University of Plymouth

Support for Study Policy (February 2026)

Summary of policy objectives:

The University recognises that your wellbeing is critical to your learning, academic achievement and wider student experience.

This Support for Study Policy and Procedure will apply in situations where your health, safety, wellbeing and/or behaviour are having a detrimental impact on your ability, and/or the ability of others, to progress academically and engage fully in University life. This includes you being able to study, live and work with others and to conduct yourself in ways that do not have an adverse impact on other members of the University and local community. In particular, this policy and procedure is designed to be used in situations in which you are experiencing or presenting a level of risk (either to yourself or to others) or a level of complexity which the University cannot manage through all of our normal support procedures.

This policy applies to all students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, including research nodes, unless exceptions have been approved.

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1.0 POLICY

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The University of Plymouth welcomes a diverse study body and aims to support you in line with the Equality Act (2010), through our own Education and Student Experience Strategy and through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in developing a positive culture where you are able to fulfil your potential.

1.1.2 The University recognises that your wellbeing is critical to your learning, academic achievement and wider student experience.

1.1.3 This policy and procedure will apply in situations where occasionally your health, safety, wellbeing and/or behaviour are having a detrimental impact on your ability, and/or the ability of others, to progress academically and engage fully in University life. This includes you being able to study, live and work with others and to conduct yourself in ways that do not have an adverse impact on other members of the University and local community. In particular, this policy and procedure is designed to be used in situations in which you are experiencing or presenting a level of risk (either to yourself or to others) or a level of complexity which the University cannot manage through all of our normal support procedures.

1.1.4 The circumstances when this policy is used might be beyond your control. For example, you may become unwell or experience a deterioration in an underlying health condition or disability, which could be related to your physical or mental health.

1.1.5 The main purpose of this policy is to support you to achieve successful participation in your programme of study and foster positive wellbeing, while also ensuring the University is responding appropriately and sufficiently to risks that require our management.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy applies to all students enrolled, for all modes of study including undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, full-time, part-time and distance students and applies to all aspects of university life (i.e. including residential life and the wider student experience).

1.2.2 The policy is applicable throughout your period of enrolment with the University, including if you are seeking a return to study and if your enrolment has been interrupted under this policy and procedure.

1.2.3 This policy applies to all students at University sites of delivery, unless exceptions have been approved. All partner institutions must have a similar or equivalent policy, considering local concerns, legislation, regulation or culture. Partner institutions are welcome to use or adapt this policy, and a copy of their own local policy should be logged with the Partnerships Operations team in Academic Registry.

1.3 Underlying principles and consent

1.3.1 This policy provides a framework to enable staff to support you when you might be struggling to manage your health and/or wellbeing, in a person- and action-centred manner. In all situations, and at all stages of this policy, every effort should be made to address concerns with your full and informed agreement.

1.3.2 However, there may be occasions where you are unable, unwilling, inconsistent or unreliable in cooperating in the management of your health and wellbeing. In these circumstances, we may proceed to make decisions based on professional judgement in your best interests *without* your agreement. We will also consider the impact of your wellbeing or behaviour on other students and staff before reaching any decision. For students on professional programmes, all proposed recommendations and action plans consider operational, professional and training requirements.

1.4 Overall Aims

1.4.1 To help you to benefit from being a member of the University community and participate in all aspects of your programme of study, with the best opportunity of obtaining the award for which you are registered.

1.4.2 To ensure you can engage satisfactorily in all elements of study, research and assessment which might also take the form of placements, fieldtrips and work-based learning.

1.4.3 To ensure a jointly agreed, realistic and preventative action plan is developed in supporting you to succeed with a focus on early resolution and mitigation with a desired minimum disruption to your studies.

1.4.4 To ensure you are not prevented, hindered or disrupted from accessing your studies due to the behaviour of another student.

1.4.5 To support you, where possible, to engage fully in life as a student without your physical, mental, emotional or psychological health or behaviour having an unacceptably harmful impact upon yourself or other students.

1.4.6 To ensure staff can effectively and safely carry out their duties.

1.5 Circumstances under which your capacity to study might be brought into question

1.5.1 Your capacity to study may be questioned if:

- Your health is believed to be significantly impacting your own studies or your ability to attend or engage with your studies;
- Your health is believed to be significantly impacting the studies of others;
- Your health needs are resulting in requirements exceeding those that can be provided for by reasonable adjustments or are placing unsustainable demands on other members of the university community or support services, as primarily a Higher Education provider;
- You present a serious or potentially serious risk to yourself or to others in your community or under statutory health, safety and wellbeing legislation the university is obliged to act.

1.6 Interactions with other policies

1.6.1 There are several policies that inter-relate with this Support for Study policy, and where relevant, these related policies and procedures should be read alongside this policy.

1.6.2 The University is committed to creating an environment where all members of our community are respected, treated with dignity and feel safe, as well as ensuring the proper working of the University. We therefore reserve the right to investigate any allegations of inappropriate behaviour by a student under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure. However, if during a Conduct and Disciplinary investigation, it becomes apparent that there are grounds to believe your behaviour may relate to your health or wellbeing, then action under this Support for Study policy may be taken.

