



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure

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Student Experience & Support

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1.0 Purpose of the Fitness to Study policy and procedure

- i. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:
 - a. inform students and staff what is 'fitness to study' and how any questions relating to a student's fitness will be dealt with by the University
 - b. provide a clearly formulated and impartial procedure for dealing with concerns relating to a student's fitness to study within a reasonable timescale and having due regard to the spirit of natural justice
 - c. encourage engagement with the student at an early stage, and to promote joint problem-solving and planning between the University and the student

2.0 Scope of the policy and procedure

- i. This procedure applies to all students registered at the University of Salford but does not apply to students studying at collaborative partners. Collaborative partners are expected to have their own procedures in place.

3.0 Relationship to other policies and procedures

- i. Safeguarding policy: if there are any concerns that the student is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse as a 'vulnerable adult', or is abusing someone else who is a 'vulnerable person' then this should be discussed with Counselling and Wellbeing Service in the first instance and appropriate actions agreed.
- ii. Fitness to Practise policy: students in certain disciplines (e.g. Nursing or Midwifery, which are subject to the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies) may be subject to separate and over-riding obligations to declare significant health issues. Where there is a Fitness to Practise issue, the Fitness to Practise procedure or the regulations of the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, as applicable, will take precedence.
- iii. Student Disciplinary procedure: a student who has a mental, physical or emotional health issue is not exempt from following the University's Code of Conduct. Where there is a Disciplinary issue, the Disciplinary procedure will take precedence, unless:
 - a. there is a reasonable belief, on the University's part, that the offending behaviour is due partly or wholly to a physical, mental or emotional issue and that constructive engagement with the student through the Fitness to Study procedure could lead to a resolution of the behavioural issue;
 - b. AND that the University believes that this is the most appropriate course of action considering all the circumstances;
 - c. AND that the student agrees that the Fitness to Study procedure will be invoked OR there is a reasonable belief on the University's part that the student is not capable of making a rational informed decision on this point.
- iv. The Fitness to Study procedure will normally be considered only if the Safeguarding policy, Fitness to Practise policy and Student Disciplinary procedure either do not apply, have been completed, or have been initiated/considered and a recommendation made to engage the student with the Fitness to Study procedure, as relevant.
- v. In order to determine which procedure will be followed, it may be necessary for appropriate staff, in relation to the policies/procedures under consideration, to arrange an additional meeting with the student or collect additional information / evidence.

4.0 Policy statements

- i. The University has a duty of care to respond appropriately where there are concerns relating to a student's health and wellbeing and the impact that may have upon the individual and/or other members of the University community.
- ii. The University is committed to supporting student wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health is crucial to student learning and academic achievement.
- iii. The University aims to deliver this procedure in a supportive manner. It is not intended to facilitate discontinuation or expulsion of students for misconduct.
- iv. The Student Disciplinary procedure is informed by the University's statutory obligations including the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Data Protection Act 1998.

5.0 When is a student considered Fit to Study?

- i. When a student is fit to study, they are physically, mentally and emotionally well enough that, with any necessary and reasonable support and adjustments in place:
 - a. They are able to engage with and benefit from their academic studies with a reasonable chance of obtaining the qualification they have registered for;
 - b. Their behaviour does not unreasonably disrupt any other members of the University community or visitors in their University business;
 - c. They do not put their own, or others', health and safety at risk¹.

6.0 When is the Fitness to Study procedure likely to be considered?

- i. If a student may no longer be well enough to meet the expectations listed at Section 5.0 above, then it will be appropriate to engage them with the Fitness to Study policy / procedure at the appropriate level.
- ii. Appendix 1 lists examples of the kinds of signs and behaviours which might lead a staff member to believe that engaging a student with the Fitness to Study policy / procedure may be the most appropriate course of action.
- iii. A student may become unwell, but unless their mental, emotional or physical health issue affects, or seems imminently likely to affect, one of the three expectations set out above, it will not be appropriate to invoke the Fitness to Study procedure.

