

9. SUPPORT TO CONTINUE IN STUDY PROCEDURE

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, to all research degree students and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

9.1 Introduction

1. This procedure will be used where the University is concerned about a student's mental or emotional well-being, health or behaviour, to the extent that this might have an adverse effect on the student, other students or staff. It will only be used when the University is unsure that a student is 'capable of living independently (with adequate support) whilst also being able to continue in study and not have such a negative impact on others in the study environment as to significantly impair the learning experience of others'.
2. Staff may raise a specific welfare concern, via CPOMS, with the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group. The Student Welfare Concern process is primarily one of support, to reduce risk and prevent the deterioration of health, wellbeing and behaviour, including 'radicalisation' (i.e., being drawn into terrorism or extremist behaviour). Staff should consult the University's Mental and Emotional Well-being Guidelines for more detailed advice on what signs to look for and what to do if a student is exhibiting concerning or disturbing behaviour.

Other students or individuals external to the University should report welfare concerns to Student Wellbeing and Support at studentsupport@marjon.ac.uk.

3. Staff who are concerned about a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour should use this procedure. If there is a concern of this nature, it is appropriate

to explore the student's health, wellbeing issues or pattern of behaviour as promptly as possible and agree supportive action.

4. A student 'giving cause for concern' is likely to be one who is behaving **out of character**. The University embraces and accepts difference, and its students and staff will exhibit a diverse range of backgrounds, abilities and disabilities. A student might behave in ways that a casual observer may consider unusual, but which is characteristic for that student. Therefore, signs to look for and which might give rise to the need to invoke the Support to Continue in Study procedures include, but are not limited to:
 - A number of third-party reports about a student. These may be an indication that there is a need to address:
 - under-performance in academic work; frequent lateness/absence from lectures; missing deadlines; poor concentration or a lack of engagement to respond in a timely manner to reasonable requests made by the University; lack of self-care; self-harm; suicidal thoughts; substance misuse;
 - unusually loud or aggressive behaviour or withdrawn or unusually quiet behaviour;
 - concern about how a student's behaviour is affecting their own and/or others' wellbeing in accommodation on campus or in private rental.
 - concern about how well a student may manage their learning experience on off-site activities (e.g. residential trips) within a module or programme, or year abroad study. Students may have been receiving support, but staff may be concerned as to how well a student may cope in an unusual environment even when support issues have been addressed.
5. The Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will keep relevant departments of the University fully informed of the outcome of any formal assessment of Support to Continue to Study, whilst respecting confidentiality, data protection and professional guidelines.

6. This procedure has two stages based on the perceived level of risk to the health and safety, welfare or ability of the student to continue in study or the risk to others posed by their health, wellbeing or behaviour. The procedure can be activated at either stage.
7. If staff are unsure about implementing this procedure, they should seek advice and discuss their concerns, anonymously and in general terms, with a member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group directly or via the Student Safeguarding and Wellness Manager (or nominee). The Group meets on a regular basis to discuss student issues and concerns that have arisen within, or as referrals to, Student Wellbeing and Support.
8. If a student on a professional programme is giving cause for concern, particularly with regard to placements, the Fitness to Practise procedures might also need to be invoked. The Support to Continue in Study procedures will apply to all aspects of study that do not involve placement opportunities or similar contacts with external agencies. If a student is subsequently suspended from their programme of study, this will also include any placements and the Fitness to Practise procedures will be suspended accordingly.

9.2 Stage One Procedure

1. If concerns arise about a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour, a member of staff with primary responsibility for their academic progress and/or well-being, such as a Personal Development Tutor, should, in the first instance, approach them in a sympathetic and understanding way. Other staff should report their concerns to the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group via CPOMS in order to make the approach. This might also result in a referral to an external organisation (e.g. Channel, The Zone), with the student's consent.

Other students or individuals external to the University should report their concerns to Student Wellbeing and Support at studentsupport@marjon.ac.uk.

