

Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure

Approved by Senate on 14 June 2017

Date in force: 14 June 2017

Version: 2-01

Originator: Director of Student Services

Summary/ Description:

This policy and procedure is intended to enable the University to meet its responsibility to exercise its duty of care to those students who may not be in a position to be supported through the normal regulatory framework, and who may be a risk to either themselves or others.

This document is available in alternative formats from the Governance team

Policy

1. Definition of Fitness to Study

The University of Hull is committed, through its focus on the student experience, to the enhancement of learning and academic performance, and takes a proactive approach to the management of physical, emotional and mental health in support of student wellbeing.

There are occasions where an individual student may experience problems or situations which extend beyond the scope and remit of standard support mechanisms and academic regulations, requires an alternative means of support and/or problem resolution. This may include circumstances whereby a student is judged, on substantial evidence, to be unfit to study by reason of posing a risk to him/herself or others. The Fitness to Study policy and procedure provides a mechanism to enable the University to fulfil its duty of care and responsibility.

This policy sets out principles, in line with the University's Strategic Plan, to guide decisions and actions in these cases that will help the University provide an atmosphere which is conducive to academic achievement and the social wellbeing of its whole community and those who come into contact with the University and its student population. The University defines Fitness to Study as:

“The capacity of an individual to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student on a University of Hull programme or module, in relation to academic studies and more broadly as an engaged member of the University of Hull community.”

2. Ownership and Purpose of the policy

The policy and procedure apply to all students and constitute an alternative means of dealing with serious issues affecting academic performance and participation; as such the Executive Owner is the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education). In addition, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) has responsibility for academic performance and participation of PGR students, and will be jointly responsible for Stage 2 or 3 suspension decisions for those student cases.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- a. Provide an appropriate means by which a concern about fitness to study may be raised, either by the student concerned or by a 3rd party.
- b. Provide an appropriate and co-ordinated response by academic and professional services staff in circumstances related to an individual student where other internal procedures are not considered to be appropriate and/or a serious safeguarding issue exists.
- c. Provide a clear, understandable, timely and supportive process for the individual about whom fitness to study concerns have been raised.
- d. Provide a consistent, sensitive and non-judgemental approach to managing difficult situations that are beyond the scope of other sets of regulations, and which may require varying levels of action depending upon the level of concern and/or seriousness of the circumstances.
- e. Provide a mechanism to encourage early and active collaboration across all staff involved in managing situations where there is a fitness to study concern, and facilitate the use of appropriate case management tools in support of the process.

3. Scope of the policy

This policy provides a mechanism to enable those problems deemed to be outside the scope of other sets of regulations, such as the Disciplinary Procedure, to be managed.

Fitness to practice as required by some professional programmes, for example in Education, Medicine and Health and Social Care, (i.e. programmes leading to professional regulation and registration) have Fitness to Practice procedures that are specific to their practitioner discipline, and therefore operate outside the scope of this policy.

4. When to use this Policy

There are a wide range of circumstances that may result in a cause for concern being raised about an individual student’s fitness to study. They fall into 6 broad categories and a student case may cover a number of these categories:

These are:

- a. Conduct – unacceptable and/or criminal behaviour
- b. Health – physical/mental
- c. Institutional Duty of Care / safeguarding
- d. Attendance and engagement

- e. Compliance monitoring: Visa's, right to study
- f. In-programme continuation/Practitioner requirements

Examples of situations / circumstances that may be raised as a cause for concern include the following (***but the list is not restricted to these***) and depending upon the situation/circumstances, may need to be backed up by further investigation to obtain evidence:

- Concerns raised by concerned other(s) e.g. a friend, housemate, other student(s), services or academic staff, medical professional either whilst the student is at university or whilst engaged in university-led extra-curricular activities such as field trips & placements.
- The student has told a member of staff that they have concerns about their own fitness to study.
- Academic staff have noticed a rapid deterioration in academic performance and have concerns about underlying and more serious problems.
- Monitoring of attendance has highlighted very poor engagement with timetabled activities and may coincide with failure to submit a number of assessments and/or an unusually high number of Mitigating Circumstances applications.
- The student's academic performance or personal conduct is not acceptable and evidence suggests this to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem; this may include symptoms such as a noticeable change in mood / disposition, poor personal hygiene, social withdrawal, emotional distress, signs of self-harming.
- The student has been convicted of a criminal act outside the University that includes offences related to drugs and violence. (This aspect will also need to be flagged up to CCRA Panel).
- The student engages in behaviour that would normally be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, but which is suspected/known to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem. There may be concerns about risk to both the individual and to others s/he comes into contact with.
- The student has exhibited behaviour(s) of a level of seriousness such that s/he may be a risk to others.
- Increased self-declared sickness episodes which have continued beyond informal support mechanism (AST)

Procedure

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they are fit to study and the University provides a range of services and facilities to support students in this. There may be situations whereby either the student themselves or a 3rd party has concerns that this may not be the case. (i.e. an individual is fit to study). In such situations, the University can invoke the Fitness to Study Policy, and take action through the Fitness to Study Procedure.

