



Fitness to Study Policy

Document	Part of College Quality Framework
Policy owner:	Principal
Policy Author	Vice Principal for Quality
Version	1.1
Review date (bi-annual)	July 2024
Applies to:	All college apprentices and learners.
Monitoring and evaluation:	Records of any fitness to study interventions and recording will be monitored and evaluated in line with College Safeguarding, Behaviour for Learning and Equality and Diversity reporting.
Equality & Diversity	Students and staff of the college visitors, other personnel working within the college and members of the local community all have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. We have a long-standing commitment to equality, diversity, social inclusion and mobility and this policy sits within this. We see these as central to our success in building an inclusive and welcoming culture for all. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying by students or any anti-social or criminal behaviour which can damage and disrupt the lives of other students, staff, other personnel working within the college or other members of the community or bring the college into disrepute.

Associated documents/policies for this area:

	College Strategic Plan
	College Quality Framework and associated policies
	Behaviour for Learning Policy
	Equality & Diversity Policy

General Principles	<p>All students are expected to behave in a courteous and respectful manner to fellow students, staff, other personnel working within the college and members of the outside community. Poor behaviour will not be and will be reviewed under the Behaviour for Learning Policy.</p> <p>The college is committed to supporting all students to fulfil their potential. It is recognised that there will be occasions where, for example, a student's mental health condition may impact on their own, or others, ability to fulfil that potential. This policy and its related procedures are designed to outline the action that the</p>
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	<p>college will take to address fitness to study concerns and to ensure that issues can be dealt with in a clear and open fashion.</p> <p>This policy and its related procedures are not intended to give guidance on wider matters relating to students with mental health issues. However, this policy is intended to ensure a consistent approach to managing situations in which a student's behaviour is giving cause for significant concern.</p> <p>Students are encouraged to declare any disability, illness or disease that is likely to interfere with their studies or the health and wellbeing of other students. This allows the college to discharge its duty of care and enables reasonable adjustments to be made to support students in their studies in line with Equality legislation.</p>
Duty of care	<p>The college has a duty of care to all members of its community in order to ensure the health, safety and well-being of its students, staff and visitors. In exceptional cases, therefore, this duty of care may require the college to withdraw a student if that student presents a serious and immediate risk to themselves or to other members of the college community.</p>
Data Protection & Confidentiality	<p>The college is governed by data protection law and will treat all personal information - including sensitive personal information relating to students' mental and physical health - as confidential.</p> <p>Personal information about a student obtained under this policy and procedure will only be shared with those members of staff of the college who need to know that information in order to offer appropriate support to the student or to enable the operation of this policy and its procedures including Safeguarding where external agencies may need to be informed and consulted.</p>
Grounds for Fitness to Study	<p>A concern relating to a student's fitness to study can be raised via a wide range of sources, including but not limited to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Concerns about the student's fitness to study are raised by a student themselves. b) The student has informed a member of staff that they have concerns about their own fitness to study. c) The student's disposition is such that it indicates that there may be need to address an underlying issue. d) Behaviour that would normally be dealt with under the Behaviour for Learning Procedure, which may be known or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health issue. e) A student's behaviours are having an adverse effect on the health, safety or wellbeing of other students and/or staff.

	<p>f) The student's academic performance or personal conduct is not acceptable and is thought to be as a result of an underlying physical or mental health issue.</p>
<p>Stage 1 (informal)</p>	<p>Once concerns are raised, the Course Tutor (or Head of School) and member of staff from Student Experience should arrange to meet with the student as soon as possible. At this meeting, a clear explanation will be given to the student about the concerns raised and the meeting will be conducted in a sympathetic and supportive manner. The student may be accompanied by a parent or guardian or a Student Support member if appropriate.</p> <p>The aim of the meeting will be to attempt to identify any underlying causes for the concerns raised and determine if any adjustments can be made to alleviate these concerns.</p> <p>The student will be referred to specific sources of support available at college and to outside agencies if appropriate.</p> <p>An action plan should be determined and agreed upon between the student and the Course Tutor (or Head of School), including specific review dates.</p> <p>Further informal meetings will occur on these review dates to determine if the concerns previously raised are being resolved. A copy of the action plan should be sent to the student within five working days of the first informal meeting. A copy of this documentation should also be sent to Director of Curriculum.</p>
<p>Stage 2 (formal)</p>	<p>If the concerns have not been resolved by the actions in Stage 1, or if the member of staff identifying the concern considers that the case is too serious to be dealt with under Stage 1 of the procedure, the student can be referred to Stage 2 of the procedure.</p> <p>A formal meeting will be arranged with a Director of Curriculum, Director of Student Services and a designated Safeguarding Officer in order to make an assessment of the student's fitness to study.</p> <p>The student will be invited to attend the meeting. The student will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a parent or guardian if under 18 and by a friend if other 18. The student will be given notice of the meeting date</p> <p>The letter of invitation to the Fitness to Study Panel will include the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A clear outline of the concerns raised. b) Confirmation that the student may be accompanied to the meeting. c) The membership of the Panel considering the case. d) Encouragement for the student to speak to their Doctor, Student Support Advisor prior to attendance at the meeting.

