



University of
St Andrews

Support to study

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Key terms	Academic policies/Student progression/Fitness to study
Purpose	This policy relates to serious concerns about a student's health or behaviour which is impacting the student and/or others and which may indicate they require support to study.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
2.1	Updated membership of the Stage 2 Review panel to reflect restructured roles in Proctor's Office	Approved	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality, Principal's Office	November 2022

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

SUPPORT TO STUDY POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to determine and implement support to enable students to safely and effectively engage with their studies and University life. Where concerns are raised about a student's ability to study safely, the University will work with the student to consider an effective and sustainable support plan to manage concerns regarding a student's health or behaviour. The University recognises that there are students for whom remaining engaged with their studies is a protective factor, and aims to support students through to successful completion of their studies where possible.
- 1.2 This policy encompasses concerns relating to currently registered students (including those studying online), prospective students, summer/short courses students, and students on external placements (e.g. study abroad, work placement, field work).
- 1.3 This policy may be used for any student whose ability to cope with university life, to study and progress on their programme is seriously compromised as the result of their health, wellbeing, or a disability. A student may require a [support to study review](#) where they meet the above definition and/or where one or several of the following criteria apply:
- The student is unable actively to engage in their programme of study, to attend classes or meetings with tutors or supervisors or to spend sufficient regular time in private study in such a way as to enable them to succeed;
 - Evidence that behaviour is deemed likely to significantly and detrimentally affect the student's health and wellbeing;
 - Evidence that behaviour is deemed likely to have a detrimental impact on fellow students, staff, the University's external partners or the wider community, which on review is deemed unsustainable/unworkable;
 - The University finds that it cannot put in place reasonable adjustments in respect of the student's disability (including mental health difficulty) and/or requests for such have become unreasonable;
 - The student is due to engage in an external placement as part of their degree programme, e.g. study abroad, work placement, field work, where it is unlikely that sufficient support will be available to provide for their welfare and/or the welfare of others participating in an event.

2. Support for students

- 2.1 Students can access a range of support options, as described in the [Guide to Support Services](#).

3. Process

- 3.1 The University may become aware of a concern regarding a student's health or behaviour by a number of channels including self-declaration, Student Services consultation, interactions with

members of University staff, or third parties (e.g. family, friends and external services such as the NHS or Police).

3.2 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 either the emergency services, or Student Services, via the Advice and Support Centre (ASC), immediately for advice in the first instance.

3.3 Where concerns are reported to the ASC, or where they are identified during contact with Student Services, Student Services will attempt to engage with the student to determine whether effective support is in place. If the student does not engage with effective support planning and concerns remain, a support to study review will take place.

3.4 Support to Study Review Process: Stage 1

3.4.1 Student Services will assess the concern/s raised and check the student's academic status. Consultation with relevant colleagues will determine whether the situation can be resolved under alternative regulations, which may include (but is not limited to):

[Senate Regulations](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#)

[Leave of Absence, Re-engagement and Withdrawal Policy](#)

[Early Academic Intervention Policy](#)

[Academic Adjustments for Disabled Students Policy](#)

[Progress reviews and termination of studies for postgraduate research students](#)

[Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

[Student Conduct Risk Management Policy](#)

3.4.2 If there is a relevant alternative process, this will be implemented, alongside offering support and reasonable adjustment to the student to navigate this process, and monitor their health.

3.4.3 Where there are no relevant regulations, or where a Support to Study Review will operate in parallel to an additional process such as those listed in 3.4.1., Student Services will offer to meet with the student to discuss the concern/s raised, offering guidance and determine an appropriate support plan.

3.4.4 Student Services will work with the student to establish what types of support and monitoring would be appropriate to their situation, and enable them to continue their studies. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Regular meetings with Student Services;
- Engaging with relevant external health professionals;
- Reviewing suitability of current accommodation situation;
- Review of disability support plan including academic adjustments;
- Review of support and monitoring from the School/s, including supervision arrangements for research postgraduates;

- Review of support which may be available from family members and others in an identified support group;
- Set points for review of the situation to ensure the support plan is effective and sustainable.

3.4.5 Alternatively, the student may choose to consider taking a [Leave of Absence](#). If this is being considered, the student should meet with the Registry Officer (Student Support) to discuss the implications and process for requesting such a leave.

3.5 Support to Study Review Process: Stage 2

3.5.1 Student Services will notify the student that their case will be considered at Stage 2 if concerns re-emerge where:

- The student does not engage with their support plan and does not wish to take a Leave of Absence;
- The student is engaging satisfactorily with available support and monitoring, however risks cannot be reasonably managed.

