# SUPPORT TO STUDY PROCEDURE

## Purpose

1. The Support to Study Procedure is designed to enable the University of Suffolk to respond to and manage concerns regarding a student's health or behaviour where this is seriously impacting on them and/or others and indicates that they may not currently be fit to study. The aim of the procedure is to support the student through to successful completion of their studies where possible.

## Scope

2. This procedure applies to all students enrolled on a course offered by the University of Suffolk, including those at partner institutions.

3. The Support to Study Procedure should be used where students require support or intervention beyond the remit of standard procedures. Concerns should be considered through the appropriate procedure in the first instance, for example the Additional Time due to Extenuating Circumstances Policy or referral to Student Life services for disability support through reasonable adjustments and other support arrangements.

4. Concerns about a student may be raised from any source, including any member of staff, student, placement partner, the Occupational Health Service or other agencies such as the Police or Social Services. A concern may also be raised as a result of an application made under the Additional Time due to Extenuating Circumstances Policy or Academic Appeals Procedure, or as a result of an investigation under the Student Discipline Procedure.

5. A concern may arise due to:

- the student demonstrating behaviour that poses a risk of harm to either themselves or others;
- the student's behaviour and/or circumstances significantly impacting on their ability to achieve the competence standards or learning outcomes required;
- the student's health or behaviour causing disruption to the teaching, learning or support of another student.
- concerns regarding the student's capacity to live and/or learn within a University environment and/or within a placement; or
- the student's continued lack of awareness or willingness to engage with support.

6. Students who present at the University with physical, mental or emotional wellbeing difficulties should be considered from a supportive perspective rather than a disciplinary one. However, the University reserves the right to invoke investigative or disciplinary procedures where appropriate, for example:

- where the student's health or behaviour poses a risk of harm to either themselves or others; or
- where the student does not positively respond to supportive interventions; or
- where mitigating factors have been explored and it is found that they do not mitigate behaviour in breach of University regulations.

7. Should a student be unable or unwilling to participate in proceedings, the procedure should continue in their absence, and this may constitute a concern in its own right.

8. Where it is deemed appropriate and necessary, a student may be suspended from their studies at any point during the proceedings while a concern is being considered (as described in paragraph 31).

9. This procedure should not be used to address academic performance issues. Such issues should be dealt with through normal assessment procedures.

10. The Support to Study Procedure is not intended to replace the Fitness to Practise Procedure for students enrolled on courses which lead to professional registration and/or licence to practise, although a case raised under the Fitness to Practise Procedure may also lead to consideration of support for study or the student's fitness to study.

**Expectations**

11. The University encourages students to inform the University at the earliest opportunity of any disability or health condition that may affect their ability to study or that may require support arrangements to be put in place and expects that students will engage with the support arrangements available.

12. Where a student chooses to remain on a course, the consideration of any concerns raised about their fitness to study will start from the point of view that the student has taken the decision that they are fit to engage with the programme.

**Commitments**

13. In considering any concerns, appropriate attention will be paid to the requirements of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. In particular, reasonable adjustments will be made for those with disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health or long-term medical conditions.

14. The University will also take account of relevant legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2017) and UK Data Protection Act (2018), the Mental Health Act (2007), the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act (2010).

15. All proceedings should be conducted on the basis of strict confidentiality. All parties to the concern and individuals who have been involved in any related investigation and/or the management and/or the administration of the concern will observe the requirements for confidentiality. Whilst confidential information may need to be disclosed in order to consider the concern and potential risk, this will only be to those staff involved in the consideration of the concern.

16. Students can access impartial and confidential advice from the Students' Union Advice Centre and Student Life.

17. Audiotape recordings of meetings will not normally be allowed, although reasonable adjustments may be made if required in accordance with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Requests for adjustments must be made in advance to the Office for Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct (OSACC).

## PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT A STUDENT'S FITNESS TO STUDY

18. The Support to Study Procedure has three stages, based on the potential risk of harm to the student and/or others or severity of the concern. Each stage is designed to support the student and provide opportunities for engagement with the University's services to enable the concerns to be addressed and the student to progress. Paragraphs 19 to 64 set out the normal route for consideration of concerns. Serious or critical concerns, particularly where there is deemed to be a moderate or high risk of harm may proceed straight to stage 2 or stage 3 and a referral can be made in these instances to the Dean of School (or equivalent at partner institution) as outlined in paragraph 27.

**Stage 1: Early resolution / intervention, support, and action planning**

19. Support and action planning should be used in most cases where the risk or severity is low; the student's academic position is vulnerable but recoverable and the impact of their behaviour on others is limited. Informal support should include consideration of the following:

- Involving the Course Leader or Personal Academic Coach (or equivalent at partner institution) for academic support
- Involving appropriate staff from Student Life or equivalent department
- A target to improve attendance or engagement
- Signposting to specialist support internally and externally
- Agreed actions for the student to complete
- A follow-up date to review progress

20. On becoming aware of a concern, staff should discuss the concern with the Assistant Director, Student Life, Head of Student Life or nominee. Where appropriate, a Case Worker will be appointed, who will usually be a student support adviser.

21. Any approach, where possible, should be made by a member of staff who knows the student, therefore the Case Worker will work in close liaison with the Personal Academic Coach (or appropriate staff member) to arrange a supportive meeting with the student, to discuss the nature of the behaviour that has caused the concern raised.

22. The nature of the concerns should be clearly and honestly identified to the student who should be encouraged to discuss the issues or concerns. Where appropriate, information should be given to the student about sources of support available and the University's procedures, such as the Additional time due to Extenuating Circumstances Policy. The student should be given the opportunity to explain their point of view and should be encouraged to use one or more of the sources of support available.

23. At the end of the meeting, the Case Worker should set clear expectations and/or appropriate actions should be identified. A review period, normally of three weeks, should be agreed to allow the student to consider their behaviour and engage with the support available. To ensure transparency, the student should also be informed that if they are unwilling or unable to co-operate with the process or are unable to modify their behaviour, then the case may proceed to a formal stage of the Support to Study Procedure.

24. A record should be made of the discussions and the actions agreed, with a copy given to the student and the Personal Academic Coach (or equivalent). The Case Worker should also

retain a copy on the student's file. Should the case proceed to the formal stages of the procedure, a copy of this record should be provided to the Dean of School (or equivalent).

25. At the end of the review period, the Case Worker should meet with the student to discuss the steps taken by the student to address the concerns. If the concerns have been addressed satisfactorily, for example the student is engaging with support processes and showing signs of progress, then this will be noted, the Dean of School (or equivalent) will be updated, and the student will be monitored through the standard University procedures. It is hoped that, in most cases, the concerns can be satisfactorily addressed at this stage and that students will respond positively, co-operating fully with the process and taking advantage of the support available.

26. If the concerns have not been addressed, a further review period may be agreed or the case may proceed to the formal stages of the procedure, by making a referral usually in writing to the Dean of School (or equivalent) using a Fitness to Study Concerns referral form.

**Referring a concern and initial considerations**

27. On receipt of the concern, the Dean of School (or equivalent), in consultation with the student's Personal Academic Coach (or equivalent), the course leader and/or Assistant Director, Student Life, will evaluate the risk to the student and/or others and take such immediate precautionary measures as is deemed appropriate to safeguard all relevant parties, but without prejudice to the outcome of proceedings.

28. A risk assessment is undertaken where concerns raised pose a risk to:

- The student's behaviour and/or circumstances significantly impacting on their ability to achieve the competence standards or learning outcomes required
- The student's capacity to live and/or learn within a University environment and/or within a placement
- The student's own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others
- The property of the University and/or others, and/or
- The reputation of the University or an external partner or agency and/or its proper functioning and/or its activities

29. The risk assessment process will seek to establish the following:

a) There are emerging concerns and the risk is low
b) There are continuing or serious concerns
c) There are persistent or critical concerns

30. If the Dean of School determines that the risk is low, the concern will be managed, or continue to be managed under Stage 1 (informal stage). If the Dean of School determines that the risk is moderate or high, the concern should proceed for consideration by either the Support to Study Case Review Group (CRG) (Stage 2) or the Fitness to Study Committee (Stage 3).