These are rare but difficult situations to deal with, each is highly individual and must be dealt with on a case by case basis. This procedure will be invoked from a supportive, rather than disciplinary perspective, whilst also offering a formal route to deal with high risk situations.

Concerns should be notified to the academic Head of the student's School and the Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (Academic Liaison(AL)). The decision to invoke the procedure and the appropriate stage will be made after discussion of the issue and consideration of supporting evidence between the Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (AL) and the Head of School. They will confirm whether there is sufficient evidence to do so, identify the appropriate way to approach the student, and also eliminate a course of action through other possible policies and procedures.

The procedure comprises 3 stages of action, which can be entered at any stage depending upon the perceived seriousness of the individual circumstances and the situation that has prompted the concerns raised.

The underlying principle is that, causes for concern about fitness to study are dealt with at the earliest possible point after being raised, and wherever possible remedied by action at stages 1 or 2.

Stage 1 – Informal Stage

If the academic Head of the student's School and the Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (AL) determine that Stage 1 is appropriate then the Head of School will arrange for a member of staff from the school to raise the concerns with the student and invite them in for an informal meeting/discussion.

This would normally be a member of staff with knowledge of the student concerned, such as an Academic Support Tutor. If the staff member has limited experience in dealing with this sort of situation, a member of Student Services / Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support will provide advice/guidance on how to approach the student and discuss difficult issues. In exceptional circumstances a member of Student Wellbeing Learning & Welfare Support staff may be invited to attend the meeting.

This meeting is intended to be informal and supportive in nature and to encourage open discussion. It should be held as soon as is practicable and be a fact-finding and non-confrontational discussion of the possible issues or problems.

Conduct of the meeting

The student should be reassured the meeting was necessary as part of the University's duty of care to its students, and is intended to be supportive. They will be made aware of

the policy and procedure, and have the Stage and its intent explained to them including the precise nature of the behaviour that has caused the concern, with examples where appropriate.

The student should be encouraged to explain their views on the matter and to provide as much background as they are comfortable with discussing.

The member of staff will explain the impact on the student and others and, where appropriate, offer appropriate supportive outcomes and in particular, encourage use of one or more of the support services provided by the University.

The nature of the discussion will determine possible outcomes. Examples may include that the student is advised to:

- Access specific service(s) within Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support, or their GP or another external service, for instance to seek specific/specialised advice on matters that may be worrying them.
- Take some form of remediation action with regard to problems around academic performance e.g. submit a Mitigating Circumstances request to cover under-performance.
- Work on time management and academic skills development to improve academic performance such as completion of required assessments.
- Attend classes, increase engagement with studies and submit drafts for feedback, attend tutorials, etc.
- Avoid certain areas or people for a period of time where there have been interpersonal problems. Mediation may be appropriate in some circumstances.

Outcomes of the meeting

It is anticipated that most cases can be resolved informally at this stage, with the student engaging with the process and accessing the support available through academic and professional services.

Notes of the meeting should be made, including any plans agreed between the staff member and the student, with a copy setting out the plans agreed sent to the student for the purposes of clarity.

The member of staff will arrange to meet with the student to review the situation in an agreed time period, normally of not more than one month.

If the concerns about a student's fitness to study have been significantly reduced and/or eliminated, no further action is required.

In some circumstances it may be necessary/appropriate to extend the review period by mutual agreement and in which case an appropriate number of additional meeting(s) will be agreed.

The notes on the informal stage will be attached to the student record, and if the outcome is judged to be successful, the Stage will be signed off jointly by the Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (AL) and the Head of School.

If informal intervention is unsuccessful, either at the initial or review meetings, or the case is deemed too serious to be addressed informally, Stage 2 of the procedure may be invoked. If concerns arise at a later time, Stage 2 of the procedure may be invoked.

Stage 2 – Case Review: Formal Intervention

If action taken under Stage 1 has not been successful or if the concerns raised are too serious to be dealt with informally, Stage 2 is invoked. This is a formal review undertaken by a Case Review Panel and based on the evidence made available / submitted to the Panel. A standard Risk Assessment, (available through Student Services) and must be completed by staff in Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support, in partnership with the staff member/team raising the issue prior to the Panel being convened. The University Safeguarding Officer will coordinate its completion under the direction of the Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (AL).

A Case Review Panel will be convened by the Faculty Business Manager (or their delegate) from the student's faculty, and will constitute the provision a formal meeting with the student. The Faculty Manager or their delegate acts as clerk to the Panel, usually made up of the following:

- A representative of the School, normally HoS or their delegate
- Faculty representative: Associate Dean Education or Student Experience.
- A representative / representatives from appropriate specialist services team e.g. Registry Services, International support, Welfare, Safeguarding, Accommodation, 'ResLife' team or any other deemed relevant.
- The Director of Student Services or Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning & Welfare Support (Academic Liaison) will chair the panel.