6.0 Procedure

6.1 Raising concerns about a student

- i. If a student believes that they themselves, or another student, may not be well enough to meet the expectations listed at Section 5.0 above, they should straight away talk to:
 - a. A member of academic staff (supervisor, tutor or lecturer)
 - b. A member of a relevant professional service such as the student Counselling & Wellbeing Service (0161 295 0023 or wellbeing@salford.ac.uk) or Disability and Learner Support Service (0161 295 0023 or disability@salford.ac.uk)
 - c. An officer, student representative or staff member of the Students' Union, or

¹ This definition has been drawn from Glasgow University's procedure.

- d. Another relevant person (such as a placement liaison or mentor)
- ii. It may not be easy for students, student representatives or staff to raise a concern about a student. For advice at any stage, students and staff may contact the student Counselling & Wellbeing Service.
- iii. If a student has raised concerns about themselves or a fellow student with a staff member, or if the staff member has their own concerns about a student, that member of staff has the responsibility for taking appropriate action or initiating an appropriate referral. If the student has discussed the issue with a student representative, the student representative will refer to a Students' Union officer or staff member, who will make the appropriate referral.
- iv. If concerns have been identified by a member of staff who does not have a direct relationship with the student, then they will contact the Counselling & Wellbeing Service to make their concerns known.

6.2 Suspension pending a meeting

- i. The Fitness to Study procedure is intended as a constructive approach to resolve issues together with students. It is not normally a mechanism to remove students from study.
- ii. Where there is considered to be an imminent risk to the student or others, a student who is being engaged with the Fitness to Study process may be suspended by the Dean of School (or in cases deemed to be urgent by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or a nominee of the Deputy Vice Chancellor from amongst the membership of the VCET) pending a Fitness to Study meeting and, if applicable, any subsequent appeal.
- iii. Suspension pending a meeting is a neutral act in the context of the eventual determination of whether a student is Fit to Study. Its purpose may be, for example:
 - a. to avoid any repetition of the circumstances which led to a concern arising before these can be addressed;
 - b. to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the University community, including the student who is the subject of concern.
- iv. An order of suspension may include a requirement that the student shall have no contact with a named person or persons. A student who is suspended pending a hearing may be wholly or partly prohibited from entering all or specific University premises, and from participating in University activities, including exercising their functions or duties of any office or committee membership in the University. The student's access to IT facilities may be withdrawn during the suspension. Suspension may be subject to further qualification, such as permission to take an examination or submit an assignment.
- v. Normally no student shall be suspended unless they have been given the opportunity, normally within 5 working days, to make representations to the Dean of School, either in person or in writing, as the student chooses. Such representations may be put forward by the student or by a friend or representative with the recorded consent of the student. In cases deemed to be urgent, particularly if the safety of others is perceived to be at risk, a student may be suspended with immediate effect and before being given the opportunity to make representations. In this instance, the student or their representative shall be permitted to put forward representations at the earliest possible opportunity thereafter.
- vi. Before a decision to suspend a student is taken, consideration should be given to the potential impact upon the student's studies. A suspended student should seek guidance from their School on how they might nevertheless best continue their studies.

- vii. Written reasons for the decision to suspend shall be recorded by the Dean and sent to the student, copied to the Quality & Enhancement Office. Where the student is also a member of staff guidance should be sought from the Human Resources Division and the Quality & Enhancement Office and the CEO of the Students' Union, as appropriate, as to whether any further steps need to be taken.
- viii. On the advice of the Head of Quality & Enhancement or nominee, the Vice-Chancellor or another member of the VCET shall review the suspension on receipt of evidence of significantly altered circumstances, which might affect the order. That review shall be serviced by an officer of the Quality & Enhancement Office. A student wishing to instigate such a review can do so at any point during the suspension via a written request submitted through the Quality & Enhancement Office. Such a request should provide appropriate supporting evidence.

6.3 Stages of the procedure

- i. There are four stages of the procedure:
 - a. Stage 1 – emerging concerns
 - b. Stage 2 – continuing concerns
 - c. Stage 3 – serious/persistent concerns
 - d. Review and or Appeal
- ii. In most situations, it will be appropriate to start at stage 1 of the procedure. However, there may be some occasions when the stage of risk or impact requires a move straight to stage 2 or 3. Appendix 1 contains a quick reference to selecting the appropriate stage of the procedure.