**Precautionary measures**

31. Any precautionary measures taken are neutral in that they are not a determination regarding any of the concerns raised. The University has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect the academic position of a student in these circumstances regardless of the allegations or concerns. Measures might include:

- Temporary suspension of a student from their programme of study or a learning activity.
- Temporary exclusion from University premises either particular areas/campuses.
- Temporary removal of access to University facilities and/or resources.
- Temporary non-contact agreements.

32. Suspension is an interim measure. The suspension may be to take a student off campus or out of placement for their own safety or for the safety of others while a case review is carried out, or to provide a cooling off period.

33. Suspension may include recommending to the Vice-Chancellor/Principal, in consultation with the Academic Registrar and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent), that the student be suspended as an interim safeguarding measure. In the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or the University Secretary are empowered to authorise the suspension. Where a student is registered at a partner institution, the relevant Principal (or equivalent) or their authorised representative have delegated authority to suspend a student.

34. Any suspension as an interim safeguarding measure of a University of Suffolk student registered at one of the partner colleges must be notified immediately in writing by the relevant Principal (or equivalent) or their authorised representative to the Vice-Chancellor and Academic Registrar.

35. The period of suspension is at the discretion of the Vice Chancellor/Principal (or equivalent) or their authorised representative.

36. The terms of the precautionary action and the reason for it will be notified to the student in writing by the Vice-Chancellor/Principal (or equivalent) or their authorised representative.

37. A student may appeal the decision to suspend them from their studies and/or practice. An appeal and any supporting evidence should be submitted to the Office of Student Complaints and Conduct (OSACC) via email within five working days of the decision of suspension. In consultation with the Academic Registrar, the Vice-Chancellor/Principal will review and consider the appeal and an outcome will be issued to the student via email within five working days of the receipt of the appeal.

38. The Vice-Chancellor/Principal or authorised representative may take action as follows:

a) Determine no change to the original decision and terms to suspend/restrict the student;
b) Determine no change to the original decision to suspend but reduce or restrict the term of the suspension;
c) Overturn the original decision and remove the suspension/restriction.

39. Where a suspension remains, it will be reviewed every twenty working days (four weeks) until the conclusion of the case or at any stage if there is a material change in the circumstances of the case. The Office of Student Complaints and Conduct (OSACC) will invite the student to present any written representations in support of their review. Any review will be undertaken by an Associate Dean or Senior Academic who has had no prior involvement in the case and a recommendation made to the Vice-Chancellor or authorised nominee if the recommendation is that the suspension or restrictions should be lifted.

40. Factors to be considered as part of the review include the reason(s) for the suspension/restrictions, any altered circumstances, the stage of any investigation(s), and the estimated timescale before the case is likely to be resolved. Those carrying out the review may also consult with the relevant Dean of School or their nominee as appropriate. The student will be informed via email of the outcome of any review.

41. Should the outcome of the review be a recommendation to lift the suspension/restrictions, consideration will be given to any terms that should be applied to the student's return to the University. The lifting of the suspension will not affect the Support to Study process.

**Stage 2: Consideration by the Support to Study Case Review Group**

42. The Dean of School will pass all relevant documents, including the Fitness to Study Concern Form and a record of any agreed actions from Stage 1 where appropriate, to OSACC, who will convene a meeting of the CRG.

43. The CRG will comprise:

- Associate Dean Teaching and Learning or nominee (Chair) (not previously involved in the review of any interim suspension/restrictions)
- The student's Personal Academic Coach (or equivalent) or course leader (as appropriate)
- Assistant Director, Student Life (or equivalent) or nominee
- Staff member from Student Life Department (or equivalent), who does not know the student

A representative from OSACC will be in attendance to record the discussions, the CRG's decision and justification for that decision.

The panel may hear from the Case Worker or staff working with the student, but they will not be part of the decision-making process.

44. The student will be informed in writing by OSACC at the earliest opportunity, and normally within five working days of referral of the case, that a CRG is being convened to discuss the case, the nature of the concern and the procedure being followed.