The Panel may call a witness / witnesses if it sees fit.

The student will be given written notice of the meeting, normally, 10 working days, and the letter will inform them of the purpose of the meeting and may request additional/necessary documentation. The student will be encouraged to provide detailed information, including relevant documents and medical evidence, ideally provided by their GP or medical practitioner. The student will be provided copies of any documents seen by the Panel and an electronic copy of the policy.

The student may request to attend all or part of the Case Review Panel Meeting, and the Panel Chair will make a reasoned decision regarding whether the student should attend. If the student does attend they have the right to be accompanied by a friend or representative.

The meeting will normally proceed and the panel consider the case even if the student does not attend as agreed, engage in the process, or not provide requested evidence.

The outcomes available to the Panel are:

- That no further action is required; in which case the notes on Stage 2 will be attached to the student record, and will be signed off jointly by the Chair/Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (AL) and the Head of School.
- To monitor the student formally for a specified period of time. An action plan will be agreed with the student detailing any steps the student needs to take and the support to be provided by the University. Regular review meetings will be arranged with a nominated member of staff, and the student made aware of what the possible outcome will be should the action plan be breached. This will normally involve their case escalating to Stage 3, as will a refusal to engage with the action plan.

- To recommend a specific academic arrangement be put in place that is agreed between the Faculty, School and the student. The arrangement may include a suspension of studies. If the student does not agree to the recommended course of action, the case will move to Stage 3.
- To refer the case directly to Stage 3 - This will be appropriate in serious cases such as where there are safeguarding issues and the student is considered to be at risk, or a risk to others in the University community.

All documentation appertaining to the meeting (i.e. notes of agreed action plan) will normally be sent to the student within 5 working days of the meeting. The student should be asked to agree to the Action Plan by signing and returning one copy to the HoS or their delegate. A copy of the documentation will also be held on the student's record.

Stage 3 – Fitness to Study Panel

Level 3 of the Fitness to Study procedure should be initiated when a student fails to address concerns about their fitness to study from Stage 2, or where the circumstances presented are particularly detrimental/serious, questioning the student's ability to study successfully, and/or there is evidence of risk to the student and/or others. Any case that is progressing from stage 2 to 3 will require the Stage 2 Risk Assessment to be updated in conjunction with Student Wellbeing, Learning & Welfare Support prior to the Panel convening. This updated risk assessment must be forwarded to the Director of Student Services for consideration and agreement or otherwise.

If deemed appropriate the Director of Student Services will convene a Fitness to Study Panel, with a clerk appointed from the University Registrar's Directorate / Solicitor's Office. The Panel will be chaired by the DSS (or their delegate) and consist of representatives from the following areas, and/or other as appropriate, depending on the issues that are being considered:

- A representative of the School, normally HoS or delegate.
- Faculty representative: Associate Dean Education or Student Experience.
- Director of Student Services.
- The Head of Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (AL) or their delegate.
- An independent member of staff who has not been involved in Stages 1 or 2 of the procedure (preferably from another school or faculty).
- A representative / representatives from appropriate specialist services team e.g. Registry Services, International support, Welfare, Safeguarding, Accommodation, 'ResLife' team or any other deemed relevant.

The Panel may call a witness / witnesses if it sees fit.

The purpose of the Panel is to review the student's case notes including any further requested by the panel and agree appropriate actions.

The student will be given written notice of the meeting. Normally, 10 working days will be given and the letter will inform the student of the purpose of the meeting and request any necessary documentation, if not previously provided a copy of the policy will be included.

As with the Case Review, the student will be given the opportunity to provide detailed information, including further medical evidence.

The student may request to attend all or part of the Fitness to Study Panel Meeting, and the Chair of the panel will make a reasoned decision regarding whether the student should attend. If the student does attend they have the right to be accompanied by a friend or representative. Documentation sent to the student and the Panel in advance of the meeting should include:

- Details of the case including all evidence, the timeline and any previously agreed Action Plans.
- A copy of the Fitness to Study Procedure.
- Any medical or other evidence provided by the student.

The Fitness to Study Panel meeting will normally proceed and the panel consider the case even if the student does not attend as agreed, engage in the process, or not provide requested evidence. The meeting may also proceed if an invited attendee is unable to attend.

The Panel will make a recommendation to the PVC (Education) (or, in his/her absence, an alternate member of Executive to whom the PVC (Education) has delegated his authority).