6.4 Initiating / escalating the procedure

- i. Where there are concerns about a student's Fitness to Study, initiating the procedure is positively encouraged. Early engagement and discussion of issues with the student is most likely to result in a successful outcome. Concerns will be acted on promptly.
- ii. Section 3.0 above describes how to determine whether Fitness to Study is the most appropriate policy / procedure to follow, and this should always be considered.
- iii. It is recognised that these situations can be difficult to deal with and that the stage of risk is often hard to determine. If any staff member is unsure about whether to invoke this procedure; they are encouraged to seek advice from the Counselling & Wellbeing Service (0161 295 0023 or wellbeing@salford.ac.uk).
- iv. In most cases it is expected that matters will be resolved through an informal stage 1 procedure initiated by a member of academic staff. It may sometimes be the case that a student is continuing to study successfully but behaviour in other areas is suffering, for example participation in extracurricular activities or use of sports or prayer facilities. In this case a member of professional services staff could initiate the procedure.
- v. Where the procedure is invoked in relation to a non-academic issue it will normally still be beneficial to involve an appropriate member of the School in the procedure. If the student is studying on a course governed by professional practice requirements, it will always be essential to inform the School of concerns which arise in relation to conduct, health or wellbeing which may affect the student's eligibility to continue on their course.
- vi. In the event of a disagreement as to whether the Fitness to Study procedure should be invoked the Associate Director, Student Experience and Support will make the final decision.

7.0 Stage 1 meeting with a student

7.1 Arranging the meeting:

- i. The decision to meet with the student under the Fitness to Study procedure at stage 1 will normally be taken by a member of School staff, or occasionally professional services staff, with primary responsibility and/or knowledge of the student (e.g. personal tutor or programme leader) or who has observed the behaviour which is causing concern (the 'Key Staff member' for this Stage). If a staff member is unsure about whether to invoke this procedure; they are encouraged to seek advice from the Counselling and Wellbeing Service (0161 295 0023 or wellbeing@salford.ac.uk).
- ii. Before holding a meeting consideration will be given as to whether the student needs any reasonable adjustments in place. If a staff member is unsure about how to approach this question, they are encouraged to seek advice from the Disability and Learner Support service (0161 295 0023 or disability@salford.ac.uk).
- i. The meeting will happen in an appropriate place for the discussion of personal matters.
- ii. At this informal stage the student does not need to be given extensive notice that the discussion is going to happen (unless relevant reasonable adjustments are required).
- iii. Staff members are encouraged to make every reasonable attempt to engage the student at this stage as they are in the best position to have the initial meeting due to their direct observation of the fitness to study issues

7.2 During the meeting:

- i. As far as possible, the procedure will be treated as a framework within which to have a supportive, open discussion with the student
- ii. The student will be advised that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a concern which has arisen about their behaviour.
- iii. The student will be advised what behaviour has caused concern giving clear description and examples.
- iv. Factual language will be used e.g. raised voice, frequent interruption, non-submission.
- v. The nature of the concern will be identified e.g. likely impact on the student's studies.
- vi. The student will be encouraged to reflect on the issues, including the potential impact on themselves and others, contribute to the discussion and share any concerns they have.
- vii. The student will be asked whether they accept and that change is needed, or are willing and able to make changes to address the concerns.
- viii. The aim of the meeting will be to agree on:
 - a. what type, stage or extent of change is expected, and within what time frame
 - b. whether there are any underlying causes of the behaviour which will be addressed
 - c. what (if any) additional support or reasonable adjustments will be put in place by the University
- ix. The student will be reminded that, whilst the University has a duty of care to support students with ill health, it is the student's responsibility to be fit to study.

- x. The student can also identify additional support or adjustments they feel they need and consideration will be given as to whether these are reasonable.
- xi. Students will be informed that if the concerns continue, any additional cause for concern arises, or they refuse to engage in the process, this could result in their fitness to study being further considered by moving to Stage 2 or that a different procedure may be initiated
- xii. If appropriate, information will be provided about sources of professional support within the University that the student can access (e.g. Health Centre, Student Experience & Support).
- xiii. The student and member of staff will agree a date to meet within 3 months to review the situation. This is known as the Stage 1 review meeting. The meeting is to discuss the effectiveness of the support that the student has been accessing. The review date can be at any point in the three month period and will be determined by the perceived seriousness of the issues and the nature of any actions planned to address this