45. The student will be asked to submit a statement in response to the concern, along with any documents, such as medical reports or certificates where relevant, to OSACC within ten working days of the letter informing them of the concern. In certain cases, the student may also be invited to attend the meeting of the CRG to give their representation in person. Where a student is invited to attend, they may be accompanied at the meeting by a friend. A friend is defined as a member of staff of the University of Suffolk or Partner institution, or a registered student at the University, or a member of staff or sabbatical officer of the Students' Union. The role of the friend is to act as an observer, give moral support and to assist the student to make their case. In addition, where reasonable adjustments are required, a student may be accompanied by a supporter e.g., a sign language communicator or a note-taker, and a student with difficulty in understanding English may be accompanied by an interpreter.

46. The CRG will meet normally within five working days of the deadline for the student to submit their statement. The meeting will normally be in person, but a virtual meeting may be facilitated where appropriate.

47. The role of the CRG is to consider the case and any potential risk to the student and/or others. The purpose of the meeting is to agree a set of actions and strategies that will support the student to improve their engagement with their course and potential outcomes. The CRG will also take into account whether or not the student has engaged with early interventions identified at Stage 1 and whether the concern has persisted or escalated. If the student fails to provide a

statement or does not attend the meeting when invited, the CRG will continue as planned and make a decision based on the information to hand.

48. The CRG, having considered the concern, may decide:

a) There is no need for additional intervention. The case will be closed, and the student will be expected to engage with the University's processes and services in the usual way and maintain contact with their Personal Academic Coach.

b) There is a need for further intervention. The CRG will identify recommended actions and/or the reinforcement of any existing interventions, the support to be provided and an appropriate review date. This may include the recommendation of a period of intercalation. The Case Worker will continue to be responsible for encouraging the student's engagement with the recommendations, ensuring that the appropriate support is in place and holding regular meetings with the student, to review their progress. The student should be informed that if they do not engage with and follow the action plan, the case may proceed to Stage 3. The Case Worker should provide a written report to the CRG at the end of the review period.

c) To refer the case to the Fitness to Study Committee. The CRG would normally only take this decision where a serious or critical concern remains, and the suspension, exclusion or withdrawal of the student may be the most appropriate course of action, or where the student does not engage with the process or does not agree with the recommendation to take a period of intercalation.

d) To refer the case to an alternative University policy or procedure e.g., Student Discipline or Fitness to Practice.

49. The student will be informed of the decision of the CRG, in writing via OSACC, normally within five working days of the meeting. The letter will also include a concise record of the discussions and the rationale for the decision, and provide details of actions to be taken, where appropriate. A copy of the letter will also be retained on the student's file.

**Stage 3: Consideration by the Fitness to Study Committee**

50. This stage of the procedure may be implemented following a referral from the CRG and/or where there the following examples may apply; There are continuing and/or serious concerns (as outlined in paragraph 5)

- The student has not engaged with support procedures and recommendations made at stages 1 and 2 and does not wish to intercalate.

- the student has been temporarily suspended as a precautionary measure or has been detained under the Mental Health Act.
- there are other serious on-going concerns regarding the student's fitness to study.

51. All relevant documentation will be referred as expeditiously as possible to the Academic Registrar, who will convene the Fitness to Study Committee (FTSC).

52. The FTSC shall comprise:

- Dean of School (or equivalent) (Chair) or nominee
- Course Leader or other senior academic if the Course Leader has previously been involved in the case as either the Personal Academic Coach or Case Worker
- Assistant Director, Student Life or nominee

A representative from OSACC will be in attendance as Secretary to record discussions, the decision of the FTSC and the justification for that decision.

53. The Chair of the FTSC, in consultation with the Academic Registrar may order the proceedings at its discretion but should conduct as outlined in Appendix 1. and may call witnesses if required. The FTSC may request further medical evidence.