2. The concerns should be explained to the student as clearly as possible and reported to the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group, normally with the student's knowledge, using the Student Welfare Concern Form. The student concern will be brought to the next meeting of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group or, if appropriate, a special meeting will be convened.
3. The Group will consider the referral and nature of the concerns before deciding whether:
 - no further action should be taken; or
 - a member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group should be appointed to liaise with the student and all staff concerned (by way of an informal meeting and/or other appropriate mechanisms) to offer and co-ordinate support and referrals, as appropriate: or
 - a case conference should be convened, on the grounds that there is evidence of a safeguarding concern, persistent anti-social behaviour, withdrawal or extreme physical change / uncharacteristic episodes that have not been or are unlikely to be resolved without such a meeting.
4. If a case conference is convened, the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will write to the student, setting out the arrangements, and all relevant parties including the Academic Standards Officer should be sent a copy of the letter.
5. The Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will chair the meeting. A nominee of the appropriate Dean of Faculty (such as the Academic Director, or Programme/Programme Area/Subject Area Leader) will also attend, along with a Student Life Officer and/or the Resident Life Tutor in cases where the student is a campus resident or where the behaviour occurred in a University residence.
6. The student may choose to be accompanied by a friend, who should normally be a student of the University or a representative of the Student Union.

Students with a disability also have the right to be accompanied by a support worker (e.g. sign language interpreter or mental health worker) as appropriate to their needs.

7. The meeting will invite the student to respond to the concerns. A clear, written statement from the member of staff calling the meeting should be sent to the student and staff attending at least 48 hours before the meeting. The meeting will focus on how the concerns can be addressed, along with the potential consequences of (a) not keeping to the agreed actions and/or (b) continuing to give cause for concern.
8. The Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will write to the student after the meeting, setting out the arrangements made, and all relevant parties - including the Academic Standards Officer and, in the case of a safeguarding incident, Registry - will be sent a copy of the letter. The Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) is also responsible for keeping the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group informed.
9. The student's case will continue to be monitored until all those involved agree that there is no continuing cause for concern. At this point, the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will write to the student to confirm that, unless there are any further concerns, the procedures have come to an end. All relevant parties - including the Academic Standards Officer and, in the case of a safeguarding incident, Registry - should be sent a copy of the letter.

9.3 Stage Two Procedure

1. Stage Two will be initiated if there is ongoing concern or evidence of 'disturbing' behaviour that might be a serious safeguarding concern to themselves or others, a risk to their health, wellbeing or safety, or the good order or reputation of the University, and if it is not possible to resolve these concerns at Stage One.

2. In such instances, a member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group will immediately convene a meeting of the Group, which will discuss and agree the next step. The Group will also appoint a member to liaise with all concerned and make recommendations to the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) as appropriate.
3. A formal meeting (the arrangements for which will be as for the Stage One Case Conference) will be called by the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) to discuss the most appropriate course of action. The student will have the right either to represent themselves at the first part of this meeting, accompanied if desired, or to submit a written representation to the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee). If the student fails to respond or attend, the case conference and formal adjudication may go ahead in their absence.
4. The formal meeting, chaired by the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee), will include representatives from the student's academic programme, the Marjon Student Union and the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group. Their contribution, however, will be subject to Data Protection legislation and/or professional codes of confidentiality.
5. The student may choose to be accompanied by a friend, who should normally be a student of the University or a representative of the Student Union. Students with a disability also have the right to be accompanied by a support worker (e.g. sign language interpreter or mental health worker) as appropriate to their needs. The friend is permitted to attend to provide advice and quiet support to the student, and can be heard only with the agreement of both the student and the Chair. The Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will write to the student, setting out the arrangements, and all relevant parties including the Academic Standards Officer will be sent a copy of the letter.

6. In the event of extreme unacceptable behaviour or serious risk to the student and/or other members of the University, a student may be denied access to the University, both physically and virtually, with immediate effect at the point of referral. The Vice-Chancellor or (in the Vice-Chancellor's absence) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost will confirm this, on the recommendation of the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee), either before or after the case conference takes place. Any denial of access under this provision will normally be reviewed at intervals of no more than one month and the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group will continue to provide support, co-ordinated by the appointed member, to the student during this period.
7. In exceptional cases those involved in the case conference may conclude, on the basis of the available evidence, that extreme unacceptable behaviour or serious risk to the student and/or other members of the University, is likely to continue throughout the two-year period stipulated, in Section 8 of this [Framework](#) (the Regulations for Academic Awards), as the maximum period during which a student can remain registered without gaining credit. As this will automatically result in a student's registration coming to an end, they may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor or (in the Vice-Chancellor's absence) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, via the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee), that they should be excluded permanently with immediate effect. The Academic Registrar must be notified immediately of any such recommendation, copied to the Academic Standards Officer, and, in the event of a safeguarding incident, Registry.
8. The student's case will continue to be monitored until:
 - it is agreed by all those involved that there is no continuing cause for concern
 - the student withdraws, or
 - the student's registration ceases, under Section 8 of this [Framework](#) (the University's Regulations for Academic Awards), on the basis that credit has not been obtained for a period of at least two years.