3.5.2 A Stage 2 case conference will be convened, with a panel comprising the Proctor (or delegate) and the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) and Provost (or delegate).

3.5.3 Student Services will compile the relevant available information for the purpose of generating a report and recommendation to inform the Stage 2 panel. This may include:

- Any contact with Student Services, including any existing disability record and medical documentation previously provided by the student;
- A summary of any academic concerns;
- Reports from any concerned individuals or services (which may include academic staff, other students, family/guardian, or external services);
- 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 support required for the student to safely and effectively engage with their studies. Should this be beneficial, or where further advice and an independent view on support is required, Student Services will discuss this option with the student.

If information is provided to the University in confidence, it may not be possible for the University to share that information with a student, or if information is disclosed the source may be withheld.

3.5.4 The student will be given the opportunity to submit their perspective to the panel, either in person, or by a written statement. The student is welcome to approach Student Services or the Education Advocate within the Students' Association, if support is required for attending or submitting a statement. 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.

3.5.5 Outcomes of a Stage 2 Case Conference are:

- a. The student can continue their studies with appropriate support and regular scheduled review of this support by Student Services. The Proctor will communicate the outcome to the student in writing, and request that the student discuss the outcome with Student Services.
 - b. The student wishes to take a [Leave of Absence](#) (only possible where the student has not already taken the maximum allowable period of leave). The Proctor will confirm the choice of the student in writing, and the student should then make contact with the Registry Officer (Student Support) to make a leave of absence request. Leave of absence requests as an outcome of this policy will be granted.
 - c. The student cannot currently continue their studies, and a compulsory Leave of Absence is required. Where possible, this outcome will be communicated to the student in person (or via agreed alternative) by Student Services, followed by written confirmation from the Proctor, which will be copied to the Registry Officer (Student Support) to activate the administrative process.
 - d. For students due to go on external placements as part of their degree programme, the placement may be cancelled or postponed. The student will be notified in person (or via agreed alternative) by the Global Office, and may have the option to continue their studies at St Andrews.
 - e. Where a student has exceeded the maximum allowable period of leave, and where risks cannot be reasonably managed, the student's studies will be [terminated](#). Where possible, this will be communicated in person (or via agreed alternative) by Student Services and in writing by the Proctor. Please note that the aim of the University throughout implementation of this policy is to avoid termination of studies wherever possible (see clause 1.1).
- 3.5.6 Where a Leave of Absence is the outcome, the student will normally still retain the fee liability. Advice regarding financial support is available from the Money Advisers at money.advice@st-andrews.ac.uk.
- 3.5.7 International students should be aware that outcomes within this Policy may affect their existing permission to stay in the UK, and therefore their ability to complete their programme of study under the terms of their current visa. International students should contact the University's International Student Advisers (advint@st-andrews.ac.uk) as early as possible in the process to discuss the specifics of their case.
- 3.5.8 At the Stage 2 case conference, the student will be asked if they would like the University to make their emergency contact aware of the outcome. Where the appropriate staff or professionals have assessed circumstances and judged that there is risk of significant harm, the University may share information with healthcare professionals, the police and/or the student's emergency contact in order to protect the student or others. Student Services will endeavour to discuss this directly with the student when this judgement has been made; if it has not been possible to successfully contact the student in these circumstances, the University will likely be required to act in order to fulfil its duty of care to the student or others.

4. Appeals and Complaints

- 4.1 There is no route of appeal under University Procedures against Support to study case conference decisions. These **do not** fall within the scope of the University [Policy on Student Academic Appeals](#).
- 4.2 Students may choose to raise any concerns about the quality of service they have received from any part of the University, including Academic Schools and departments under the University [Complaints Handling procedure](#) (CHP). In this instance that may include a claim that the University had not correctly followed policy and/or procedures. A guide to the CHP can be found at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/principals-office/documents/chp-students-guide.pdf>
- 4.3 Complaints regarding this policy should be directed in the first instance to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) and Provost.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated	-	February 2021
1.1	Changes to Associate Provost titles	Updated	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	August 2021
2.0	New Support to Study policy approved, replacing Fitness to Study policy.	Approved	Brian Ho, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	July 2022
2.1	Updated membership of the Stage 2 Review panel to reflect restructured roles in Proctor's Office	Approved	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality, Principal's Office	November 2022