54. The Chair of the FTSC, in consultation with the Academic Registrar, will review the documentation and determine whether a specialist assessment of the student should be sought prior to the meeting. The purpose of the assessment will be to provide the following information:

- the nature and extent of any condition from which the student may be experiencing;
- their prognosis;
- the extent to which it may affect the student's fitness to study, ability to achieve the learning outcomes and/or manage the demands of student life;
- any risk it may pose to others;
- whether any additional steps should be taken by the University in light of the condition to enable the student to study effectively;
- whether the student will be receiving any on-going treatment or support.

55. If a specialist assessment is sought, the student should be encouraged to consent to this as it will ultimately enable the University to address the concerns in the most effective manner possible. The cost of a specialist assessment will usually be met by the University. The student will also be asked to authorise full disclosure to the University of the results of the assessment and will be provided with assurances that it will be treated in confidence. Should the student refuse

to undertake the medical assessment or to share this information with the University, the meeting of the FTSC will proceed based on the information already available.

56. The Secretary will arrange a date for the meeting of the FTSC as soon as possible (preferably within twenty working days) and will formally invite the student to attend. The student may be accompanied at the meeting by a friend as defined in paragraph 45. An explanation of the purpose of the meeting and copies of the documentation being considered will be sent to the members of the FTSC, the Chair of the CRG and to the student concerned, normally ten working days before the meeting.

57. The student and Chair of the CRG (if applicable) may request the contribution of relevant individuals who can present information about the case ("witnesses") and shall inform the Secretary of the name(s) at least five working days prior to the FTSC. The decision of the Chair of the FTSC regarding witnesses to be called shall be final. In reaching a decision about witnesses to be called, the Chair will take into account their number and relevance to the matter in hand.

58. The Secretary shall inform witnesses of the date, time, and venue of the FTSC but is not responsible for ensuring their attendance. The unavailability of witnesses shall not restrict or delay the FTSC unless the Chair determines that their evidence may be material to the decision of the FTSC. Unavailable witnesses may submit a statement to the Secretary for consideration by the FTSC. Exceptionally, a witness may be accompanied by a friend as defined in paragraph 45.

59. The student may also provide the Secretary with a written statement and/or any other additional written evidence as he or she considers relevant to the case. Such information should be submitted at least five working days before the meeting and will be circulated to the FTSC and the Chair of the CRG by the Secretary.

60. The Secretary will send final confirmation of arrangements to the student at least three working days before the meeting. This will be sent to the student's University email address and contact address and should include:

- the nature of the concern
- membership of the FTSC
- the name of the presenter of the case
- the name(s) of any witness(es) called
- the date, time and place of the FTSC

61. The FTSC will consider the oral and written evidence submitted and any oral and/or written statement or evidence provided by the student. The FTSC has the power to seek such other evidence as it deems necessary to make an informed decision and may be adjourned to allow for such evidence to be gathered.

62. The FTSC will operate on the principle of the balance of probability and the decision reached should be the majority decision of the FTSC. Where there is a split decision, the outcome will be determined by the Chair of the FTSC.

63. The possible outcomes of the FTSC may include, but are not limited to:

a) The student can continue with their studies with appropriate support and an agreed action plan;
b) The student agrees to take a period of intercalation and return may be subject to conditions;
c) The student cannot currently continue with their studies and a period of intercalation is enforced, with return subject to conditions;
d) Taking into account the individual circumstances of the case and any supporting medical evidence where there is no reasonable prospect of the student re-engaging with their studies, the student will be withdrawn from the programme. This outcome should only be considered in the most serious cases.

64. The Secretary will inform the student and the Chair of the CRG in writing within five working days of the FTSC, giving clear and detailed reasons for the decision and any actions that need to be taken and, where appropriate, conditions that need to be met. The student will also be informed of the right to appeal against the decision of the FTSC in accordance with paragraphs 70 to 79 of this Procedure.

**Return to study**

65. After a period of suspension or intercalation, the decision as to whether the student may return to study will be made by the Dean of School (or equivalent), in consultation with the Academic Registrar and the Assistant Director, Student Life.

66. Where the student had been suspended as part of the Support to Study Procedure, the Academic Registrar will be responsible for informing the Vice-Chancellor if and when the suspension may be lifted.

67. Students will only be permitted to return if the University is satisfied that they are fit to study and any conditions imposed on their return have been met.