7.3 After the meeting:

- i. The key points and agreements, including action points arising from this discussion will be recorded by the Key Staff member using a standard proforma (see Appendix 3) and:
 - a. communicated in writing to the student within five working days
 - b. notified to the Programme Leader and Personal Tutor (or equivalent relevant role-holders) and kept by the School on the student's file, with due regard to confidentiality and the need to cleanse the record after an appropriate period of time.
 - c. copied to the Counselling and Wellbeing Service wellbeing@salford.ac.uk for monitoring and recording purposes
- ii. At the time of the review meeting, if the student's behaviour has not reached the required standard, or if the student does not engage with the review meeting, then the Key Staff member may take one or more of the following actions:
 - a. Contact the Counselling & Wellbeing Service and propose to escalate to stage 2 of the procedure
 - b. Initiate a different policy or procedure, for example the Student Disciplinary procedure or Fitness to Practise procedure
 - c. Take no further action (if e.g. the student has withdrawn from the University)
 - d. Take another action to address the concerns, which is appropriate in the circumstances.
- iii. The Key Staff Member will keep a brief record of the decisions and actions taken at / after the Review Meeting and will store it and record it as following the initial meeting, above.

8.0 Arranging a Stage 2 meeting with a student

8.1 Arranging the meeting:

- i. The decision to meet with the student under the Fitness to Study procedure at stage 2 will normally be taken by a member of the Counselling & Wellbeing Service (the 'Key Staff Member' for this stage) jointly with a member of the student's School or a professional service.
- ii. The decision to invoke the procedure at stage 2 will be because one or more Stage 1 procedures have already been held and this has not resulted in satisfactory, sufficient and sustained improvement, or if the behaviour / impacts are too serious to be addressed at Stage 1.

- iii. Before holding a meeting consideration will be given as to whether the student needs any reasonable adjustments in place.
- iv. The student will be given reasonable notice of:
 - The time, date and location of the meeting
 - Any information or documents they will / may prepare, bring or submit
 - Information about representation. The student may be accompanied at any meeting or hearing under this Procedure by a representative of the student's choice and that representative must be willing to act in this capacity and may speak on the student's behalf. The representative must not be someone who has been suspended or excluded from the University for any reason. Disabled students may additionally be accompanied by a support worker (e.g. sign language interpreter or mental health worker) if they require one. Students are not entitled to have legal representation at the meeting.
- v. The meeting should normally be held about 5 working days from the date when the student is informed that it will take place.
- vi. The student will be given advance copies of any documents which will have informed the decision to invoke the Fitness to Study procedure at stage 2, or which are likely to be considered as part of the discussion at the meeting. The student will be asked to submit any documents they wish to submit for circulation ahead of the meeting.
- vii. The student will be informed that engaging with stage 2 of the procedure is mandatory and refusal to engage may result in further escalation to stage 3 or invoking other procedures such as the Student Disciplinary procedure.
- viii. The meeting will be attended by a Counselling & Wellbeing Service Advisor and (normally) a member of School or professional services staff, and (normally) a notetaker.

8.2 During the meeting:

- i. As far as possible, the procedure will be treated as a framework within which to have a supportive, open discussion with the student
- ii. The aim of the meeting will be to agree on:
 - a. what type, stage or extent of change is expected, and within what time frame
 - b. whether there are any underlying causes of the behaviour which will be addressed
 - c. what (if any) additional support or reasonable adjustments will be put in place by the University
- iii. If possible, a mutually agreed action plan will be devised to put in place support for the student and formally agree expectations for the student to observe. In cases where reasonable adjustments are required, the appropriate Disability Adviser will be consulted.
- iv. This Action Plan will have a specific review date, and the consequences of not keeping to the agreed action plan must be clearly outlined to the student. This may involve moving to Stage 3 of the procedure, where a suspension may be considered.