Possible recommendations may be that:

- If the concerns about a student's fitness to study have been substantially reduced and/or eliminated, no further action is required.
- Subject to the student's consent and the agreement of the Faculty/School, it is necessary and appropriate to adjust the hours of study; this will be negotiated between the student and the school. (The Head of School should make the student aware of any academic and financial support implications of this action).
- Without the student's consent, it is necessary and appropriate to suspend the student's studies for an period of no more than 4 weeks to allow the student to undergo assessment by a medical professional, to access support services within or external to the University, or for the University to obtain further information and / or evidence. The student should be informed in writing of the suspension and any conditions attached to it such as prohibitions on activities or access to specified parts of the University estate.
- Without the student's consent, it is necessary and appropriate to exclude the student from all or part of the University estate and/or its services, for a short initial period of no more than 4 weeks to allow the student to undergo assessment by a medical professional, to access support services external to the University, or for the University to obtain further information and / or evidence. The student should be informed in writing of the exclusion, the reasons for it and any conditions attached to it.
- A further suspension or exclusion of up to a year is necessary and appropriate, with or without the student's consent, to allow the student to resolve areas of concern.
- This should be reviewed at the end of the 4-week period to decide on any further course of action.
- If the Stage3 formal intervention and or requirements are unsuccessful, with or without the student's consent, it is necessary to terminate the student's studies at the University. This recommendation should only be made in the most serious cases, taking into account the nature of the case, any medical evidence and the individual's circumstances. Such a recommendation should be on the grounds that either there is no reasonable prospect of the student re-engaging with their programme of study in the mid to long-term, (for

example due to significant health issue), or that safeguarding issues are such that they are a continued risk to themselves and/or others.

- Any other action considered to be proportionate and appropriate be applied.
- This may include review by the UoH Occupational Health Service at request of the panel.

Where it has been agreed to terminate a student's studies at the University or impose an interruption of studies (suspension), Registry Services will ensure that this is recorded on the student's central record. This should also be held on record by the academic school.

In the event of termination the student will be entitled to the credits or award gained to date.

Stage 3 – Exceptional referral for temporary suspension

Where there is a risk to the student or the University that is considered to be very high, an immediate temporary suspension to studies or exclusion from all or part of the University estate and/or its services may be the most appropriate course of action. In such cases the matter should be referred straight to the PVC (Education) (or, in his/her absence, to an alternate member of Executive to whom the PVC (Education) has delegated his/her authority), who may impose a temporary suspension or temporary exclusion on the student, with a review within 4 weeks.

If the student concerned is a Postgraduate Research student, the PVC (Research) will be jointly responsible for the decision.

The student will be notified in writing of the decision and terms of the suspension or exclusion. The terms of the suspension or exclusion will be specific to the individual case, and may have qualifications attached such as permission to attend a specific event for example attend an examination, or meet with specified University support services or Student Union Advice Service.

A Review Panel, where possible should be convened to review the circumstances leading to the temporary suspension or exclusion, which may result in one of a number of recommendations, including to extend the terms to a further period of suspension, to extend the period of exclusion, to terminate the student's Programme of Study, to invoke a Fitness to Study Panel to consider the case, or other action considered appropriate and proportionate.

Fitness to Study Procedure - Right of Appeal

A student will have a right to appeal a Stage 2 or 3 'Fitness to Study' outcome.

The Fitness to Study Appeal must be lodged within 10 working days of the decision being made. The request for appeal should be made in writing to the Secretary of the Student Progress Committee. The request for appeal of a Fitness to Study outcome must specify the grounds of appeal, and must be accompanied by supporting documentation which reflects one or more of the following:

- That fresh material evidence is available, which was not available on reasonable enquiry or application at the time of the original meeting.
- Procedural irregularity.
- Bias or prejudice.

- That the decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

On receipt of the statement of appeal and supporting evidence, the Secretary shall record the date of receipt and check that the appeal meets the criteria and that evidence has been attached. If evidence has not been attached the student will be contacted and given five working days to submit. The appeal will then be forwarded to the Senior Tutor responsible for the school in which the student was registered at the time of the recommendation or decision. The Senior Tutor is a member of Student Progress Committee, and is an academic member of staff who is external to the school concerned and who, as a neutral member of staff, deals with appeals and complaints from students in that department.

If the appeal is rejected at this initial stage then the Secretary will write to the student confirming this to issue a Completion of Procedures letter. It would be open to the student to submit a fresh application.

If the request for appeal is accepted, the full University of Hull Fitness to Study Appeal Procedure will be invoked.

Return to study

The Fitness to Study Panel (Stages 2, 3) or Review Panel (Stage 3 Exceptional referral) that made the recommendation regarding suspension or exclusion will reconvene, with as many of the original panel members as are available, to consider whether the student is fit to resume studies.

In all cases the student will be required to provide appropriate evidence, such as medical evidence from a GP or other medical practitioner, of fitness to resume his/her studies, this may include follow up review by Occupational Health Services. An updated risk assessment should be completed in conjunction with Student Services, and submitted to the relevant Panel.