68. Should the University have any continuing concerns about the student's return to study at the end of a period of intercalation, a medical assessment may be requested. If this is the case, the University will nominate an independent professional to carry out the assessment and cover the cost.

69. In any cases where a student returns to study following the implementation of the Support to Study Procedure, the University may decide that a return to study plan is necessary to support and monitor the student during the early stages of their return. Regular review meetings may also be held. In such cases, the student must continue to co-operate and engage with these meetings, which may continue for a specified period of time or for the duration of their studies.

## PROCEDURE FOR APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF THE FITNESS TO STUDY COMMITTEE

70. Written notice of appeals against a decision of the FTSC must be submitted to OSACC within five working days of the written confirmation of the decision of the FTSC.

71. The grounds on which an appeal against the decision of the FTSC can be considered are:

- the FTSC did not make reasonable efforts to acquire all relevant information
- that new evidence has become available that could not have reasonably been provided for the FTSC and which could materially have affected the decision(s) of the FTSC
- there was evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the hearing by the FTSC
- there was prejudice and/or bias and/or appearance of prejudice and/or bias in the conduct of the hearing of the FTSC
- the outcome is not reasonable or proportionate

72. In the event of an appeal, the Academic Registrar will consider whether the grounds for appeal are covered by the provisions of paragraph 71 above and warrant further consideration by the Fitness to Study Appeal Panel (FTSAP).

73. If the Academic Registrar determines that there are no grounds for further consideration of the appeal, the matter will be referred to a senior representative of the awarding institution for consideration. If the senior representative of the awarding institution agrees that there are no grounds for further consideration, the Academic Registrar will inform the student in the form of a

completion of procedures letter within ten working days giving the reasons for that decision. This decision is final and there is no further right of appeal. Students may be able to seek a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (see paragraph 80).

74. If the Academic Registrar or senior representative of the awarding institution determines that the appeal does warrant further consideration, the Academic Registrar will appoint a FTSAP.

75. The FTSAP will comprise:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair) or nominee
- one senior academic who has had no previous involvement in the case
- one academic from the relevant subject area from the awarding institution
- Deputy Academic Registrar (or nominee)

A representative from OSACC will be Secretary to the FTSAP and record the FTSAP's decision and justification for that decision.

76. The FTSAP will carry out a paper-based review of all documents considered at the FTPC, together with the written statement submitted by the student setting out the grounds for the appeal. The FTSAP will not proceed by way of a re-hearing but will have the power to require the presentation of such further evidence as it deems necessary. The student will be informed of when the FTSAP will meet but will not be present.

77. The FTSAP will have the same powers as the FTSC and may confirm the decision of the FTSC or substitute such other decision as it considers appropriate.

78. When the FTSAP has reached its decision, the Secretary will inform the student in writing through the issue of a completion of procedures letter, copied to the Dean of School (or equivalent) and Academic Registrar, within five days of the FTSAP meeting.

79. The decision of the FTSAP is final and there is no further right to appeal. Students may be able to seek a review by the OIA (see paragraph 80).

**Further right to appeal**

80. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal against a decision of the FTSAP may be able to seek a review by the OIA should the case be eligible under the OIA's rules (see http://www.oiahe.org.uk/). Details will be provided in the completion of procedures letter advising the student of the final outcome of their appeal.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

81. The University of Suffolk will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Fitness to Study Procedure and reflect upon the outcomes for enhancement purposes. A report will be submitted annually to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Quality Committee and Senate. The report will include equality monitoring data.

## APPENDIX 1

## ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS AT THE FITNESS TO STUDY COMMITTEE (FTSC)

1. At the start of the hearing, the FTSC will have a preliminary discussion in private. The Secretary shall then invite into the committee meeting:

- the Chair of the CRG or other staff member presenting the case
- the student who is the subject of the hearing
- any accompanying friend as permitted by the Procedure

2. If the student fails to appear, the FTSC will consider whether or not to proceed with the case immediately and may do so provided it is satisfied that the student has been properly informed of the time and place of the meeting.

3. Any witnesses whom the FTSC has invited to attend will join the committee to give evidence and then will withdraw from the meeting.

