

Fitness To Study Policy (Procedure)

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Procedure

It is important to be clear about what is reasonable in an educational setting and the limits to the individual support that can be provided within the College. Our staff provide outstanding support for all students, but there will be times when a student's physical or mental health or personal circumstances are so affected that they are not able, despite support both internal to the College and externally, to maintain satisfactory progress. Fitness to study therefore relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully, satisfactorily and appropriately in relation to their studies at College. This includes participation in their study programme, as well as practical assessments or mandatory competencies in practice associated with their study programme that lead them towards a final qualification.

Stages of action

The procedures can be entered at any stage depending on the level of concern and urgency although it is hoped that most situations can be remedied by action taken at stages 1 or 2.

Initial action

It is possible that the initial stages of intervention might be through the normal College procedures with regard to attendance and performance concerns as doubts about a student's fitness to study may not yet have been identified. This is most likely in cases where health issues have not been disclosed to the College before joining or a new health issue is causing problems that have not yet been disclosed to the College.

Stage 1 - Informal Stage

- Once concerns have been raised about a student's fitness to study, the student's Tutor or Progress Coach will liaise with a member of the Mentoring team to make them aware of the concern and seek their guidance and advice before approaching the student.
- The Tutor will then meet with the student, with support from a Mentor or Educational Mental Health Practitioner if required, and explain that concerns about their fitness to study have been raised. The student will be made aware of the precise nature of the behaviour that has caused the concern.
- The Tutor will attempt to resolve the matter by informal discussions with the student. The student should be encouraged to explain their situation and views on the matter and will be encouraged to use one or more of the support services offered by the College if appropriate.
- A referral may be made to an external service, such as a healthcare professional if this is deemed appropriate.
- The Tutor should consider with the student whether any specific arrangements or other types of support could be applied to help them study more effectively.
- The meeting outcomes will be logged on Promonitor as a confidential comment.
- The Tutor / Progress Coach will contact the student's parents/carers to ensure that they are fully aware of the concerns raised and any actions arising from the meeting.
- A review meeting will be set not more than two college weeks from the date of the initial meeting.

- Depending on the concerns raised the Tutor may choose to follow the process above and review or move immediately to stage two as detailed below.

Stage 2 - Fitness to Study Concern

- If the issues raised are of sufficient concern, or if informal actions have not resulted in the improvement requires, the Tutor will ask their Head of Faculty to convene a meeting. The meeting should be attended by the Head of Faculty, Tutor, a member of the Mentoring Team, Student and Parent/Carer.
- This meeting will be recorded formally and the following should be discussed and agreed:
 - Details of the concerns around the student's fitness to study.
 - Current actions by the College, student, parents/carers, healthcare professionals or other relevant bodies in relation to the current fitness to study concerns.
 - An action plan for resolution of the situation. This may include:
 - Actions to be taken by the student.
 - Actions to be taken by parents/carers, healthcare professionals or other relevant bodies.
 - Support or adjustments to be made by the College to assist with the student's studies.
 - Targets to be met by the student
 - A timescale for review and resolution. This should be no more than 4 College weeks from the date of the meeting.
 - Additional interim meetings may be scheduled to monitor the situation and progress made by the student.
 - The Tutor, Mentoring Team and other relevant College staff should help the student access the support available to them to enable them to continue with their studies as agreed. The expectation is, however, that the student will take personal responsibility and fully engage with the support put in place by all parties.
 - If the concerns have not been addressed, support has not been sought, or sufficient progress has not been made, the case will move to the next stage of the process.

Stage 3 - Fitness to Study Review

- If concerns remain despite earlier stages of intervention, a review meeting will be held to determine the next course of action. Attendees at this meeting will be:
 - A nominated Assistant Principal
 - Head of Student Services
 - The student's Tutor
 - Mentoring team representative
 - External agency where appropriate
- The purpose of the review panel is to assess the student's fitness to study in the context of their current study programme and decide on the next course of action in the best interests of all parties.

- The College may seek additional information in the form of assessments from medical professionals or other relevant bodies.
- If appropriate the student and student's parents/carers may be invited to attend the meeting.
- The outcomes of this meeting will be communicated to the student and parents/carers. These are (but not limited to):
 - No further action required. This is most likely in the event of the student recovering in advance of the meeting to the point they are actively able to participate in their study programme and may therefore be able to succeed this academic year. Continued monitoring of progress is also likely to be recommended.
 - To recommend specific further academic or pastoral support arrangements are put in place to assist with on-going support at College. This is most likely if the College believes that with continuing support the student may still be able to be successful on their study programme this academic year.
 - To implement a revised study programme for the student. This is likely if the College believes that a changed or reduced study programme may allow the student to be successful this academic year.
 - A suspension in studies or an agreed break in learning with a resumption or restart of their programme at an appropriate point in the future. This is most likely if the student has a condition that is temporary or will in time improve and they will subsequently be able to fully participate in a study programme.
 - Withdrawal of College place. This is most likely if the College believes that the student's current state of health:
 - Will preclude them from being successful on their study programme.
 - Requires a level of support that the College is not able to adequately provide.
 - May impact on the health, safety and welfare of staff or students.
 - Is likely to have a negative effect on the learning and progression of other students at the College.

Right of Appeal

The student may appeal where the decision has been made to exclude. All appeals should be made in writing to the Principal within 5 working days of the decision.

The Principal's decision will be final.

Exclusion will preclude a learner applying for another course at the college until the following academic year or a period of 6 months depending on when the exclusion has occurred. Should the learner wish to apply for further study at a future date, the college will require evidence from an external professional that they are fit to return to study with reasonable adjustments if required. This may also involve a meeting with the learner and the external agency prior to attending.

Fitness to Study Review

Date

<<Name>>
<<Address 1>>
<<Address 2>>
<<Town>>
<<County>>
<<Postcode>>

Dear

Fitness to Study Review Outcome

Following our meeting on [date], I am now writing to confirm the details of our discussion.
(*Warnings can be issued in absentia, where a student fails to attend a scheduled meeting*).

The outcome of the fitness to study: health & wellbeing risk assessment is (*insert*)

As a consequence, we have agreed to the next steps (*Detail the offer of support/reasonable adjustments/actions required by the student/break in learning/termination of enrolment*)

(*If the enrolment is not terminated*): We will meet to review the impact of the measures put in place and to re-assess the situation on (*date*)

(*OR if the enrolment is terminated*):

You have the right to appeal this decision and must reply in writing to the Principal within 5 days of the date of this letter.

If you are unsure as to what is required of you then do not hesitate to contact myself, the Student Services Manager.

Yours sincerely

Student Services Manager