At this point, the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will write to the student to confirm that the procedures have come to an end, subject to their reactivation if this becomes appropriate. All relevant parties, including the Academic Standards Officer and, in the event of a safeguarding incident, Registry should be sent a copy of the letter.

9.4 Return to Study

1. Where the outcome of either of the above Stages is interruption, the student's appointed member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group will continue to monitor the student's progress towards return and liaise with all parties as necessary. The student will be required to provide sufficient evidence, from an appropriate professional who has been working with the student, to enable the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group to recommend to the Academic Registrar (copied to the Academic Standards Officer) that the student is ready to return to study after interruption. In addition, the student may be required to agree a study support plan and/or obtain formal medical clearance, for example by way of an Occupational Health assessment. This is intended to respond to any ongoing support needs the student has as well as providing terms for the student's return. Should the student not adhere to the terms, or concerns re-emerge or escalate, proceedings can be re-instigated.
2. The appointed member of staff will be responsible for continued monitoring and co-ordinating support until the student no longer gives any cause for concern.
3. If, on the other hand, the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group cannot recommend that the student is ready to return to study, it will recommend a further period of interruption or withdrawal to the Academic Registrar (copied to the Academic Standards Officer), stating the reasons for their decision. The Vice-Chancellor or (in the Vice-Chancellor's absence) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost will confirm this, on the recommendation of the Director of Student Success Services (or nominee).

4. The Director of Student Success Services (or nominee) will advise all relevant parties - including the Academic Registrar (copied to the Academic Standards Officer) and, in the event of a safeguarding incident, Registry - with regard to return to study after interruption and any related issues.

9.5 Right of Appeal

1. A student has the right to appeal against the decision/s made following a Stage Two formal meeting, on one or more of the following grounds:
 - That the procedures were not followed properly
 - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision
 - That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process
 - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure
 - That the decision(s) was/were disproportionate, or not permitted under the procedures

Any such appeal must be submitted in writing to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee, within ten working days of the date of the letter communicating the decision/s.

2. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will refer the appeal to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student for consideration. The appeal stage will normally be concluded within fifteen working days of the receipt of the appeal. If a delay is envisaged, the appellant will be notified in writing before the end of the fifteen working day period.
3. If valid grounds to proceed with the appeal are not found, the original outcome of the Stage Two formal meeting will stand, and no further appeal will be

possible under the University's Support to Continue in Study Procedure. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise the student accordingly.

4. If valid grounds for doing so are identified, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise Student Wellbeing and Support to reconvene the original decision-making body with new membership of a similar status. This will always lead to an additional formal meeting under the procedures appropriate to Stage Two, which will not involve the participation of anyone involved in the original decision. If an appeal is upheld, it does not mean that the original decision/s will automatically be overturned. The case will be reconsidered under the procedures at Stage Two, and a new decision/s will then be made and communicated to the student. The outcome of this re-hearing will be final, with no further right of appeal available.
5. Any decision made under this procedure will stand pending the outcome of an appeal. For example, if a student is interrupted from study, that interruption will stay in place until the appeal process has concluded.

9.6 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

1. If a student remains dissatisfied after the appeal process has been exhausted, they can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their case. For full details please contact <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.
2. The University must issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the OIA to review a case. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued automatically where valid grounds for re-hearing the case are not found at the appeal stage and otherwise on request. However, where a Completion of Procedures letter is issued before the appeal stage has been conducted, the letter will make it clear that the student has not completed the University's internal processes. All requests for review must be made to the OIA within twelve months of the date of issue of a Completion of Procedures letter.

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