



## Support to Study Policy

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### INTRODUCTION

1. This Policy relates to concerns regarding an individual's capacity to participate fully as a student in relation to academic studies and life generally at New College of the Humanities (the College) due to their health and wellbeing (includes, but not limited to, physical health, mental health, disabilities and caring responsibilities).
2. The College is committed to supporting student wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health is crucial to undergraduate and postgraduate student learning and academic achievement.
3. Unless it is informed otherwise, the College expects its students to be able to live independently and in harmony with others, and not to conduct themselves in a way which has an adverse impact on those around them.

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

4. The purpose of this policy is to provide a suitable and co-ordinated response to concerns raised by faculty (from degree programmes or the NCH Diploma), professional staff, the student themselves, or a fellow student.
5. This policy should be used when a student's capacity to participate as a student is a cause for concern. This may be a cause for concern as a result of a wide range of circumstances, including (but not restricted to) the student's behaviour and engagement with their studies<sup>1</sup>.
6. All concerns should be raised as soon as possible with the Student Wellbeing Coordinator (SWC), in a confidential and professional manner.

### INITIAL SUPPORT

7. It is expected that the student will be approached by a member of the student's major faculty and the SWC, once concerns have been raised, in an attempt to resolve the matter by informal discussions with the student. The SWC will then make the decision as to whether the Support to Study Procedure should be invoked.

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<sup>1</sup> Students may be referred to this Policy from the Student Attendance Policy

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

8. It is possible that a student may pose such an extreme risk to themselves and/or others that they require emergency assistance outside of these procedures. In such cases, the individual(s) who identifies the crisis must report it immediately to a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) [Chief Operating Officer (COO), Executive Dean (ED), Registrar, HR & Operations Manager (HROM), Head of Quality Assurance (HQA), Financial Controller (FC), and Director of Marketing (DoM)] and the SWC. The staff members will then act accordingly, by either calling the emergency services or arranging for the student to be escorted off the premises by their next of kin or emergency contact if reasonable to do so.

## **TEMPORARY EXCLUSION**

9. The SWC may refer the case straight to the Master if it is considered that the risk to the student or the College is very high and an immediate temporary exclusion is the most appropriate course of action. If the Master is unavailable then the case must be referred directly to the COO.
10. The Master or COO may impose a temporary exclusion with immediate effect pending the invoking of this policy. A student who is subject to a temporary exclusion order is prohibited from entering College premises and from attending College events. The exclusion may, exceptionally, be subject to qualification, such as the permission to take an examination or to enter the College premises to attend a meeting with College staff. The terms of exclusion will be individual to each case and will be notified to the student via a telephone call straight away, followed by a letter sent in the post and via email. An exclusion order does not affect the student's status as a member of the College.
11. The decision to exclude will normally be reviewed after four weeks. The review may include recommendation that a Support to Study Panel be convened to consider the case. If the student does not attend the review or does not respond to the invitation to attend, a letter must be sent from the Registrar confirming their permanent exclusion and stipulating a 15-working day timeframe in which to respond to possibly reverse the outcome. If there is no response after 15 working days, then the exclusion will be implemented automatically.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **STAGE 1: INITIAL CAUSE FOR CONCERN**

12. A meeting of an Initial Cause for Concern Panel (ICCP) will be convened by the student's Head of Faculty (HoF), which will normally be comprised of the following:
  - 12.1. HoF (as Chair)