4. The Chair shall state briefly why the FTSC is sitting.

5. The proceedings at the FTSC will usually follow the pattern described below:

- all written evidence will be taken as read;
- the Chair of the CRG (or staff member familiar with the case) will present their statement;
- the student will present their case;
- the Chair of the CRG (or staff member familiar with the case) and the student may question each other and may each be questioned by the FTSC upon their statements or evidence, both written and oral;
- witnesses are called one at a time and are questioned first by the FTSC then by the person who nominated them and finally by the other party;
- following the withdrawal of any witnesses who have been called, the FTSC may ask any further questions of the student or the staff member;
- the Chair of the CRG (or staff member familiar with the case) may make a closing statement if wished (and may leave the hearing for a few minutes to prepare this);
- the student may make a closing statement if they wish (and may leave the hearing for a few minutes to prepare this);
- the student and staff member will leave the hearing;
- the FTSC will make a decision;

- at the discretion of the Chair of the FTSC, the student and Chair of the CRG (or staff member) may be invited back to hear the outcome;
- the hearing closes.

6. The order of proceedings will be at the discretion of the Chair of the FTSC. The ruling of the Chair on any point of procedure shall be final.

7. The FTSC may at any time either before or during a hearing decide to adjourn the hearing for a period not normally exceeding seven working days.

8. The decision of the FTSC will be confirmed in writing to the student and to the Dean of School by the Secretary within five working days of the meeting of the FTSC.

## APPENDIX 2

## SUPPORT TO STUDY PROCEDURE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**The Academic Registrar shall:**

- be informed that concern has been raised
- ensure that the FTSC and the FTSAP procedures are fully and properly followed
- be a source of independent advice to all parties in the FTSC and FTSAP
- receive and consider (in consultation with a senior representative of the awarding institution) appeals against decisions of the FTSC
- if it is decided (with the agreement of a senior representative of the awarding institution) that an appeal does not warrant consideration by an FTSAP, inform the student in writing giving the reasons within ten working days
- report outcomes of Fitness to Study cases to the University of Suffolk Senate annually

**The Assistant Director, Student Life and Head of Student Life (or equivalent) shall:**

- be a source of independent advice to staff and stakeholders who have concerns relating to a student's fitness to study
- where appropriate, appoint a Case Worker

**The Dean of School (or equivalent) shall:**

- take immediate action on notification of a concern to safeguard all relevant parties
- where appropriate, appoint a Case Worker

**The Chair of the Case Review Group (CRG) shall:**

- ensure that all relevant evidence is considered
- receive a written report from the Case Worker at the end of the agreed review period to determine the next course of action
- attend the FTSC to present the case

**The Case Worker shall:**

- at Stage 1, agree an action plan with the student and work in close liaison with the student and personal academic coach
- at Stage 2, encourage the student's engagement with the recommendations made by the CRG
- ensure that the appropriate support is in place and liaise with specialist agencies to arrange a specialist assessment where appropriate

- hold regular meetings with the student, to review the student's progress and maintain records of meetings
- prepare a written report for the Chair of the CRG at the end of the agreed review period
- attend the FTSC and FTSAP as a witness if required

**The Personal Academic Coach (or equivalent) shall:**

- attend meetings with the student and Case Worker as required
- liaise with the Case Worker as appropriate
- extend support to the student through the personal academic coaching system

**The Chair of the Fitness to Study Committee (FTSC) shall:**

- ensure that the FTSC proceeds as outlined in Appendix 1 and allows all relevant parties including the student the opportunity to present their case
- ensure that all relevant evidence is considered and ensure that the FTSC has all of the information it needs in order to reach a decision
- call witnesses to the FTSC and request further information/evidence required for the FTSC to reach a decision
- ensure that the FTSC reaches its decision based on the evidence before it from all relevant parties

**The Secretary to the Fitness to Study Committee (FTSC) shall:**

- ensure the FTSC procedures are fully and properly followed
- be a source of independent advice to all parties in the FTSC
- convene a meeting of the FTSC as soon as possible
- receive and send copies of all written evidence to all relevant parties
- be present for the proceedings of the FTSC to advise parties on procedure, take notes and record the FTSC's decision and reasons for the decision
- inform the student and Head of Department of the FTSC's decision in writing including informing the student of their right of appeal against the decision of the FTSC