8.3 After the meeting:

- i. The key points and agreements, including action points arising from this discussion will be recorded by the Counselling & Wellbeing Service and:
 - a. communicated to the student within 5 working days

- b. provided to the Dean of School who will notify to the Programme Leader and Personal Tutor (or equivalent relevant role-holders) and kept by the School on the student's file, with due regard to confidentiality and the need to cleanse the record after an appropriate period of time.
 - ii. At the time of the review meeting, if the student's behaviour has not reached the required standard, or if the student does not engage with the review meeting, then the Counselling & Wellbeing Manager and the Dean of the School, or their nominees, may take one or more of the following actions:
 - a. Escalate to stage 3 of the procedure
 - b. Initiate a different policy or procedure, for example the Student Disciplinary procedure or Fitness to Practise procedure
 - c. Take no further action (if e.g. the student has withdrawn from the University)
 - d. Take another action to address the concerns, which is appropriate in the circumstances
 - iii. The Key Staff Member will keep a record of the decisions and actions taken at / after the Review Meeting and will communicate it and record it as following the initial meeting, above.

9.0 Arranging a Stage 3 meeting with a student

9.1 Arranging the meeting:

- i. The decision to meet with the student under the Fitness to Study procedure at stage 3 will be taken by the Head of Student Support, or their nominee, (the 'Key Staff Member' for this stage) jointly with a member of the student's School or a professional service.
- ii. The decision to invoke the procedure at stage 3 will be because one or more Stage 2 procedures have already been held and this has not resulted in satisfactory, sufficient and sustained improvement.
- iii. Before holding a meeting consideration will be given as to whether the student needs any reasonable adjustments in place.
- iv. The student will be given reasonable notice of:
 - The time, date and location of the meeting (if there is a compelling reason why the student should not be invited to attend the meeting then this will be communicated in writing to the student at an early opportunity).
 - Information about representation. The student may be accompanied at any meeting or hearing under this Procedure by a representative of the student's choice and that representative must be willing to act in this capacity and may speak on the student's behalf. The representative must not be someone who has been suspended or excluded from the University for any reason. Disabled students may additionally be accompanied by a support worker (e.g. sign language interpreter or mental health worker) if they require one. Students are not entitled to have legal representation at the meeting.
 - Any information or documents they will / may prepare, bring or submit
- v. The meeting should normally be held at least 10 working days from the date when the student is informed that it will take place.
- vi. The student will be given advance copies of any documents which will have informed the decision to invoke the Fitness to Study procedure at stage 3, or which are likely to be considered as part of

the discussion at the meeting. The student will be asked to submit any documents they wish to submit for circulation at least 5 days ahead of the meeting.

- vii. The student will be informed that engaging with stage 3 of the procedure is mandatory and refusal to engage may result invoking other procedures such as the Student Disciplinary procedure.
- viii. The membership of the meeting may include:
 - a. the Head of Student Support or their nominee
 - b. the Dean of School / Director of Professional Service, or their nominee
 - c. Academic/School representative (normally)
 - d. Appropriate representative/s from the Counselling and Wellbeing and Disability and Learner Support teams
 - e. The Student's representative or companion.
 - f. A relevant medical professional such as the student's G.P (with student's consent)
 - g. Any support worker the student reasonably requires to accompany them to enable them to participate in the process.
 - h. A notetaker (normally)

9.2 During the meeting

- i. As far as possible, the procedure will be treated as a framework within which to have a supportive, open discussion with the student
- ii. The aim of the meeting will be to agree on:
 - a. what type, stage or extent of change is expected, and within what time frame
 - b. whether there are any underlying causes of the behaviour which will be addressed
 - c. what (if any) additional support or reasonable adjustments will be put in place by the University – this will normally be working from the basis of the Stage 2 plan already in place and identifying ways in which the plan can be enhanced.
 - d. whether it will be necessary or beneficial for the student to interrupt their studies in order to, for example, undertake treatment which will enable them to be fit to study once again.
- iii. If possible, a mutually agreed action plan will be devised to put in place support for the student and formally agree expectations for the student to observe. In cases where reasonable adjustments are required, the appropriate Disability Adviser will be consulted.
- iv. Where appropriate, the agreed action/s will take into account whether there are any reasonable adjustments that can be put in place, or whether the limits of reasonableness have been reached at that time (in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and SENDA 2001).
- v. This Action Plan will have a specific review date, and the consequences of not keeping to the agreed action plan must be clearly outlined to the student.
- vi. Otherwise a decision will be reached that the student will take the necessary actions to interrupt their studies, or if they do not, or cannot, then the University will take the necessary actions to suspend their studies.