1.6.3 If you disclose that you have been the victim of a crime or an incident of sexual violence or misconduct, you do not need to provide the University with details of the incident but the University will respond in accordance with our Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy.

1.6.4 The University may also consider a student under our Fitness to Practise Policy if you are studying a programme that is subject to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) fitness to practise

requirements. The two policies may run in parallel, however, the Fitness to Practise policy will normally conclude after the outcome under this Support for Study policy is known.

1.6.5 This policy is not designed to address academic performance issues which should be dealt with under the normal academic progression and award procedures (including extenuating circumstances) in our Academic Regulations.

1.6.6 This policy and procedure sits alongside the Attendance and Engagement Policy which outlines levels of student engagement expected by the University.

1.6.7 The University wants our community to be safe and conducive environment to work and study and a positive experience for all. Any concerns that someone may be at risk of harm, abuse, exploitation or radicalisation are taken seriously and in line with our Safeguarding Policy (including Prevent).

1.7 Support and reasonable adjustments

1.7.1 The University wants you to feel comfortable throughout this Support for Study policy and procedure. As such, you can bring a person who is either a friend or someone from the Students' Union to accompany you, in a supportive capacity only, during any meetings. 'In a supportive capacity only' means that the individual is able to provide you with some emotional support or make a suggestion in relation to how we may support you during the meeting(s); however, the individual is not permitted to advocate on your behalf or to answer questions for you. Since this is not a legal procedure, it would not normally be necessary for you to bring legal representation.

1.7.2 At all stages, the University wants you to have the right support to help you which could include being supported by the Students' Union.

1.7.3 When arranging a meeting under this policy, the University will also consider any adjustments you may require. Specifically, if you are a disabled student, the University will consider a reasonable adjustment, which might be necessary to engage with this policy. We will consider adjustments as reasonable if they:

- Remove or reduce the possible barriers to you engaging with the policy or being disadvantaged by it;
- Are practical to make;
- Are affordable;
- Do not harm or adversely affect the health, safety and wellbeing of others.

1.7.4 Normally we suggest that, if you intend to bring a person to support you in a meeting (in line with section 1.7.1 above), this person should be a friend or someone from the Students' Union, rather than a relative (such as a parent or guardian). If there is a disability-related reason why you would prefer the person attending in a supportive capacity to be a parent or guardian, please let us know in advance of the meeting, and we may wish to discuss this with you in advance of the meeting. In rare cases in which a relative does attend in this capacity, the same restriction will apply in that they will be attending the meeting in a supportive capacity only; they will not be attending to advocate on your behalf or to answer questions for you.

1.7.5 Since this is not a legal procedure, it would not normally be necessary for you to bring legal representation to any meeting held under this policy and procedure. Any request to attend such a meeting with legal representation must be made at least three days in advance of the meeting and this may result in the University having its own legal representation at the meeting or the University involving a lawyer in a different capacity, such as an advisory capacity.

1.7.6 If a meeting as part of this policy might result in you being excluded from professional registration permanently, without right to appeal, the University will advise you of this before the meeting.

1.7.7 If you are enrolled on an apprenticeship programme, consideration will be given to your employer and their role

in the process and the contractual relationship. This is in accordance with the employer agreement, commitment statement and operation handbook. In meetings held under this policy, there might be someone in attendance from the University Apprenticeships Hub.

1.8 Emergency measures

1.8.1 There may be exceptional occasions where you pose such an extreme risk, or perceived risk, to yourself and/or others that emergency measures need to be put in place. This may include immediately requiring you to stop attending academic sessions and/or research sessions, and not engage with any other University activities for a period of time to enable the University to assess your fitness to study. Following a risk assessment, the University will decide whether to put emergency measures in place, whether you should be interrupted from your studies for the remainder of the academic year, or whether you are able to engage with a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting and return to your studies with appropriate support in place.

1.8.2 Such immediate action and conditions will be necessary when you pose a risk to:

- Your own (or other's) health, safety and wellbeing;
- University property;
- The reputation of the University.

1.8.3 Where your wellbeing and behaviour presents an immediate risk to yourself or others, the Emergency Services will be contacted. For matters arising on University premises, campus security will be contacted.

1.8.4 Appendix 1 includes a flowchart about the process for emergency measures. Any such measures will be identified through a risk assessment conducted by specialist members of staff (normally the Head of Student Services or nominee) and will normally be authorised and communicated by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Registrar (or nominee). Where possible the University will do this verbally (in all cases the decision will be given in writing). Examples of how we assess risk can be found in Appendix 2.

1.8.5 If you are residing in University-managed accommodation, if the University decides to interrupt you from study, you are required to leave your accommodation with the notice period as set out in your license agreement. If it is not possible to support you for the duration of your notice period in your allocated room (e.g. if there are significant concerns for your wellbeing of others in your flat), the University will endeavour to provide a suitable temporary alternative.