Stage 2 Suspension: If the decision made at Stage 2 was suspension, the decision about return to study can be made by the Case Review Panel and does not require referral to the PVC (Education).

Stage 3 Suspension / exclusion: If under Stage 3 the PVC (Education) (or, in his/her absence, an alternate Executive member) made the decision to suspend or exclude on the recommendation of either the Fitness to Study or the Review Panel, the Panel should reconvene to consider whether the student is fit to return to studies, and make a recommendation to the PVC (Education). The PVC will make the final decision based on that recommendation. If the PVC (Education) is absent the recommendation should be made to an alternate member of Executive to whom the PVC (Education) has delegated his/her authority), who will make the final decision.

Where the student concerned is a postgraduate research student, both the original and final decisions to suspend will be made jointly with the PVC (Research and Enterprise).

Requirements for return to study

The Panel agreeing or making the recommendation in support of the student's return to studies after a period of suspension or exclusion is agreed, should identify the key elements

for a return to study action plan that the student will be required to engage in to support that return. The academic School has responsibility for the student but will be supported by Student Services as required.

The plan will be time limited with a formal review point, and draw on support related to both academic studies and wellbeing, learning and welfare support; it may include review meetings, specific academic and/or study skills activities, referral to specific support staff or any other relevant support. Should the return be unsuccessful the Fitness to Study policy will be re-applied, with entry at any stage depending on the situation. A series of template documents have been developed to support the process and are attached as appendices.

Appendix A

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Re: Panel to be convened for the Stage 3 Fitness to Study Case, student xxx xxxxx
{student number xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx}

As a consequence of the seriousness of the concerns outlined in the attached documentation in respect of student xxx xxxxx above, it has been deemed necessary to proceed to Stage 3 of the fitness to study procedure. This stage of the procedure is initiated when a student fails to address concerns about their fitness to study from Stage 2, or where the circumstances presented are particularly serious for the student's fitness to study successfully, and/or there is evidence of risk to the student or others, and in this instance has been deemed necessary in respect of xxxxxxxxx.

A panel has been convened for XXX at XXX where his/her case will be discussed and recommendations made with regard to his/her current status as a student of the University. In line with guidelines in the procedure as to representation on the panel, you have been identified as an appropriate member of the panel. I have attached a copy of the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure for your information.

I would be grateful if you could confirm whether you will be able to act as a panel member or otherwise as soon as possible. The provisional arrangements are as follows:

Panel date:

Meeting time/duration:

Location:

If you have any questions about the case and / or the Panel meeting, please contact me or, in my absence, John Watson, Head of Student Support (academic liaison).

Kind Regards

Dr Angela Gardiner
Director of Student Services
University of Hull

Appendix B



**Fitness to Study policy:
Template Documentation for use by Faculty's and academic departments.**

Document	
1.	Timeline of events
Stage 1	
2.	Invitation for student to attend fitness to study (FTS) meeting (Stage 1)
3.	Confirmation of action agreed at FTS meeting (Stage 1)
4.	Outcome letter to student following 1 month review (no further action) (Stage 1)
5.	Outcome letter to student following 1 month review (further action required) (Stage 1)
Stage 2	
6.	Invitation for student to attend fitness to study (FTS) meeting (Stage 2)
7.	Confirmation of action agreed at FTS meeting (Stage 2)
8.	Outcome letter to student following 1 month review (no further action) (Stage 2)
9.	Outcome letter to student following 1 month review (further action required) (Stage 2)
Stage 3	
10.	Informing student of stage 3 fitness to study panel meeting being convened
11.	Memorandum to director of student services – level 3 intervention required
11.	Letter informing student of temporary suspension under FTS (Stage 3)
12.	Letter to student informing of the outcome of FTS panel meeting (Stage 3)
13.	Letter to the Academic registry informing of the outcome of the FTS panel meeting (Stage 3)

Document 1. TIMELINE OF EVENTS – FITNESS TO STUDY

Student name	
Student number	
Programme of study	

DATE	TRANSACTION	COMMENTS
Eg 1/3/15	Module leader reports concerns about student to senior tutor	XXX displayed erratic behaviour in seminar, module leader was very worried – some general advice sought from SWLWS
5/3/15	Letter 1 sent	XXX invited to meeting with personal tutor on 10/3/15

Document 2. INVITATION FOR STUDENT TO ATTEND FITNESS TO STUDY MEETING (STAGE 1 ACTION)

Can be sent by email.

Dear XXXXX

As your personal tutor/ supervisor/ Senior Tutor for the XX programme, I am contacting you to arrange a meeting to discuss concerns about your current fitness to study.

Outline the main concerns:

Examples:

It has been noted that

- you have not attended lectures since.....
- you have submitted a number of extn / mit circs requests forms this semester
- there have been a number of concerns about your health and wellbeing since the start of the stage

(for further details about what may constitute concerns about a student's fitness to study, please refer to the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure. Be as specific as you can so that the student understands what issues are likely to be discussed. However, avoid becoming accusatory.)