9.3 After the meeting:

- i. The key points and agreements, including action points arising from this discussion will be recorded by the Counselling & Wellbeing Service and:
 - a. communicated to the student within 5 working days
 - b. provided to the Dean who will notify the Programme Leader and personal Tutor (or equivalent relevant role-holders) and kept by the School on the student's file, with due regard to confidentiality and the need to cleanse the record after an appropriate period of time.
- ii. At the time of the review meeting, which should include the Key Staff member and may include other staff members involved in agreeing the action plan, if the student's behaviour has not reached the required standard, or if the student does not engage with the review meeting, then the Head of Student Support and the Dean of the School, or their nominees, may take one or more of the following actions:
 - a. Initiate a different policy or procedure, for example the Student Disciplinary procedure or Fitness to Practise procedure
 - b. Take no further action (if e.g. the student has withdrawn from the University)
 - c. Take another action to address the concerns, which is appropriate in the circumstances
- iii. The Key Staff Member will keep a record of the decisions and actions taken at / after the Review Meeting and will store it and record it as following the initial meeting, above.
- iv. If the recommendation is being made for the student to interrupt their studies (after the Stage 3 meeting or the review meeting) or that the student should be required to withdraw (after the review meeting), written reasons for the decision to suspend should be explicitly stated in the notes sent to the student, along with the terms of the interruption / suspension as appropriate. The student should also be provided with relevant information about the Appeals process.

9.4 Level 3 Outcomes: Enhanced Action Plan

- i. If the recommendation is that of an enhanced Action Plan, and the student was not invited to be present at the stage 3 meeting, the student will be invited to meet with the Head of Student Support or their nominee to receive and discuss the recommended actions from the Case Conference. The student will be invited to bring along a person to support them at the meeting.
- ii. The plan will have a concrete review date, and the consequences of not adhering to the Action Plan will be made clear. A copy of the agreed Action Plan will be submitted to the Quality and Enhancement Office and to the Dean of School.

9.5 Level 3 Outcomes: Suspension

- i. Suspension of studies as a substantive decision following a Fitness to Study meeting or action plan review will only be recommended when all reasonable adjustments and approaches have been exhausted and the student does not meet the expectations set out above in Section 5.0 above. The suspension is intended to give the student time away from studies to address health and wellbeing issues, in order wherever possible to return to the University and resume study.
- ii. A student who is suspended may be wholly or partly prohibited from entering University premises and from participating in University activities, including working at the University or Students' Union, or exercising their functions or duties of any office or committee membership in the University or the Students' Union. Suspension may be subject to qualification, such as permission

to take an examination. A suspended student will seek guidance from their School on how they might best continue their studies.

- iii. A decision to suspend will normally be conveyed by the Dean of School at a meeting with the student (and representative if required). This meeting will include a consideration of issues arising from suspension, such as the impact on studies or student funding, and Student Experience & Support will offer appropriate support and referrals in this case. Where the student wishes to voluntarily interrupt the course at this stage, this will be favourably considered with the provision for a review of the health and wellbeing of the student at the end of the interruption period.
- v. In cases of suspension of study following a Fitness to Study meeting or action plan review, the following will be informed by the Counselling & Wellbeing Service:
 - The Dean of School who will arrange for the suspension to be processed (if the student does not voluntarily interrupt)
 - Student Administration to ensure that any student records are amended accordingly
 - Home Office Compliance Team
 - Programme Leaders to advise on academic status and any current module registrations
 - Human Resources, if the student is employed by the University, and the Chief Executive of the Students' Union.

9.6 Suspension and Campus Living Villages (CLV)

- i. If a decision to suspend impacts upon a student's tenancy in CLV. CLV will consider where appropriate a temporary or permanent change to a student's accommodation arrangements.

9.7 Review of/end of suspension

- A request to review a suspension may arise from either the student (or their representative) or from their School or Student Experience and Support. Requests should be accompanied by supporting evidence. The suspension will not be lifted until the student has provided appropriate medical evidence from their G.P or other approved medical professional, or proof of engagement with support services, or other evidence reasonably required by the University, taking into account agreements documented in the action plan, that the student is considered fit to return to study. The University may ask the medical professional to answer specific questions or consider specific issues, and will not make a decision to lift the suspension until satisfied that the student is fit to return to the University environment.
- Decisions to end a suspension will be made by either the Dean of School or the Associate Director of Student Experience & Support (or nominee).
- Where the suspension resulted from the fact that no adjustments were deemed reasonable, this will be considered so that at the point at which a student is deemed fit to return to study, appropriate adjustments can be considered by Student Experience & Support seeking other advice as necessary.
- The University will make every effort to allow the student to continue with their studies, within the limits set by University and programme Regulations. This may include repeating periods of study. The ability to repeat or return to study will depend upon the feasibility and reasonableness of such a proposal, and will be decided on a case by case basis.