1.9 If you are detained ('sectioned') under the Mental Health Act (1983)

1.9.1 If the University is informed that you have been detained ('sectioned') under the Mental Health Act, the Head of Student Services, or nominee, may recommend to the Academic Registrar or Deputy Vice-Chancellor for an immediate emergency measure to be put in place where appropriate and necessary. This will *not* require a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting to be held. As the length of time a period of detention can last may vary from one person to another, the emergency measure will remain under review and will be adjusted accordingly.

1.10 Applicants and pre-admission support

1.10.1 The University wants to ensure everyone who applies to study is able to engage with their chosen programme. This policy may also be used where there is a concern that, due to health, wellbeing or disability, you may be unable to fully engage with your programme. Appendix 3 includes a flowchart about how this policy is used for prospective students and applicants.

1.11 Communicating with your trusted contacts

1.11.1 It is your decision to share the details of any meetings held under this policy with your trusted contact. The only time the University might do this, without your consent, is where there are very serious concerns about your welfare, e.g. if your health has deteriorated and you are seriously unwell and/or at risk of serious harm. In such instances we may also liaise with emergency services. Further information can be found in our Student Trusted Contact Policy.

1.12 Data protection, confidentiality and sharing information

1.12.1 The University complies with current data protection legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and treats all personal information as confidential within the terms of the legislation. Within this policy we will also process special category data about you (e.g. relating to your health or personal circumstances).

1.12.2 Our Privacy notices explain how the University shares personal information amongst members of staff who need to know in order to support you. This includes being able to use this policy, which may necessitate notifying an accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB).

1.12.3 Without your consent to do so, the University will not normally pass on this information except as outlined in our Safeguarding Policy (including Prevent) or the Student Trusted Contact Policy.

1.12.4 Student Visa holders should be aware that the University is legally required to report any interruption to study or withdrawal from study to the UK Visa and Immigration Department (UKVI). The University will stop sponsoring a Student Visa holder during the interruption of study, meaning that the student must return to their home country for this period. The University will issue a new CAS to support a return from interruption as set out in the Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) and Student Visa Sponsorship Policy.

1.12.5 If you speak to a University support service (e.g. Student Services) as part of this policy, we will ask for your agreement to share relevant information with your Faculty and/or the Doctoral College, for example about reasonable adjustments. If you choose not to share information with your programme team, this may affect the University's ability to support you and may mean that we cannot implement adjustments.

1.13 Appeals

1.13.1 As outlined in our Appeals Procedure, you may submit an appeal against decisions made within this policy. By decisions, the University means a decision to put into place an action plan, a decision to temporarily interrupt from study, or a decision to recommend permanent withdrawal from a programme of study.

1.13.2 If you wish to appeal you need to complete the appeal form and submit it with all supporting evidence to the Complaints and Appeals Team at appeals@plymouth.ac.uk within 10 working days of the decision being notified to them in writing.

1.13.3 Any decision made under this policy will stand pending the outcome of an appeal and referral back to the appropriate stage of the procedure for reconsideration.

1.14 Grounds for appeal

1.14.1 The appeals procedure is not a means of setting aside professional judgements of University staff with

respect to your support, your wellbeing, or any decisions taken at the various stages of this procedure or in accordance with this policy.

1.14.2 You may submit an appeal on the following grounds:

- There is new evidence which for good reason, you were unable to provide at the time that the decision was taken under the Support for Study policy and procedure; or,
- Material procedural irregularity; or,
- Bias, or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure; or,
- The outcome of the process is disproportionate, by which we mean that the practical impact(s) of the decision are significantly greater than was intended by those making the original decision.

1.15 Appeal procedure

1.15.1 Appeals against decisions within this policy at an Initial Support Meeting (Stage 1) or Support to Study Meeting (Stage 2) will be considered by a Head of School or School Postgraduate Research Coordinator (or any of their nominees).

1.15.2 Appeals against decisions made to interrupt you for the remainder of the year following emergency measures, or made at a Fitness to Study Meeting (Stage 3) or following a Return to Study (Stage 4) request will be considered by a Deputy Vice Chancellor or Academic Registrar (or nominee).

1.15.3 The person considering the appeal will not normally have been involved in the decision against which you are appealing.

1.15.4 The Complaints and Appeals Team will acknowledge an appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal form. This team will then provide a pack of information about the appeal to the person considering the appeal (see above). The person considering an appeal may conduct additional enquiries if they need clarification on any points of fact or supplementary information to make an informed decision. They shall then decide to uphold or reject the appeal.

1.15.5 The University endeavours to conclude appeals made against decisions taken under this policy and procedure within 20 University working days of acknowledging receipt of the appeal form. However, complex cases may take longer and you will be advised accordingly and provided with updates.

1.15.6 Any decision made under this policy will stand pending the outcome of an appeal. For example, if you are interrupted from study, that interruption will stay in place until the appeal process has concluded.