I would like to discuss these concerns with you and consider whether there is anything that the University is able to do to help you. An appointment has been scheduled for you at XXX on XXX in XXX. You may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter. Please report to XXX upon arrival.

The purpose of this meeting will be to establish whether there is need for further supportive action under the University's *Fitness to Study Procedure (Stage 1)*. In accordance with this procedure, **further action may include, for example, an agreement that you seek advice from specialist services, or that you improve your attendance, or that you consider alternative modes of study. In some cases, it may be necessary to proceed to Level 2 or 3 of the Fitness to Study procedure.** Following the arranged meeting, I will write to you again to inform you of the decision of what, if any, further action is being taken.

I would like to highlight the seriousness of this matter and strongly advise you to make use of this opportunity for a meeting by attending at the scheduled time. If there is a good reason why you are unable to attend at this time, please contact me immediately. If you wish to submit a written statement, it would be helpful if this could be received in advance of the meeting.

If at any stage you would like to access support during this time, please come along to Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support. The team offer free, confidential support and appointments are not always necessary. To access the team please contact the AskHU desk on the 2nd floor of University house.

Should you have any questions or queries with regards to the Fitness to Study Process or anything else contained in this letter we are happy to address these and can be contacted via the Ask HU desk. I have enclosed an information leaflet detailing the contact information for the HUU advice centre and the Ask HU Team.

A copy of the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

3. CONFIRMATION OF ACTION AGREED AT MEETING (STAGE 1 ACTION)

Can be sent by email

Dear XXXXX

Thank you for meeting with me on XXXX.

I am writing to you to provide a brief written record of what was discussed at our meeting concerning your fitness to study.

We discussed:

Example: (this should be sufficiently detailed to act as the formal record of the Stage 1 meeting discussions, but does not need to be verbatim)

How your ill health during Semester One has affected your attendance. I reminded you of the student sickness procedures and the requirement of students to provide self-certification/ medical evidence when unwell. We also talked about your module selection and strategies that you might use to try to catch up. You talked about how you have been feeling stressed and lonely and that this has made it difficult for you to interact in seminars.

We agreed:

Example: (this is a record of the informal action plan – bullet points are used to make the agreed action points clear)

- That you would register with a local GP so that it will be easier for you to get medical help if you fall ill again whilst at University.
- You do not want to talk to a GP about low mood at this time but have agreed to access the University's Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support team for more advice first.
- You are going to submit a mit circs form for module XXX although you understand that the impact of the form will be limited as you do not have any formal evidence.
- You are going to make efforts to improve your attendance and have agreed to email me and the programme administrator whenever you miss a lecture, explaining the reasons for your absence.

A review meeting has been arranged for you at XXX on XXX in XXX (normally around one month after the initial meeting). As before, you may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter. Please report to XXX upon arrival.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure has been provided previously. An electronic copy is however available at; XXXXXXXX

Yours sincerely

4. OUTCOME LETTER TO STUDENT FOLLOWING 1 MONTH REVIEW – NO ACTION (STAGE 1 ACTION)

Can be sent by email.

Dear XXXXX

Thank you for meeting with me on XXXX to further review your fitness to study.

I am writing to inform you that there will be no further action under the Fitness to Study procedures at this time. Following our meeting on XXXX and the review meeting on XXXX I am now satisfied that the concerns about your fitness to study have been significantly reduced / eliminated.

I have reached this decision because: *Summarise how the situation has improved. Review and sum up against the agreed action points following the initial meeting*

Example:

Your attendance has improved significantly and I have had no further reports from staff about erratic behaviour.

As agreed you have made contact with Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support and have provided evidence that you have registered with a local GP.

Please be aware that any future concerns about your fitness to study will also be considered in line with the University Fitness to Study procedure and that if concerns are particularly serious a higher level of the procedure may be invoked. It is advisable, therefore, to ensure that you keep the Department informed of any personal or medical issues that may affect your ability to attend University or submit assignments. Provide contact details for reporting concerns of F2S.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure has been provided previously. An electronic copy is however available at; XXXXXXXX

Yours sincerely

5. OUTCOME LETTER TO STUDENT FOLLOWING 1 MONTH REVIEW – FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED (STAGE 1 ACTION)

Should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email

Dear XXXXX

Following our meetings on XXX and XXX, I am writing to inform you that I continue to be concerned about your current fitness to study. Therefore, in accordance with the *Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure* the concerns about your fitness to study will be brought to the attention of the Head of School. The Head of Department (or nominee) will then invoke Stage 2 of the Fitness to Study Procedure. This is a formal level of intervention and is necessary because our meetings under Level 1 of the procedure have not successfully addressed the ongoing concerns.

