# UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

## POLICY ON FITNESS TO STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Fitness to Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>All students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship with other policies</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Owner</strong></td>
<td>Proctor's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Approving Committee</strong></td>
<td>Learning &amp; Teaching Committee, then Academic Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy approved date</strong></td>
<td>September 2016</td>
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<td><strong>Policy effective from date</strong></td>
<td>2016-17 Academic Year</td>
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POLICY ON FITNESS TO STUDY

1. Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to respond to and manage concerns regarding a student’s health or behaviour that is seriously impacting on themselves and/or others, and indicating that they may not be currently fit to study. The University aims to support such students through to successful completion of their studies where possible. This policy encompasses concerns relating to currently registered students, prospective students, and summer students, and will be used when a concern is raised.

2. Raising a Concern
The University may become aware of a concern regarding a student’s fitness to study by a number of channels including self-referral and referral by third parties. These concerns should be communicated to an appropriate senior member of staff, who will normally be one of: a School Director of Teaching; a School Director of Postgraduate Research; or the appropriate Pro Dean for the student’s programme of study. The senior member of staff may recommend or reinforce appropriate interventions, judge that there is no need for further intervention or refer the student to student services for a fitness to study assessment. However, if the concerns about the student are urgent or serious – or in case of any doubt – the staff member who becomes aware of the concern should contact the Advice and Support Centre (ASC) immediately for advice in the first instance.

Where Referral to Student Services for a Fitness to Study assessment is considered to be the appropriate action, this should be enacted by completing the form provided below. This should be sent to the Advice and Support Centre (ASC) in the first instance. ASC staff will pass the completed referral form to the appropriate member of Student Services staff (usually a Support Adviser) who will respond to the individual/s raising the concern; contact the student, and inform any academic staff who may need to know about the concerns. During the Fitness to Study process, Student Services will liaise with the referring person, as appropriate, and will produce a report which will be sent to the referring person once the Fitness to Study process is complete.

3. Early Intervention prior to consideration of Fitness to Study
Student Services will assess the concern/s raised, check the student’s academic status and determine whether the situation can be resolved under academic regulations, or non-academic misconduct regulations. If there is a relevant academic or non-academic process, this will be implemented, alongside offering support and reasonable adjustment to the student to navigate this process, and monitor their health. Where there are no relevant regulations, Student Services will inform the student of the concern/s raised, offering guidance and any available appropriate support. As a result of this guidance, the student may choose to consider taking a Leave of Absence. If this is being considered, the student should meet with the Registry Support Officer to discuss the implications and process for requesting such a leave.
Some students choose to continue their studies if the relevant support and monitoring (University or external) can be put in place, and the student agrees to engage with this. Student Services will discuss with the student what types of support and monitoring would be appropriate to their situation, which may include:

- Regular meetings with Student Services;
- Engaging with relevant external health professionals;
- Reviewing suitability of current accommodation situation;
- Set points for review of the situation to ensure agreement is being complied with.

If concerns re-emerge at any point, including where the student ceases to engage with support and monitoring, the situation will be re-assessed. This may result in decisions previously made being overturned (i.e. decision to allow to remain within a residence reviewed and student rehoused).

4. Fitness to Study Case Conference

Student Services will notify the student that their case will be considered at a Fitness to Study Case Conference where ongoing concerns remain. For example:

- The student does not engage satisfactorily with the Early Intervention Process or subsequent monitoring and support and does not wish to take a Leave of Absence;
- The student is engaging satisfactorily with support and monitoring, however concerns remain regarding their fitness to study;
- There are other ongoing concerns regarding a student’s fitness to study.

Student Services will liaise with relevant University staff, and the student, in order to establish a suitable date and time for the Case Conference. Additionally, Student Services will compile the relevant available information for the purpose of generating a report and recommendation to inform this case conference. This would include:

- Any interaction with Student Services, including any existing disability record and medical documentation previously provided by the student;
- A summary of academic concerns, as raised by the referring person or school;
- Reports from any concerned individual witnesses (which may include academic staff, other students, parents);
- Any report from a University commissioned General Practitioner or specialist healthcare practitioner (such as an independent Psychiatrist). These professionals would have a greater understanding of the University context than an external health professional might, and be able to make a more informed analysis of the student’s ability to engage with their studies.