1.15.7 If an appeal is upheld, it does not mean that the original decision will automatically be overturned. The case will be reconsidered under the relevant stage of this policy and a new decision will then be made.

1.16 If an appeal is upheld

1.16.1 If an appeal is upheld, the Complaints and Appeals Team will inform you in writing, and the case will be referred to the relevant stage of this policy to be reconsidered. If possible, the people who are involved in the reconsideration of the case will not have been involved when the case was originally considered.

1.16.2 You may not subsequently appeal a decision taken following reconsideration of the case at the relevant stage of this policy and will be deemed to have completed the University's internal procedures.

1.17 If an appeal is rejected

1.17.1 If an appeal is rejected, you will be informed in writing by the Complaints and Appeals Team and will be deemed to have completed the University's internal procedures.

1.17.2 In either case, as the internal procedures have been completed, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter. This will enable you to refer your case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Please refer to the OIA website for information on their criteria and their time limits.

2.0 PROCEDURE

2.1 Procedure stages

2.1.1 The procedure has four stages:

- **Stage 1**: Initial Support Meeting – an informal meeting for emerging and low-level concerns.
- **Stage 2:** Support to Study Meeting (and review) – a formal meeting for continuing concerns.
- **Stage 3**: Fitness to Study Meeting – a formal meeting for critical, urgent and persistent concerns.
- **Stage 4:** Return to Study Meeting (if required) – a formal meeting to discuss possible return to study after a period of interruption.

2.1.2 Staff should apply this procedure on a case-by-case basis with you. This might necessitate working through each of the stages sequentially or repeating different stages without any progression. There is provision within this policy to enable direct access to Stages 2 and 3, where the circumstances of an emerging situation warrant more immediate proactive management of a situation to keep you, and/or others, safe.

2.2 Record-keeping

2.2.1 Meeting notes and actions are essential to support you and to ensure a clear and transparent audit trail for both staff and yourself. It is therefore mandatory to keep notes of all of the meetings, including actions, and these must be shared with you.

2.2.2 Staff must adhere to University prescribed templates for these meetings and record their interactions on the relevant University system, normally S4. Templates and further support are available to provide guidance for staff when working through this procedure.

2.3 Stage 1: Initial Support Meeting (ISM)

2.3.1 An Initial Support Meeting will typically be utilised in initial (non-critical) low-level concerns and observations with the intention of seeking a successful resolution of the matter through interaction with you and through agreed actions. An Initial Support Meeting may also be held if staff feel that a formal record of the meeting should be made to signpost you to other teams (e.g. Wellbeing Services) in the University. Appendix 2 outlines the circumstances that may lead to an Initial Support Meeting.

2.3.2 At this meeting, a member of staff such as a Personal Tutor or Programme Team/a member of the Supervisory Team (PGR students) will discuss concerns with you to identify how the University might be able to help. The decisions available at the Initial Support Meeting are:

- To take no further action (e.g. the situation has resolved itself).
- To implement a support and action plan which should detail any steps you need to take and a timeframe for completion.
- To refer the matter as a Support to Study (Stage 2) meeting instead where the University may bring in other members of staff to advise, for example a Mental Health Advisor or a Disability Inclusion Advisor.

2.4 Stage 2: Support to Study (StS) Meeting

2.4.1 A Support to Study Meeting will typically be utilised for continuing and significant concerns and/or where you are unable, inconsistent or unwilling to engage, discuss and action matters identified and agreed at Stage 1. Appendix 2 explains the circumstances that may lead to a Support to Study meeting.

2.4.2 The University will normally arrange a Support to Study meeting where:

- An Initial Support Meeting, including any action plan, has not sufficiently addressed the concerns the University has about your health and wellbeing that could be impacting on student life, academic engagement and your success;
- You have chosen not to, or have been unable to, engage with the support offered or have not completed the requirements within the action plan within an appropriate timeframe;
- The concerns about a your health and wellbeing are more serious and/or have escalated;
- You have been/will be interrupted from studies under the Attendance and Engagement policy following a disclosure of health issues that have prevented you from engaging.

2.4.3 At the Support to Study meeting there will be members of staff such as:

- An academic representative such as a Personal Tutor, Programme Lead, Stage Lead, School Postgraduate Research Coordinator (for research students only), Practice Educator or Central Apprenticeship Hub Reviewing Officer (for apprentice students only) who will usually Chair the meeting.
- A member of staff from the Academic School, Faculty Office, Doctoral College, Partnerships Operations or Central Apprenticeship Hub, who will take notes.
- Staff from University Support Services, such as Disability Inclusion Services and/ or the Mental Health Team, who may either be asked to provide information and/or attend the meeting.

2.4.4 The decisions available at the Support to Study meeting are:

- To take no further action (e.g. if a temporary wellbeing issues has resolved itself or a particular stressor may have passed);

- To implement an expanded support and action plan, which should detail any steps you need to take. This *must* include:

    - **mandatory actions**: such as engaging with the Mental Health Team or specialist external services to maximise your chances of getting well and to stay on your programme of study, which means if these actions are not met the University would normally hold a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting.
    - **advisory actions**: such as attending regular meetings with a university member of staff. These are advisory, but are still strongly encouraged.