You will receive a further letter from the Head of Department within the next few days. The first step of the Level 2 intervention is a formal meeting, which I may also be asked to attend.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure has been provided previously. An electronic copy is however available at; XXXXXXXX

Yours sincerely

6. INVITATION FOR STUDENT TO FORMAL FITNESS TO STUDY MEETING (STAGE 2 ACTION)

Should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email

Dear XXXXX

As / On behalf of the Head of Department of XXXX, I am writing to you regarding concerns about your current fitness to study.

Outline the main concerns – EXAMPLE:

It has been noted that

- you have not attended lectures since.....
- you have submitted a number of extn and / or mit circs requests this semester
- there have been a number of concerns about your health and wellbeing since the start of the stage

(for further details about what may constitute concerns about a student's fitness to study, please refer to the Fitness to Study Procedure, section 2.2. Be as specific as you can so that the student understands what issues are likely to be discussed. However, avoid becoming accusatory.)

- you have had meetings with your tutor under Stage 1 of the Fitness to Study procedure, but concerns about your fitness to study remain. (Include, unless intervention has commenced at Stage 2)

We would like to discuss these concerns with you and consider whether there is anything that the University is able to do to help you. A meeting has been arranged at XXX on XXX in XXX. You may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter. Please report to XXX upon arrival.

The purpose of this meeting will be to establish whether there is need for formal action under the University's *Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure (Stage 2)*. In accordance with this procedure, **formal action may include, for example, an agreed Action Plan, an agreement to adjust your mode of study or an agreement that you take a leave of absence. In some cases, it may be necessary to proceed to Level 3 of the Fitness to Study procedure.** Following the meeting, I will write to you again to inform you of the decision of what, if any, further action is being taken.

I would like to highlight the seriousness of this matter and strongly advise you to make use of this opportunity for a meeting by attending at the scheduled time. If there is a good reason why you are unable to attend at this time, please contact me immediately. If you wish to submit a written statement, it would be helpful if this could be received in advance of the meeting. Please also submit any relevant medical evidence.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure has been provided previously. An electronic copy is however available at; XXXXXXXX.

Yours sincerely

7. CONFIRMATION OF ACTION AGREED AT MEETING/ REVIEW MEETING (STAGE 2 ACTION)

Should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email – within 5 working days of the meeting.

Dear XXXXX

Thank you for attending the meeting held on XXX to discuss your fitness to study.

Enclosed/ Attached are a copy of the Minutes of the meeting and an Action Plan summarising what was agreed at the meeting. Please sign and return a copy of the Action Plan to XXX within the next 7 calendar days. If you disagree with any points of the Action Plan, please contact me immediately.

A further Fitness to Study review meeting has been arranged for you at XXX on XXX in XXX (normally around one month after the initial meeting). As before, you may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter. Please report to XXX upon arrival.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure has been provided previously. An electronic copy is however available at; XXXXXXXX.

Yours sincerely

NOTE: It is possible that there may be more than one review meeting. A similar letter to that above, along with a copy of the Minutes and agreed/ amended Action Plan, should be sent to the student following each meeting.

8. OUTCOME LETTER TO STUDENT FOLLOWING 1 MONTH REVIEW – NO FURTHER ACTION (STAGE 2 ACTION)

Should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email – within 5 working days of the meeting.

Dear XXXXX

Thank you for attending the Fitness to Study meeting/ review meeting held on XXX.

I am writing to inform you that there will be no further action under the Fitness to Study procedure at this time. Following our meeting on XXXX and the review meeting on XXXX I am now satisfied that the concerns about your fitness to study have been significantly reduced/ eliminated.

I have reached this decision because: *Summarise how the situation has improved. Review and sum up against the agreed Action Plan.*

Example:

Your attendance has improved significantly and I have had no further reports from staff about erratic behaviour.

As agreed you have made contact with Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support and have provided evidence that you have registered with a local GP.

You have provided recent medical evidence which confirms that you are fit to study, and have a strong support network around you.

Enclosed/ Attached is a copy of the Minutes of the meeting of XXX, for your information.

Please be aware that any future concerns about your fitness to study will also be considered in line with the University Fitness to Study procedure, and that if concerns are particularly serious a higher level of the procedure may be invoked. It is advisable, therefore, to ensure that you keep your Department informed of any personal or medical issues that may affect your ability to attend University or submit assignments.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure has been provided previously. An electronic copy is however available at; XXXXXXXX

Yours sincerely

9. OUTCOME LETTER TO STUDENT FOLLOWING 1 MONTH REVIEW – FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED (STAGE 2 ACTION)

Should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email – within 5 working days of the meeting.

Dear XXXXX

Following our meetings on XXX and XXX, I am writing to inform you that there continues to be significant concerns about your current fitness to study. Therefore, in accordance with the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure your case is being referred to the Director of Student Services for further action. The Director of Student Services will invoke Stage 3 of the Fitness to Study Procedure and a Fitness to Study Panel will be appointed. This is a more formal level of intervention and is deemed necessary as our meetings under Stage 1 / 2 of the procedure have not successfully addressed the ongoing concerns.