9.8 Termination of study

Sometimes, unfortunately, with all reasonable adjustments in place, including interruption/suspension where relevant, a student continues to be unwell, and cannot meet the reasonable stated requirements of the University for return to / continuation of study. In this instance the University may terminate the registration of the student, or decline to allow re-registration.

If the student wishes to appeal against the decision reached at Stage 3, the appeal must be made in writing to the Quality and Enhancement Office (geo-general@salford.ac.uk) within 10 working days of the written confirmation of the Stage 3 decision and must specify the grounds on which it is based.

9.9 Appeals against the decision reached at Stage 3

If the student wishes to appeal against a decision reached at Stage 3 (following the Stage 3 meeting or following the review meeting), the appeal must be made in writing to the Quality and Enhancement Office (geo-general@salford.ac.uk) within 10 working days of the written confirmation of the Stage 3 decision and must specify the grounds on which it is based.

An appeal may made only on one or more of the following grounds:

- i) that evidence is available which for good and reasonable cause has not been brought to the attention of the Dean of School or Student Experience and Support previously
- ii) that there has been a relevant and significant error in the operation of the Fitness to Study Procedure
- iii) that the decision was unreasonable, where unreasonable shall be taken to mean perverse: that is, the outcome was not a conclusion a similar Officer acting on behalf of the University might have taken

The Dean of Students, or their nominee, will consider all appeals, normally within 15 working days of receipt.

An officer from the Quality and Enhancement Office will support the review.

The Dean of Students can reach one of the following decisions:

- Reject the appeal
- Fully or partially uphold the appeal and amend any actions or outcomes determined by the stage 3 process.

The officer from QEO will write to the student within 5 working days of an outcome being reached to provide a decision and rationale. Where an appeal has been rejected, the letter will also constitute a 'Completion of Procedures' letter, outlining the scheme of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

[Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA)

The 'completion of procedures' letter will explain that if a student remains dissatisfied at the conclusion of the University's internal Fitness to Study Procedure, they may ask the OIA to review their case. This will require completion of an OIA scheme application form upon receipt of the 'completion of procedures' letter. The scheme application form must be submitted within twelve months of the date that the completion of procedures letter was issued. The OIA website provides further information regarding the scheme and its eligibility criteria: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

Independent Advice and Support

Independent advice and support for students in relation to this Procedure is available from the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#).

10.0 Interruption

If a student elects to interrupt their study part-way through a Fitness to Study procedure, the procedure may resume at the university's discretion when the student decides to seek to return to study.

The University's Interruption policy covers students interrupting/suspending.

Policy:

http://www.salford.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/904573/StudentInterruptionsWithdrawalsPolicy.pdf

Guidance: <http://www.askus.salford.ac.uk/interruptions-and-withdrawals>

11.0 Critical illness of students

From time to time there may be a situation where a student finds themselves severely incapacitated, e.g. through injury or critical illness.

In such a situation, where it would be unreasonable to expect a student to submit a PMC or apply for an interruption of study, it would be reasonable to act in accordance with instructions/requests from the student's duly authorised representative, e.g. parent, partner, to interrupt that student's course of study.

If a student is incapacitated or detained for treatment, then the University may pause the Fitness to Study procedure and resume it, if appropriate, when the student is sufficiently recovered.