  The Support to Study meeting will set a reasonable time for completion of agreed actions. This may vary normally between 1- 4 weeks depending on the nature of the actions. The timeframe for completion and/or review of the action plan will be agreed with you and recorded in the meeting notes.

- To refer the matter to a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting.

2.4.5 Before a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting is held a Review of Stage 2 actions should normally take place, typically by a Stage lead, Programme lead or Faculty Registrar to ensure agreed mandatory actions have been implemented.

2.4.6 Progression to a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting should normally only happen where there is a persistent and significant escalation of concern in addition to you not sufficiently meeting any Stage 2 mandatory actions and the University may need to consider interrupting you from your studies, to mitigate the risk(s) identified.

2.4.7 Where there is a possibility of a progression to Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting, this must be agreed normally by a Faculty Registrar or Doctoral College Manager (or their nominees).

2.5 Stage 3: Fitness to Study (FtS) Meeting

2.5.1 A Fitness to Study Meeting will typically be utilised for critical, urgent and persistent concerns following the end of any time-bound mandatory action plan agreed at Stage 2, and/or if you do not engage with the mandatory actions, and/or if more serious concerns emerge. A decision to convene a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting must be agreed normally by a Faculty Registrar or Doctoral College Manager (or their nominees). You will normally be invited to the meeting, however, if you choose not to engage with this procedure, do not attend on the day of the meeting, or only attend for part of the meeting, this meeting will normally proceed or conclude in your absence . Appendix 2 outlines the circumstances that may lead to a Fitness to Study meeting.

2.5.2 The University may arrange a Stage 3 Fitness to Study meeting where:

- A Support to Study Meeting (Stage 2) meeting including mandatory action plan has not sufficiently addressed the concerns the University has about your health and wellbeing, which could be impacting on your university life, academic engagement or success;
- You have not agreed or abided by the actions (including those that are mandated as opposed to those advised) set out in the action plan at Stage 2 within an appropriate timeframe;
- There is insufficient improvement in your capability to study or function at University following Stage 2 support;
- The concerns about your health or wellbeing or the health and wellbeing of others are more serious or have escalated;
- You have been subject to emergency measures and we need to meet you to make a decision about your overall fitness to study;
- You are an applicant, and a concern has arisen about your health (e.g. a disability or underlying medical condition) and the University's ability to support or make reasonable adjustments as part of the programme you have chosen to apply to study. This includes concerns about your health, safety or wellbeing and/or the health, safety or wellbeing or other students, staff or others in the University community.

2.5.3 At a Fitness to Study meeting members of staff will normally include:

- A senior academic representative, who will usually chair the meeting, such as an Associate Dean or other senior academic/senior tutor, which could include the Deputy Director of the Doctoral College for postgraduate research students. Where deemed necessary, a Fitness to Study meeting may be chaired by a Deputy Vice Chancellor or Senior Manager from Professional Services (e.g. Academic Registrar, Head of Student Services or nominee);
- An academic representative from the programme team;
- A member of staff from the School or Faculty, Doctoral College or Academic Partnerships (who will take notes);
- A member of staff from University support services, such as a Disability Inclusion Advisor or Mental Health Advisor, normally acting in an advisory capacity;

- Where appropriate, external specialist members to support the discussion such as someone from external support services (e.g. NHS), normally acting in an advisory capacity.

2.5.4 The meeting is an information-based discussion, where the University makes a decision about what to do regarding your fitness to study to address the concerns that have been identified. You will normally be given 5 working days notice of the meeting and will always be provided with a copy of all information gathered for the meeting so that you can prepare.

2.5.5 As well as hearing from you, the University may obtain additional information from an expert, such as a registered health or social work practitioner if appropriate (e.g. a letter from a GP, a report from a clinical psychiatrist, psychologist or an occupational health specialist). In some cases, the University may decide to ask the specialist to attend the meeting where appropriate.

2.5.6 The chair of the Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting will be responsible for making the decisions – in consultation with others, as appropriate – on the information that will be relevant for each meeting, as well as deciding who will be asked to attend the meeting, and in what capacity. The chair will also allocate the responsibility for collating the necessary information for the meeting to an individual or team (for example, to the relevant Faculty Registrar or Doctoral College Manager).

2.5.7 The University will make decisions based on the full range of information available, rather than acting upon single pieces of evidence such as the specific advice or recommendations of any single professional. All information received in advance to inform this decision will be treated with sensitivity and with due regard to the importance of confidentiality.