**The Chair of the Fitness to Study Appeals Panel (FTSAP) shall:**

- ensure that all relevant evidence is considered and ensure that the FTSAP has all of the information it needs in order to reach a decision
- ensure that the FTSAP does not proceed as a re-hearing

**The Secretary of the Fitness to Study Appeals Panel (FTSAP) shall:**

- ensure the FTSAP procedures are fully and properly followed
- be a source of independent advice to all parties in the FTSAP
- convene a meeting of the FTSAP as soon as possible
- receive and send copies of all written evidence to all relevant parties
- be present for the proceedings of the FTSAP to advise parties on procedure, take notes and record the FTSAP's decision and reasons for the decision
- inform the student that there is no further right to appeal and provide information on how to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

## APPENDIX 3: Action Plan Template

Support for Study Action Plan – to be completed by Case Worker / student support adviser

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name: | | | | | |
| Adviser: | | Personal Academic Coach | | | |
| Summary of objectives<br>*Note here actions or objectives arising from the Support for Study Case Review Group or Fitness to Study Committee (delete once populated)*<br><br>Suggested frequency of review meetings | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Review meeting | Record of meeting | Progress against actions/objectives | Next steps | By when | Who |
| First meeting<br>Date: | | | | | |
| Review<br>Date: | | | | | |
| Review<br>Date: | | | | | |

## APPENDIX 4: Decision Map

Flowchart to support determining the appropriate stage of Support to Study Procedure

Mapped within the table below are the three stages and considerations associated to assist with determining which stage to of the procedure to invoke.

| | |
|---|---|
| There are initial or emerging concerns and a low risk of harm to self or others is presented:<br>• the student demonstrating behaviour that poses a risk of harm to either themselves or others;<br>• the student's behaviour and/or circumstances significantly impacting on their ability to achieve the competence standards or learning outcomes required;<br>• the student's health or behaviour causing disruption to the teaching, learning or support of another student.<br>• concerns regarding the student's capacity to live and/or learn within a University environment and/or within a placement; or<br>• the student's continued lack of awareness or willingness to engage with support. | Refer to stage 1 of the procedure - Early resolution / intervention, support, and action planning. (See paragraphs 19-26) |
| There are continuing and/or serious concerns and/or a moderate risk of harm to self or others is present; | Refer to stage 2 of the procedure – Refer concerns to the Dean of School for the case to be consideration by the Support to Study Case Review Group (See paragraphs 42-49) |

| | |
|---|---|
| • the student demonstrating behaviour that poses a risk of harm to either themselves or others:<br>• the student's behaviour and/or circumstances significantly impacting on their ability to achieve the competence standards or learning outcomes required;<br>• the student's health or behaviour causing disruption to the teaching, learning or support of another student.<br>• concerns regarding the student's capacity to live and/or learn within a University environment and/or within a placement; or<br>• the student's continued lack of awareness or willingness to engage with support.<br>• the student does not actively engage with support mechanisms | |
| There are persistent and/or critical concerns and/or a high risk of harm to self or others is present;<br><br>• the student demonstrating behaviour that poses a significant and/or likely risk of harm to either themselves or others;<br>• the student's behaviour and/or circumstances significantly impacting on their ability to achieve the competence standards or learning outcomes required;<br>• the student's health or behaviour causing disruption to the teaching, learning or support of another student. | Refer to stage 3 of the procedure – Refer concerns to the Dean of School for the case to be consideration by the Fitness to Study Committee (See paragraphs 50-64). |

| | |
|---|---|
| • concerns regarding the student's capacity to live and/or learn within a University environment and/or within a placement; or<br>• the student's continued lack of awareness or willingness to engage with support.<br>• The student has not engaged with support procedures and recommendations made at stages 1 and 2 and does not wish to intercalate.<br>• the student has been temporarily suspended as a precautionary measure or has been detained under the Mental Health Act. | |