Appendix 1: Signs which may cause staff to consider engaging a student with the Fitness to Study policy / procedure

It is likely staff will consider initiating the Fitness to Study procedure if:

- i. there is one or more of (this list is not exhaustive):
 - a. Lack of engagement with study (poor attendance, lack of communication with staff, non-submission of assessments);
 - b. Poor or declining academic performance;
 - c. Behaviour or disposition which may indicate a student needs additional support, such as:
 - d. Mood swings or unusual behaviour (e.g. aggressive, withdrawn, distressed, irritable);
 - e. Apparent signs of ill health (e.g. dramatic weight loss or gain, ongoing lack of personal hygiene and care);
 - f. Withdrawal from social, cultural or sporting activities once considered important;
 - g. Lethargy or signs of lack of sleep;
 - h. Obvious signs of substance/ alcohol misuse;
 - i. Information about specific episodes (e.g. self-harm/suicidal thoughts or attempts);
 - j. Inappropriate behaviour (e.g. inappropriate touching, invading personal space, excessive, unexpected and prolonged laughter, uncharacteristically bad language such as swearing);
 - k. Disruption to the teaching and learning activities of other students, including placements;
 - l. Unreasonable demands being placed on staff or other students;
 - m. Persistent behaviour which is unacceptable;
 - n. Self-referral where the student advises a member of the University of difficulties they are experiencing;
 - o. Concerns emerge through a third party outside the University;
- ii. AND it seems likely or possible that the above signs are caused by a physical, mental or emotional issue.

Appendix 2: Quick reference to Fitness to Study stages

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Invoked when	<p>There is a concern that the student has a physical, mental or emotional issue which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affecting their chance of completion • Unreasonably disrupting other people • Putting their own or others' safety at risk 	<p>As stage 1 but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 already tried one or more times - has not resulted in satisfactory, sufficient and sustained improvement • A formal process is essential in order to quickly secure an improvement in student behaviour where there are significant / imminent risks to continuation. 	<p>As stage 1 but either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 already tried one or more times – has not resulted in satisfactory, sufficient and sustained improvement • Or the issue is serious, complex or urgent and the possibility of suspension needs to be able to be considered.
Initiated by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally a member of the School. • Occasionally may be staff from a Professional Service. 	A member of the Counselling & Wellbeing Service, working jointly with a member of staff from the student's School / a professional Service.	The Head of Student Support or their nominee working jointly with a member of staff from the student's School / a professional Service.
Advance notice	Not necessary ²	5 working days	10 working days
Note taking	<p>Brief note of facts, decisions, actions, key points of agreement / difference and target date for student signature. Captured on proforma. Aim to produce within 5 working days of meeting. Notes kept on student's record in School.</p>	<p>As Stage 1 but fuller notes. Aim to produce within 5 working days of meeting. Copy of notes stored on student's Wellbeing record.</p>	<p>As Stage 2, full notes. Aim to produce within 5 working days of meeting. Copy of notes stored on student's Wellbeing record.</p>

² May need to make a reasonable adjustment and give notice if disabled student with e.g. anxiety – check first.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Possible outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement by each party on expected future actions which may include e.g. behaviour change or provision of additional support if appropriate, with timescale for review. • No action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal agreement of required future actions which may include e.g. behaviour change or provision of additional support if appropriate with timescale for review. • No action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced version of Stage 2 Plan • Student required to interrupt their studies or have studies suspended • No action

Appendix 3: Fitness to Study Action Plan

Student's name & roll number:

Present:

Concern raised by:

Brief outline of concern:

Feedback following meeting with student:

Agreed action points:

Declaration:

I understand the nature of the concern(s) raised by the university, as has been explained to me and outlined in this document and the possible impact/consequences that this/these concern(s) may have upon my own fitness to study.

I also understand the impact that this/these concern(s) may have upon the community of staff and fellow students who are working and studying at the University and to which I belong.

I have agreed to work towards the action plan outlined above, which has been developed to support me.

I understand that if I am unable or unwilling to carry out the action plan, the university will need to consider taking appropriate or remedial actions, or referral as my situation will require.

I understand and consent to information surrounding my fitness to study being shared with other relevant services within the University. A copy of this action plan will therefore be submitted to the Dean of School and disseminated to relevant staff in the School where appropriate. I am aware that this report and its outcomes will also be recorded by the Counselling & Wellbeing service.

I realise that any non-attendance can be reported to the appropriate service and acted upon.

Whilst I understand that the University has a duty of care to support me, ultimately I am responsible for my own health and wellbeing and it is my responsibility to be fit to study.

I am also signing to agree to a review in order to review the progress I have made.

Student's name:

Signature _____ Date of Signature _____

Review Date _____

Appendix 4: Flowchart