2.5.8 The decisions available at the Fitness to Study meeting are:

- continuation with an action plan, including any mandatory actions, conditions and/or any other measures that are deemed to be proportionate and appropriate to the individual circumstances and to the University's management of any associated risks – and appropriate timescale to resolve the concerns and an appropriate timescale to resolve the concerns that led to the meeting, with a review meeting;
- a change in your mode of study, or to a more suitable programme of study;
- interruption from study;
- in some cases, a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor (or nominee) that you are withdrawn from the University;

2.5.9 If the meeting is held with an applicant who has not yet enrolled, the outcome of the meeting could include their enrolment being deferred (Appendix 3).

2.5.10 If a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting is to take place online/virtually, recordings of these meetings are usually not made. If a recording is to be made, this will normally require the consent of all attendees and, if approved, is normally only for the short-term purpose of enabling an accurate note of the meeting and its outcome to be made, after which the recording should be deleted.

2.5.11 The decision made at a Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting, including how the decision was reached, will normally be communicated to you as soon as is practically possible, and where possible the University will do this verbally (in all cases the decision will be given in writing). If the University has been unable to meet with you to inform you of the decision, the University will write to you to let you know the outcome, normally within 10 working days.

2.5.12 If the decision of the Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting was to interrupt you, the outcome letter will also explain the process you can use to request a Return to Study (Stage 4) meeting.

2.5.13 If you are an applicant and the decision of the Fitness to Study (Stage 3) meeting was to defer your

offer to study at the University, the outcome letter will explain the practical implications of the deferral.

2.5.14 If at any point during the Support for Study procedure you decide to voluntarily interrupt, the University will write to you to explain how to request a Return to Study (Stage 4) meeting.

2.5.15 If you do not request a Return to Study (Stage 4) meeting, and do not respond to communications, you will be withdrawn from your programme of study. You may appeal this decision if you have grounds upon which to do so.

2.6 Stage 4: Return to Study (RtS) meeting

2.6.1 If you choose to interrupt or are interrupted from their programme (including a break in learning on an apprenticeship), you may at a later date want to resume study. The University's priority in such situations is ensuring you are well enough to return and successfully engage in your programme of study and wider university life.

2.6.2 You must contact the University providing normally at least six weeks' notice, if you want to request a return to study, unless the programme is a professional programme in which case you will be required to give more notice, and the notice period will be set out in the letter you are provided with explaining your interruption. The notice period may be shorter than the period stated here if your period of interruption is less than six weeks in total.

2.6.3 Upon hearing from you, the University will work to assess your fitness to resume study which will normally include:

- Completing a short questionnaire providing the University with more information about your current health status, including how you are managing your health, what factors would need to be in place to support you, what factors might exacerbate your wellbeing and health and how you would manage this (this information will be shared with Student Wellbeing Services in advance of any meeting for expert advice and input).
- Receiving evidence (e.g. a letter from a GP, registered health professional, social worker, evidence of support from disability services team) or anyone else who has been supporting you professionally.
- Arranging a Return to Study (Stage 4) meeting to discuss your potential return and/or liaising with you over email/telephone/videoconference to collate relevant information.

2.6.4 Having reviewed the relevant information, the Executive Dean of the Faculty, Director of the Doctoral College, or Academic Registrar (or nominee) will make a decision about request.

2.6.5 The decisions available at a Return to Study (Stage 4) meeting will normally be either:

- A return to study (which may be on the basis of an action plan – including any mandatory actions, conditions and/or any other measures that are deemed to be proportionate and appropriate to the individual circumstances and to the University's management of any associated risks – and appropriate timescale to resolve the concerns that led to the interruption, with appropriate plans for review meetings, as required), or;
- An extended interruption (for example if the University does not have enough information on your case you are not in agreement that the previous concerns or risks have been sufficiently resolved), or;
- Withdrawal from study.

2.6.6 Where you are requesting to return to a registered Health, Social Care or an Education programme,

there may be a requirement to complete a new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Occupational Health (OH) check.

