case management approach coordinated by a member of staff from the appropriate professional service
  - A written agreement about necessary changes to behaviour, with a review period agreed
  - A record of likely consequences of any continuation of concerns, which may include referral to the Head of School for action under the Code of Student Conduct
  - Where the student's behaviour appears to be in breach of the Code of Student Conduct, the Convenor of the College Panel should refer the case to the relevant Head of School for action under the Code.
- 6.5 If the student is unwilling or unable to attend the meeting of the Panel, they may be represented at the meeting by their Students' Association adviser (if they have one) or another member of the University community. Whether represented or not, a written report of the findings of the Panel will be sent to the student after the meeting.
- 6.6 Where an interruption of studies is under consideration, the student should be referred to the Advice Place for advice on funding arrangements and any other relevant issues, and/or to the International office where immigration issues are relevant.

### **7 STUDENTS DETAINED UNDER THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT**

- 7.1 For any student who is detained ('sectioned') under the Mental Health Act 1983 and who is therefore unable to interact with the University in the management of their wellbeing, an appropriate interruption of studies will be put in place. Prior to the student's return to study, and in order to ensure appropriate support is in place, the case will be considered under Support for Study Stage 2, where further evidence may be sought regarding the student's fitness to return to study.

### **8 RETURN TO STUDY**

- 8.1 Successful return to study is the aim after any period of interruption of studies. When a student's studies have been interrupted under this policy, a review period should be set at the time of the interruption. The review period for interruption should ideally be agreed with the student, and should take into account:
- The student's health and any medical prognosis
  - The support in place for the student, such as counselling or ongoing medical treatment
  - The phasing of the student's studies (e.g. the need to interrupt for a full semester to ensure readmission at an appropriate point academically)
  - The regulations for the degree/programme of study, e.g. limitations on the total period of interruption permitted



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- The implications of an interruption on any placement arrangements or professional qualification linked to the programme of study
- The implications of an interruption on any external funding arrangements and/or immigration status

8.2 Following any interruption of study on medical grounds, the student will be required to provide evidence from relevant professionals, such as confirmation that the student has engaged with counselling or has taken appropriate medical advice to ensure that the behaviour which caused the referral under this policy has been addressed. This evidence may be assessed by the University's Occupational Health professionals, or may include referral of the student to Occupational Health for assessment. Such an assessment may lead to a recommendation of return to study, or a recommendation that a further interruption is put in place, subject to the regulations etc. above. The recommendation must be sent to the Chair of the College Support for Study Panel, who will arrange for consideration of the case by the Panel. The Panel may consider such cases electronically, and will notify their decision to the student and the Personal Tutor/Supervisor/Student Support Team.

## **9 MONITORING AFTER RETURN**

9.1 Once a student has returned to study, the Personal Tutor/Supervisor will be responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of the student for a period of up to six months, and if any concerns re-emerge, must raise these promptly with the student. A re-referral for consideration under the Support for Study Policy may be appropriate in such cases.

## **10 REPORTING AND RECORDING**

10.1 The Secretary of each College Support for Study Panel keeps a record of Support for Study cases and reports annually to the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee on case numbers and outcomes. Details of concerns logged at both stages of the policy are held as confidential notes on the student's record. Concessions, such as interruption of studies, are recorded on the student's record in the normal way.

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