	<p>The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the areas of concern and assess the student's fitness to study. The Fitness to Study Panel will seek to identify a way forward that is likely to serve the best interests of the student, balanced with the best interests of other members of the college. The outcome of the meeting may include one or more of the following (this list is not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agreement by all concerned that the concerns raised have been or will shortly be resolved and that no further action is required. b) Agreement by the student to a formal action plan to remedy the situation. This might include, for example, referral to outside agencies such as drug and alcohol abuse agencies, mental health support or counselling. Where appropriate, the action plan may include clearly defined timescales. c) Agreement by the student to take a break in learning for a specified period of time. Re-admission following this period of break will be determined by the Director of Curriculum in which the student studies and may require evidence that the student has engaged in a specific therapeutic programme if appropriate. <p>The Fitness to Study Panel will be held in the student's absence if the student chooses not to attend or, despite all reasonable attempts, the College has not been able to contact the student.</p> <p>A written record of the meeting shall be made and this will include any agreed action plan. A copy of the written record and action plan will be sent to the student within five working days of the meeting. Copies of this action plan may also be sent to members of staff in the college who will be responsible for assisting the student to undertake the actions required. A copy of this record will be maintained in the Directorate. It will be the responsibility of the Head of School in the Directorate to ensure that actions arising from the meeting are followed up.</p>
<p>Immediate Risk</p>	<p>If concerns about a student have not been resolved by the actions in Stage 2 of these procedures, or a student's behaviour raises serious immediate concerns that they pose a risk to themselves or to others, then the member of staff identifying the concerns should inform the Director of Curriculum and Designated Safeguarding Lead.</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum, in conjunction with other appropriate staff such as Safeguarding and Head of Student Experience will conduct a risk assessment to identify the level of risk to the student and /or to others and determine whether continued study may put the student and/or others at an unacceptable risk or further exacerbate the student's condition.</p> <p>The panel will also consider whether the student's health or behaviours demonstrate an inability to meet the learning outcomes of the award. All available evidence will be included as part of the risk assessment.</p> <p>The risk assessment will normally result in one of two possible outcomes:</p>

	<p>a) The level of risk to the student and/or others is within acceptable levels and Stage 2 of these procedures should (continue to) be followed.</p> <p>b) The level of risk to the student and/or others is unacceptable and Stage 3 of these procedures should (continue to) be followed.</p> <p>If the risk assessment concludes that there is an unacceptable level of risk, the Director of Curriculum will convene an urgent meeting with the student, who may be accompanied by a parent/guardian or and relevant friend to discuss the outcomes of the risk assessment. This meeting will consider various options in relation to the student, including temporary suspension or a recommendation to a member of the College Executive member, usually the Deputy Principal, that the student be withdrawn.</p> <p>A decision from the immediate risk meeting can be made “in abentia” if a student does not attend.</p>
Stage 3 (Serious)	<p>If concerns about a student have not been resolved by the actions in Stage 2 of these procedures then the Head of School identifying the concerns should inform the Director of Curriculum and Designated Safeguarding Lead.</p> <p>The Director of Curriculum will convene an urgent meeting with the student, who may be accompanied by a parent/guardian or and relevant friend to discuss the outcomes.</p> <p>This meeting will consider various options in relation to the student, including temporary suspension or a recommendation to a member of the College Executive member, usually the Deputy CEO, that the student be withdrawn.</p> <p>A decision from the immediate risk meeting can be made “in abentia” if a student does not attend the convened meeting.</p>
Appeal	<p>Students have the right to appeal against any decision taken under Stage 3 of these procedures. An appeal must be based on one of the following grounds:</p> <p>a) there is new evidence that would have significantly affected the outcome and which could not reasonably have been made available during Stage 3 of the process</p> <p>b) that there was a material procedural irregularity with regard to the process which demonstrably affected the outcome</p> <p>A student wishing to submit an appeal, must submit their request in writing within 10 working days of the date of the decision to the Principal. If a student has been excluded from the University, their appeal will usually be heard by the Deputy Principal.</p>

<p>Upon receipt of a student's appeal letter, the Principal or his nominee will respond within 10 working days. The decision will be final. At this time the college will consider that its procedures have been concluded and the student will be issued with a letter to this effect.</p>