2.7 Rearranging or not attending meetings

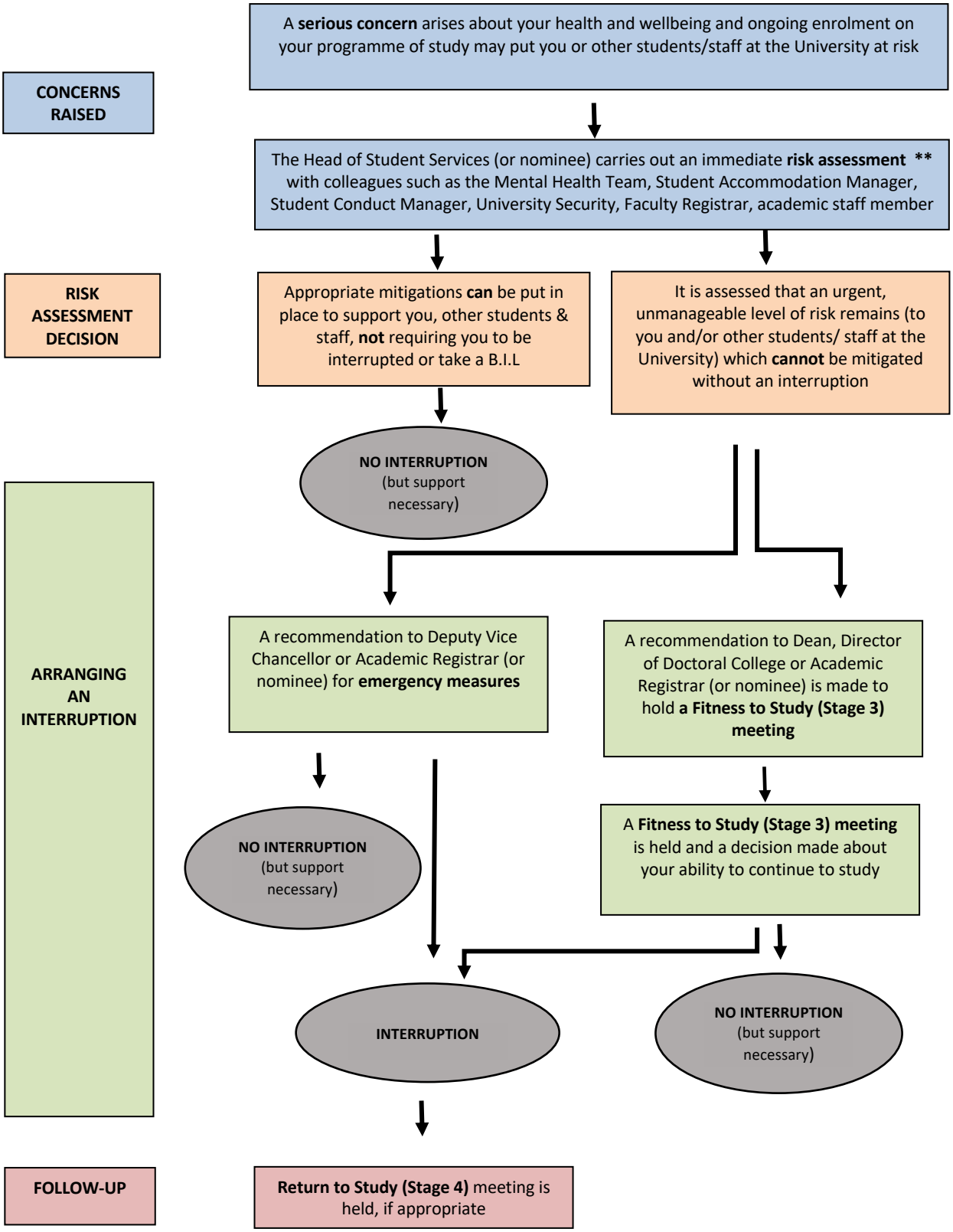
2.7.1 The University will try to schedule meeting dates to allow everyone to attend. As the meetings scheduled under this policy and procedure are important, you are strongly encouraged to prioritise them. The University will work to try to enable any barriers to your attendance at these meetings to be overcome, such as by making reasonable adjustments to respond to disability-related requirements, so that those making decisions at the meeting can hear from you about your perspective and take account of your views and experiences.

2.7.2 If you choose not to attend a meeting, if you do not attend on the day of the meeting, or if you only attend for part of a meeting, the meeting will normally proceed or conclude in your absence.

2.7.3 If you know in advance that you are unable to attend a meeting, or if you decide in advance not to attend a meeting, you may ask to provide a written statement or verbal recording in advance of a meeting, instead of attending. However, whenever possible, we do encourage you to engage in these meetings, since the opportunity to discuss with you your circumstances and your experiences is generally very important and helpful.

2.7.4 If, in advance of a meeting, you need to request a postponement, you may make such a request; whether any postponement is granted will depend on the circumstances and will be at the discretion of the chair of the relevant meeting. The chair may decide to continue with the meeting, particularly in cases where matters need to be discussed or decided with some urgency. Whether your request for a postponement is granted or not, you may only request one postponement of this nature.

Appendix 1: Routes to Interruption from Study [or Break in Learning (B.I.L)]* flowchart



*Breaking in Learning (B.I.L) is a term used for apprentices. **Risk factors are outlined in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2: How the University assesses risk

This section explains how the University assesses risk to inform you which type of meeting would be most appropriate to instigate in this Support for Study policy and procedure. (NB: For staff, further detailed information and signposting can be found on the Student Services Sharepoint).

The considerations when assessing risk might be as follows (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Are you engaged in help and support?
- Are you taking ownership and clear steps towards supporting yourself?
- Can you demonstrate the ability to keep yourself safe?
- Are other people (staff, students, friends) at risk of physical or psychological harm?
- Can the concern(s) be mitigated with reasonable adjustments and an agreed action plan?
- How are you progressing academically?
- Is there a significant impact on other aspects of university or student life?
- Are you on a professionally registered course or one that requires placements?

