



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

# **Student Fitness to Study Policy**

**Version Number 4.1**

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## 1. What to do if concerned about a student's mental health

Any person who has concerns that a student may need additional support should signpost the student to, or report concerns directly to, appropriate services as soon as possible. If you are unsure how to act in relation to concerns about a student, you can seek advice from the askUS team.

### Immediate concern about risk

If you are concerned that there is an immediate risk from a student towards themselves or others, you should contact the emergency services on 999 directly and the University Security team (Emergency 0161 295 3333) immediately afterwards.

### Support Services

askUS Enquiries (visit <https://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/contact-askus> for opening hours) 0161 295 0023 or [askUS@salford.ac.uk](mailto:askUS@salford.ac.uk)

Counselling & Wellbeing Service (core hours 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri excl. public holidays) 0161 295 0023 or [wellbeing@salford.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@salford.ac.uk)

Disability & Learner Support Service (core hours 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri excl. public holidays) 0161 295 0023 or [disability@salford.ac.uk](mailto:disability@salford.ac.uk)

Chaplaincy team (variable hours – for urgent enquiries contact askUS Enquiries) [faithcentre@salford.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentre@salford.ac.uk)

Students' Union Advice Service (core hours 9am-4pm, Mon-Fri excl. public holidays) 0161 351 5400 [advicecentre-ussu@salford.ac.uk](mailto:advicecentre-ussu@salford.ac.uk)

### Who can students talk to?

If a student is worried about their own health or wellbeing or that of another student they can talk to:

- A member of a relevant professional service, such as the Counselling & Wellbeing Service or the Disability and Learner Support Service.
- A member of academic staff.
- An officer, student representative or staff member of the Students' Union.
- Another relevant person (such as a placement liaison or mentor or your GP).
- Professional body or Union representatives.

## 2. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) inform students and staff of what is 'fitness to study';
- b) provide a clear, supportive and impartial procedure for staff to address concerns relating to a student's fitness to study; having due regard to the principles of natural justice;
- c) encourage engagement with the student at an early stage and promote joint problem-solving and planning between the University and the student.

## 3. Policy Scope

This applies to all taught and research students registered at the University of Salford. It does not apply to students studying at collaborative partner organisations which are expected to have their own procedures in place.

## 4. 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 implement this policy through the associated [procedure](#) in a supportive manner. The policy does not aim to facilitate the withdrawal or expulsion of students for misconduct.
- iv) When implementing the Fitness to Study policy, all staff will have regard to the need to follow the principles of accessibility, clarity, proportionality, timeliness, fairness, independence, confidentiality, and the enhancement of the student experience. These principles are discussed in more detail in Appendix 4 of this policy.

## 5. Definitions and Interpretations

- i) When a student is 'fit to study', they are physically and mentally well enough so that, with any necessary and reasonable support and adjustments in place:
  - They can engage with and benefit from their academic studies and submit assessments with a reasonable chance of obtaining the qualification they have registered for;
  - Their behaviour does not unreasonably disrupt any other members of the University community; or visitors in their University business;
  - They do not put their own health and safety at risk, or that of others.
- ii) A reference in this policy or associated procedure to an office-holder includes that office-holder's deputy or nominee.
- iii) A 'friend' means a friend, relative or guardian, a fellow student at the University acting in a supporting capacity, or a member or staff member of the Students' Union. A friend may support and assist the student but should not represent them or act on their behalf, including in a legal capacity.

## 6. When to use the Procedure

The procedure may be invoked at the appropriate stage when a student's fitness to study is in question. Such a question may arise due to a range of circumstances including (but not limited to):

- Behaviour which would normally be dealt with as a disciplinary or fitness to practise matter, but which may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health difficulty.
- A student's health difficulties are adversely affecting the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others.
- A student's academic performance and/or engagement is unsatisfactory and may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem.

## 7. Relationship to other Policies and Procedures

You can find a list of the University's policies and procedures here: <http://www.salford.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/governance/policies-and-procedures>

### i) Risk Review & Response Policy

The Risk Review and Response Policy may be invoked before the start of, or during, implementation of the Fitness to Study procedure. Application of the Risk Review and Response procedure will not necessarily impede the progress of the Fitness to Study policy.

### ii) Safeguarding Policy

If there are any concerns that the student is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse as a 'vulnerable person', 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.

### iii) Fitness to Practise Procedure

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.

### iv) Student Misconduct Procedure

A student who has a mental, physical or emotional health issue is not exempt from following the University's **Student Code of Conduct**. Where there is a Disciplinary issue, the Student Disciplinary procedure will take precedence, unless there is a reasonable belief by the School's nominee that the offending behaviour may be due partly or wholly to a physical, mental or emotional issue and that engagement with the student through the Fitness to Study procedure

is the most constructive way to address the issue.

v) **Student Engagement, Participation & Attendance Policy**

Under this policy a student will be offered support if they are struggling to engage with their studies. If it transpires that a student is not engaging due to mental or physical health issues, referral to Fitness to Study policy and procedure should be considered. However, if a student has already missed a substantial proportion of their studies, it may be that interruption of studies (with potential for return to study in the following year) will be the only possible option for consideration.

vi) **Order of Use of Policies**

Use of the Fitness to Study policy and procedure will normally only be considered if the Safeguarding policy, Fitness to Practise policy, Student Disciplinary procedure and Student Engagement, Participation & Attendance policy either do not apply, have been completed, or have been considered/initiated and a recommendation made to engage the student with the Fitness to Study procedure, as relevant. The use of the Risk & Review policy will not affect the use of the Fitness to Study policy and procedure.

vii) **Student Support Policy**

The policy should be considered alongside the Student Support Policy Framework.

<b>Document Control Information</b>			
<b>Status and reason for development</b>			
The previous document was a Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure. The Policy and Procedure now exist as separate documents.			
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<b>Author</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorised &amp; Date</b>
Polly Smith	Update: Minor changes	V4.1	SELTEC Chair's Action 31/08/21
Polly Smith	Procedural aspects removed from Policy	V3	SELTEC 22 May 2019
<b>Policy Management and Responsibilities:</b>			
Owner:	Polly Smith, Student Experience and Support		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	Associate Deans (Student Experience)		
<b>Have you completed consultation / formal assessment with the following advisory teams:</b>			
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR)	In process		
Legal implications (LPG)	N/A		
Information Governance (LPG)	N/A		
Student facing procedures (QEO)	Policy developed in conjunction with QEO		
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<a href="http://www.salford.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/governance/policies-and-procedures">http://www.salford.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/governance/policies-and-procedures</a>			
<b>Document dissemination and communications plan: Sent to key admissions contacts across the University.</b>			