The student will be given the opportunity to submit their perspective, either in person, or by a written statement. If support is required for attending or submitting a statement, the student may approach Student Services or the Education Advocate within the Students’ Association. Students should be aware that in the event that they do not attend or engage, the Proctor reserves the right to proceed in their absence.
At the Case Conference, the Proctor along with the Dean of the student’s Faculty (or for Faculty of Medicine students, the Dean of Science) will review the report from Student Services, and any information presented by the student. Outcomes of a Fitness to Study Case Conference are:

1. The student can continue their studies with appropriate support;
2. The student chooses to take a Leave of Absence;
3. The student cannot currently continue their studies, and a compulsory Leave of Absence is required.

The outcome will be communicated to the student in person by the Director of Student Services, followed by written confirmation from the Proctor and then a meeting with the Registry Support Officer to activate the administrative process. Where a Leave of Absence is the outcome, the student will normally still retain the fee liability.

5. **The University’s Complaint Handling Procedure**

Any student who is dissatisfied with the University’s procedures following the conclusion of the Fitness to Study process should consult the University’s Complaints Policy at [http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/administration/complaints](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/administration/complaints). Complaints should be directed in the first instance to the Dean of an alternative Faculty.
Process for assessing Fitness to Study

Concern indicated about a student’s health or behaviour that is impacting seriously on themselves and/or others

Early Intervention
Student Services assesses concerns, checks the student’s academic status and contacts student

Is there an appropriate academic or non-academic policy to address the concerns?

Yes

Relevant process referred to
Offer support, make reasonable adjustments and monitor/review health

Concerns re-emerge

No

Does the student engage with Student Services?
Can guidance and monitoring resolve the concern?

Yes

OR

Yes

Student progresses with agreed monitoring

Student agrees to take Leave of Absence

No

Student Services compiles relevant materials to formulate a report and recommendation for the Fitness to Study Case Conference, which may include:

- Student Services records (e.g. existing disability records and medical documentation provided by the student)
- Consultation with appropriate concerned individual witnesses – e.g. representation by parents, academic staff etc.
- External professional input may be commissioned where appropriate (e.g. a University-commissioned GP, Psychiatric other specialist healthcare assessment, or Social Enquiry Report)

Fitness to Study Referral Form

Student Services invites student to submit a statement and/or attend Fitness to Study Case Conference to offer their perspective

Fitness to Study Case Conference
Proctor and Dean of the Faculty (Dean of Science for Faculty of Medicine students) review Student Services report, alongside any information presented by student.

Student informed of outcome
In person by Director of Student Services (or delegate)
Written confirmation by Proctor

Student may make a complaint to a Dean not previously involved and thereafter progressed to VPGov
Please complete all fields of the form below and return to Student Services at theasc@st-andrews.ac.uk.

If you have any queries about the referral process, whether Fitness to Study assessment is appropriate for a particular student or any aspects of this form, please contact Student Services via e-mail at the ASC (as above) or by phone on 01334 462020.

Whilst Student Services aim to deal with all referrals in a timely manner, liaising with other healthcare professionals can cause a delay in completion of the assessment.

As such, it is helpful for us to know about any academic decisions pending fitness to study assessment and any timeframe constraints you are aware of. Please document these in the ‘Reason for Referral’ box, below.

Surname:

Forename (s):

Matriculation No:

Course and year of study:

Date Commenced Studies:

Academic Progression (including periods of leave of absence, if applicable):

Reason for Referral

Brief summary of specific concerns leading to referral for fitness to study assessment (please provided further details on Page 2):

Please provide further background information regarding the concerns highlighted above.
Please provide as much detail as possible:

Academic Concerns (for example, poor academic attainment, lack of engagement with studies, accumulating absences, failure to complete coursework, or other concerns the referring person is aware of):

Relevant non-academic concerns (for example, personal, family, health-related or other concerns the referring person is aware of):

HAS THE STUDENT BEEN INFORMED OF THIS REFERRAL? YES/NO

REFERRAL MADE BY: ___________________________ DATE: ____________

ROLE: ___________________________

EMAIL: ___________________________

TEL: ___________________________