Example Concerns **(NB. These are given as a guide only)**	**Procedure stage guidelines**
You have a diagnosed disability and are struggling to fully engage in your programme, you want to consider alternative assessment and/or reasonable adjustments, **which are straightforward for the university to implement** within the programme (this could also arise because you submit a claim for extenuating circumstances).	**Stage 1:** Initial Support Meeting
You are **not engaging with your academic programme**, e.g. you have low attendance at sessions (lectures, seminars etc) and are missing deadlines which is caused by your wellbeing. You may have some level of distress or a mental health condition.	
You have an upcoming fieldtrip and require a **discussion around reasonable adjustments/potential alternative assessments** and support.	
Any concerns identified and discussed at a Stage 1 Initial Support Meeting are **not actioned within agreed timescale** and it becomes apparent that your difficulties remain or are starting to worsen.	**Stage 2:** Support to Study Meeting
You are experiencing vulnerability, such as suicidal ideation or an eating disorder and are voicing this to support teams or have been the recent victim of a crime, such as sexual assault. However, the you **assure the University of your ability to stay safe and demonstrates you are actively seeking help** (from external services and/or disability and/or mental health advisors).	**Stage 2:** Support to Study Meeting and **review** of mandatory actions before deciding to proceed to Stage 3.
Significant concerns are arising because of your behaviour as a result of your own vulnerability or mental health. Your behaviour is **impacting on other student/staff psychological wellbeing and/or physical safety**.	**Stage 3:** Fitness to Study Meeting
You may be detained under the Mental Health Act or have a **significant attempt on your own life** or are deemed to be unwell to such an extent that the University cannot adequately support you. You are experiencing significant vulnerability such as (but not limited to): a severe and enduring mental health condition, sexual assault, homelessness, debt. **You cannot keep yourselves safe and may or may not be actively engaged in support** (e.g. Student Services, NHS, Charity Agencies or Police).	Option of immediate **emergency measures** i.e. interruption **without** the need for **Stage 3:** Fitness to Study meeting **OR**

Examples: You are self-harming or voicing strong suicidal intent. You may be relying on considerable support from flatmates, affecting the health of your flatmates. You are aggressive towards their house/course-mates or staff as a result of your mental health, and/or causing a level of self-neglect to yourself and/or the environment, which is affecting others. You are experiencing serious vulnerability (such as suicidal ideation with access to means, or a serious eating disorder) and are unable to assure staff of your ability to keep yourself safe. You do not demonstrate help-seeking behaviour. You are experiencing psychosis and this impacts upon your ability to function (including study) including presenting risk of harm to self or others, and you require secondary mental health care. You have been discharged from Emergency Department following a suicide attempt or serious self-harm.	**Stage 3:** Fitness to Study meeting (see Appendix 1)

Appendix 3: Admissions flowchart

The University welcomes applications from applicants with medical conditions and disabilities and will strive to support them by making reasonable adjustments to enable them to access their programme and engage fully with student life. This Appendix outlines the procedure the University will follow when discussing with an applicant any underlying medical condition and/or disability which might affect their ability to engage in the programme for which they have applied.

CONCERN ARISES: A concern arises about the health of an applicant (e.g. a disability or underlying medical condition) and the University's ability to support or make reasonable adjustments as part of the programme they have chosen to apply to study. This includes concerns about an applicant's health, safety or wellbeing and/or the health, safety or wellbeing of other students, staff, or other members of the University community.

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INFORMATION GATHERING: The University will gather relevant information, which could include the declaration on the applicant's admissions form, the Disability Information Form completed by the applicant, any notes of an information gathering meeting with Disability Inclusion Services, any notes of a meeting with a Mental Health Advisor, and/or email correspondence.

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PRACTITIONER-LEVEL MEETING: The applicant will normally be invited to a practitioner-level meeting to discuss the concerns to determine if they are able to study the programme they have applied to. This will include consideration of reasonable adjustments the University can make and any health, safety and wellbeing considerations and wider support needs. Possible outcomes could include:

- A support arrangement including reasonable adjustments or an action plan to enable the applicant to enrol on their programme;
- A recommendation that the University convenes a Stage 3 Fitness to Study meeting, in accordance with this policy and procedure, to consider more formally whether the applicant is able to enrol on their programme or whether the deferral or withdrawal of the applicant's offer is required (in which case there is a recommendation to convene a Stage 3 Fitness to Study Meeting).

In the case of professional programmes, a different process may be followed, either in place of, or as well as, the above process; for example, a Professional Issues Committee, or equivalent, may be asked to consider the case.

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STAGE 3 MEETING (IF REQUIRED): If required, a Stage 3 Fitness to Study meeting is convened, in accordance with this policy and procedure, to consider and decide whether it is possible to put a support arrangement in place, including reasonable adjustments or an action plan (including any mandatory actions), to enable the applicant to enrol on their programme, or decide on the deferral or withdrawal of the applicant's offer.

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FOLLOW-UP: The applicant will hear the outcome of the meeting in writing within 10 working days of the meeting. An applicant may appeal against the decision as part of this policy. If an applicant's offer is deferred and they want to request to study later, the University will use this policy to review what has happened in the intervening time to make a