- 12.2. A faculty representative, from the student's minor subject faculty. In the case where a student does not have a minor or enrichment subject, the student's Personal Tutor should attend.
- 12.3. Head of Quality Assurance
13. The student is required to submit all relevant documentation, which will normally be from a medical professional, to aid the panel in making a decision. The student will be invited to attend all or part of the meeting and can bring a representative. The student will need to confirm, in writing, their intention to attend or not, and if they will be accompanied. A letter will be sent to the student after the meeting setting out any decision made and the reasons for the decision.
14. The outcome agreed by the Panel will normally be an outcome not already attempted as part of the informal action taken by the Faculty and SWC. The outcomes available to the Panel are:
  - 14.1. No further action required.
  - 14.2. Reasonable adjustments may be required in order to help the student continue with their studies without further difficulty or disruption. Please see Appendix 1 for a list of possible adjustments.
  - 14.3. To monitor the student formally, for a specific period of time. An action plan will be agreed with the student detailing any steps the student will need to take and the support to be provided to the student. This action plan will normally detail different actions to any plan previously agreed as part of the informal action taken by the Faculty. Regular review meetings will be arranged with the student and a nominated member of faculty. The student should be made aware of what will happen if the action plan is breached, which will normally involve their case moving to **Stage 2**.
  - 14.4. To recommend a specific academic arrangement to be put in place which may include a suspension of studies. Such recommendations should be agreed by the student's Faculty and the student themselves. If the student does not agree, the case will move to **Stage 2**.
  - 14.5. To refer the case to the Support to Study Panel, under **Stage 2** of this procedure. This will be appropriate in serious cases, for example where there is evidence of a serious risk to the health and safety of the student or others in the College. This course of action would be used when it is considered that suspension, temporary exclusion, permanent exclusion or withdrawal may be the appropriate course of action or if the student has not agreed to a recommendation or action plan made under **Stage 1**.

## **STAGE 2: SUPPORT TO STUDY PANEL**

15. This stage will only be invoked in the following circumstances:
  - 15.1. Following a referral from an ICCP.
  - 15.2. If the student does not agree or is not engaging with a recommendation of an ICCP.

- 15.3. If in the opinion of the HoF, Registrar or Master, the case is sufficiently serious and urgent to warrant an immediate referral without consideration of **Stage 1**.
16. The Registrar will convene a Support to Study Panel (SSP) to consider the case, the members will normally be:
  - 16.1. The Registrar (Chair)
  - 16.2. HoF (major subject)
  - 16.3. HoF (not from the minor subject)
17. As with the ICCP, the student will have the opportunity to submit documents for the Panel to consider and will be sent a copy of any documents seen by the Panel. The student is invited to attend the panel meeting and can bring a representative. The Panel may order the proceedings at its discretion and may call witnesses if required. It may also request further medical evidence.
18. Possible actions from the meeting may include:
  - 18.1. A short-term exclusion to allow the student to be assessed by a medical professional and to access support services through the help of the SWC. The exclusion will be reviewed within four weeks as set out above in relation to emergency temporary exclusion (paragraph 11).
  - 18.2. Suspension with conditions for a period up to twelve months. A student who is suspended from the College may be prohibited from attending College events and may also be prohibited from entering the Registry or have restricted access. The terms of suspension will be notified to the student in writing by the Registrar. The decision to suspend a student shall be reviewed as necessary by the Panel.
  - 18.3. Exclusion or requirement to withdraw - if the Panel concludes, taking into account the individual circumstances of the case and any supporting medical evidence, that there is no reasonable prospect of the student re-engaging with their programme, a recommendation will be made that the student is permanently excluded or required to withdraw. This recommendation should only be made in the most serious cases.
  - 18.4. Any other action considered to be appropriate or proportionate.

### COMMUNICATION OF OUTCOMES

19. The outcome of any panel(s) must be communicated promptly and efficiently by the Chair of the SSP, as outlined below:
  - 19.1. Once a decision has been made the student must be informed straight away, by a telephone call and then followed up with a letter sent by post and email.
  - 19.2. The SWC should be informed.
  - 19.3. The HoF should inform relevant faculty members (major and minor), once the Registrar has informed the student of the outcome by telephone. Should the student have scheduled tutorials and/or lectures that day, those faculty members should be informed as a priority.