You will be offered the opportunity to attend the Fitness to Study Panel meeting as part of the Stage 3 intervention, which I may also be asked to attend.

Enclosed/ Attached is a copy of the Minutes of the meeting of XXX, for your information.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure has been provided previously. An electronic copy is however available at; XXXXXXXX.

Yours sincerely

10. INFORMING STUDENT OF STAGE 3 FITNESS TO STUDY PANEL MEETING BEING CONVENED

Should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email

Dear XXXXX

As Director of Student Services, I am writing to you regarding concerns about your current fitness to study.

Outline the main concerns – this must be reflective of the seriousness of the concerns and should be accompanied (where relevant) by any supporting documentation / evidence which has been provided as part of a timeline (a template is provided as per document 1 of the template documentation) and any other relevant documents by staff who have been involved with the student and can provide further insight into the situation.

(for further details about what may constitute concerns about a student's fitness to study, please refer to the Fitness to Study Policy. Be as specific as you can so that the student understands what issues are likely to be discussed. However, avoid becoming accusatory.)

If the student has been through earlier stages (i.e 1 and 2 or 2 only) please include the following;

- you have had meetings with your tutor under Stage 1 / 2 of the Fitness to Study procedure, but concerns about your fitness to study remain.

As a consequence of the seriousness of the concerns outlined above, it has been deemed necessary to proceed to Stage 3 of the fitness to study procedure. A panel has been convened for XXX at XXX where your case will be discussed and recommendations made with regard to your current status as a student of the University. As part of the procedure, you are entitled to request to attend the meeting. You may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter. I would be grateful if you could confirm your intention to attend or otherwise as soon as possible. Should you wish to attend, details regarding the location of the meeting will be forwarded to you separately.

The purpose of this meeting will be to establish whether there is need for formal action under the University's Fitness to Study Procedure (Stage 3). In accordance with this procedure, **formal action may include, for example, adjustments to your hours of study, temporary suspension, temporary exclusion or prolonged suspension to the maximum of one year.** Following the meeting, you will be informed in writing of the outcome of the panel meeting to inform you of the decision and any action to be taken.

I would like to highlight the seriousness of this matter and strongly advise you to make use of this opportunity for a meeting by attending at the scheduled time. If there is a good reason why you are unable to attend at this time, please contact me immediately. If you wish to submit a written statement, it would be helpful if this could be received in advance of the meeting. Please also submit any relevant medical evidence.

A copy of the Fitness to Study Procedure is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

11. MEMORANDUM TO DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES – LEVEL 3 INTERVENTION REQUIRED

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Director of Student Services, 3rd Floor, University House

From: YOUR NAME. Head of XXX (Department)

Faculty of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Date: DATE

FITNESS TO STUDY – REQUEST FOR STAGE 3 INTERVENTION

STUDENT NAME:

STUDENT NUMBER:

DEGREE PROGRAMME:

In accordance with the University Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure, the above student is referred to yourself with the recommendation that Stage 3 intervention is initiated as soon as possible.

I enclose the following items:

- Copies of all written correspondence with the student relating to their consideration under the Fitness to Study procedures to date (e.g. copies of letters, minutes, Action Plans under Stages 1 and 2);
- Timeline of Events.
- Any other documentation of relevance.

In accordance with the University's *Fitness to Study Policy Procedure*, I find the following factors should be considered as evidence that this student is not currently fit to study.

Provide a short summary of the case, outlining the main issues with the student. Much of this detail can be copied from Minutes/ Action Plans, but you may feel it necessary to provide additional explanation here.

Signature :.....

Head of School (or nominee) for XXXX

Appendix C

Fitness to study risk assessment

Student name	
Student number	
Programme of study	
Fitness to study stage	
Date of completion	

On the basis of the current situation regarding the above named student, the risk associated their continuation on their current programme of study are;

	Element	Prob. score	Impact score	Overall score	Comments
1	Risk to self				
2	Risk to staff				
3	Risk to students				
4	Risk to successful completion of programme of study				
5	Risk to placement area (where relevant)				
6	Risk to members of the public (in relation to professional programmes)				
7	Risk to University property / site				
8	Risk to university reputation				

Additional comments / notes regarding overall risk

Risk assessment completed by;			
Name	Designation / role	Signed	Date
	Head, SWLWS		
	Deputy Head SWLWS		

Score	Probability	Impact
1	Rare	Negligible
2	Unlikely	Minor
3	Possible	Moderate
4	Likely	Major
5	Almost certain	Extreme

Score	Risk category
1 - 8	Low
9 - 15	Medium
16 - 25	High

Action is required when;

- There are three or more medium risk categories indicated
- There is one or more high risk category indicated