- 19.4. Other relevant faculty should also be informed, including the student's Personal Tutor, Diploma Coordinator, and Dean of Careers.
20. All those informed will be reminded that the case is confidential and details of which should not be shared with any others without prior approval from the Registrar.
21. If other students ask for information on the student, they should not be informed of any details under any circumstances.

### **RETURN TO STUDY**

22. The SSP that made the recommendation regarding a suspension or temporary exclusion, or as many members of the original panel as possible, will be reconvened to consider whether the student is in a position to return to study.
23. Further medical evidence will normally be requested from the student which considers their ability to fully engage with their studies and meet the requirements of the programme. A student will only be permitted to return if, after receiving the medical evidence, the Panel is satisfied that the student is fit to return.
24. If the Master or COO made the decision to suspend or exclude, a SSP should be convened to consider any support that the student may require to support a return to studies, such as regular review meetings or a return to study action plan. The general expectation is that the student will take personal responsibility for fully engaging with this support.

### **RIGHT OF APPEAL**

25. The student may appeal against a suspension, requirement to withdraw and/or a temporary exclusion. A letter setting out the grounds of appeal should be addressed to the Registrar, to be received within 10 working days of the date on which the order for suspension or the requirement to withdraw was made. The Registrar will record and acknowledge the request to appeal within 10 working days of receipt, and will inform the Master of the student's request.
26. The Master will nominate a Chair to convene the Appeal Panel, which should consist of the following members:
  - 26.1. The Master
  - 26.2. Two Heads of Faculty, who must not have been involved in previous panels.
27. The student will have the right to be accompanied by another individual, either a fellow student or a representative from the Student Union.
28. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that any individual accompanying them is available for the meeting and is briefed on the arrangements for the meeting. Any new evidence that has not been presented at previous stages of the policy can only be accepted at the discretion of the Chair.

29. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Panel will meet in private in order to make its decision. The decision will be notified in writing to all concerned by the Registrar, normally within five working days.
30. The decision of the Appeal Panel will be final and the College will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter. The Completion of Procedures Letter will provide the student with all the relevant information should they decide to refer the case, within 12 months of the date of the letter, to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

### MONITORING AND REPORTING

31. The Registrar will maintain a record of Support to Study outcomes and ensure that appropriate action has been taken by the College in response to areas identified as requiring development.
  32. An annual report on Support to Study will be provided to the College's Academic Board.
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Title	Support to Study Policy (formerly the Fitness to Study Policy)	Author	Student Wellbeing Coordinator
Location	NCH Academic Handbook	Approved by	Academic Board
Version	1.0	Last updated	October 2018
Publication date	December 2018	Review date	September 2020
Related policies	Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy		
Quality Code	UK Quality Code: Enabling Student Achievement; Learning and Teaching		

## **APPENDIX 1: POSSIBLE EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

This list covers possible suggestions, and is not exhaustive.

1. A student may wish to sit close to the door of a teaching room so that they can leave the room quietly if necessary. For example, this could be the case for students who need to use the toilet more frequently or those that suffer from anxiety and need to be able to excuse themselves discretely.
2. The timing of a student's 1:1 tutorials could be scheduled at a more suitable time to them if they experience sleeping problems as a result of a mental or physical health condition. This would be subject to room and tutor availability.
3. Teaching locations could be changed, where possible. For example, if a student found that a certain room triggered their anxiety due to a lack of natural light, they could request to be moved to a room with windows.
4. Equipment could be altered to suit a student's physical needs. For example, a student may need a specific type of chair to accommodate a physical health condition and/or disability.
5. Formative deadlines could be adjusted if a student had caring responsibilities for an unwell family member.
6. Students may have individual specific needs to help them cope with their disclosed condition(s). For example, a student suffering from anxiety may benefit from the use of therapeutic putty.

If a student approaches faculty with a request for an adjustment not listed above, please seek consultation with the SWC. The SWC should be informed of all reasonable adjustment requests.