

Fitness to Study Staff Guidelines

August 2015

Intervention Guidelines for Students Causing Significant Concern and/or Presenting Risk

Also available in large print (16pt)
and electronic format.

Ask Student Services for details.

www.perth.uhi.ac.uk

Perth College is a registered Scottish charity, number SC021209.



Version Control History

Version Number	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
1.1	December 2018	Change of role to Quality Manager. Updated footer.

Fitness to Study: Staff Guidelines

Intervention Guidelines for Students Causing Significant Concern and/or Presenting Risk

1 There is a growing awareness among professional bodies and groups working in the field of student support of the need for educational institutions to respond appropriately to situations where signs of illness, mental health difficulties, psychological, personality or emotional disorders may have a profoundly adverse impact on the functioning of individual students and on the wellbeing of others around them.

1.1 It is anticipated that these guidelines will only be applied after all other appropriate interventions have been exhausted and as a last resort, for all Perth College UHI students.

2 Principles

2.1 Perth College, UHI has a duty of care to respond appropriately to situations in which there are substantial concerns relating to a student's mental and/or physical functioning and the impact upon the individual and/or other members of the College community.

2.2 This guidance assists in addressing these issues and promoting positive attitudes towards students with additional support needs. Perth College, UHI is committed to maintaining students' wellbeing and this guidance outlines the procedure and support available to both students and staff when a student presents a risk to the self and/or others by virtue of experiencing disability or mental ill-health¹.

2.3 Perth College, UHI has robust and quality assured student support procedures and processes in place. Fitness to Study issues should be resolved at College level as far as possible. However, where we have a hosted student then the appropriate staff from the home Academic Partner would need to be involved in any Panel Hearing.

2.3.1 As a partnership, Perth College UHI also recognises that where other Academic Partners host Perth College students that their staff possess the experience and skills to assess a student's capacity for study in a professional and efficient manner and are best placed to act on behalf of Perth College to handle Fitness to Study issues. Should this accelerate to a panel hearing then an appropriate staff member from Perth College will sit on the Panel.

¹ If a student presented risk, but was not experiencing a disability or mental ill-health, then this would be simply a disciplinary matter.

- 2.5 This fitness to study guidance should be considered when there are serious and pressing concerns that a student's behaviour, caused by disability or mental ill-health is impacting adversely on his or her ability to engage with a course/learning programme and presents an actual and/or perceived risk to the self and/or others.
- 2.6 This guidance can apply as an alternative to the College's student disciplinary procedures only where there are concerns that a student's behaviour, caused by disability or mental ill-health, is disruptive to study and/or presents an actual and/or perceived risk to the self and/or others.

3 Rationale for Guidelines

- 3.1 It is important to establish whether the behaviour causing concern may be due to the manifestation of a diagnosed illness or with behaviour(s) deemed to be consistent with disability or mental ill health.
- 3.2 Guidance underpins College student support processes and procedures by assisting staff in taking a consistent and sensitive approach to managing situations which become problematic. It is not intended to give guidance on wider matters relating to students with mental health needs as the College has policies and processes that address these matters more specifically, as listed in Section 11.
- 3.3 These guidelines are intended to enable a non-judgmental, consistent and sensitive approach to managing situations that require an appropriate level of intervention. It is also important, that any outcomes and decisions in each case are arrived at and agreed through a group consensus.

4 Objectives of Guidance

- 4.1 The purpose of these guidelines is to provide support to Perth College UHI staff in managing scenarios and incidents that cause significant concern.
- 4.1.1 To identify the appropriate response by Perth College UHI academic and support services staff in the circumstances outlined in paragraph 2.5, where it is not considered appropriate to apply disciplinary procedures, in particular, because the student's behaviour should be managed rather than reprimanded;
- 4.1.2 To provide a coordinated approach to the management of a situation where it is apparent that a student's mental and/or physical functioning may prevent him/her from engaging effectively in their studies at a particular time, or is adversely affecting the experience of others;

- 4.1.3 To enable academic staff, support services staff, and Personal Academic Tutors to recognise the limits to the support which they can provide and the appropriateness of referring the student onto other agencies;
- 4.1.4 To signpost areas of support for staff;
- 4.1.5 To identify and implement reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- 4.1.6 To ensure appropriate support for students and staff affected by, or involved in, the interaction with students in the aforementioned circumstances;
- 4.1.7 To consider and justify the application of relevant awarding or regulatory body regulations, or University Academic Regulations with respect to Higher Education students within the realms of confidentiality and data protection.

5 Emergencies

- 5.1 Emergency situations are rare. However, it is good practice to adopt an anticipatory duty to the management of problematic situations so that our duty of care, as Perth College UHI, is exercised with consistency and sensitivity.
- 5.2 This guidance should in no way distract from any acute or dangerous situations where it is believed that a student's behaviour presents an immediate risk to themselves or others. The relevant procedures that would cover emergency situations are shown in Section 11: Relevant Procedures and Guidelines.

6 Ongoing and Emerging Concerns

- 6.1 Where a member of College staff, suspects that a student's behaviour may be impacting adversely on his or her ability to engage with a study programme, student services staff should be notified. In this scenario, normal student support protocols apply.
- 6.2 Student services staff are responsible for coordinating and monitoring an appropriate Personal Learner Support Plan for a student presenting with a Fitness to Study issue.

7 Data Protection

- 7.1 Perth College UHI is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 and is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals. Existing data protection and student confidentiality protocols continue to apply in Fitness to Study considerations.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

8 Fitness to Study Panel

- 8.1 In the vast majority of cases, Fitness to Study issues will be resolved under normal student support protocols. Only in exceptional circumstances will a Fitness to Study process be instigated: a Fitness to Study Panel will only be convened following an initial investigation.
The purpose of the initial investigation is to make a recommendation on a case. (See Appendix 3 for information on who is involved in the initial investigation and guidance on the roles and process).
The Fitness to Study Panel will meet to make a decision on the recommendation made. That is, to validate, amend, or in a case where the initial investigating group cannot collectively agree a recommendation, to make a decision on the case itself.
- 8.1.1 Prior to convening an initial investigation, the student may be asked to take authorised absence from their studies for a period of time. The student (and relevant Subject Leader) will be notified in writing of the decision to hold an initial investigation and the reasons why. The initial investigation will be led by an appropriate member of Student Services staff. (See Appendix 3)
- 8.2 Appropriate staff, such as, the Personal Academic Tutor, and relevant member(s) of student or other support services staff will be required to collectively review the case and situation drawing upon relevant documentation identified in the checklist (Appendix 1). Any subsequent recommendation made around the issues or concerns should be explained and recorded in writing (Appendix 1: contains the documentation and a pro-forma used as part of this process).
The completed pro-forma will then be forward to any Fitness to Study Panel. The recommendation made at this stage may remove the need to convene a Fitness to Study Panel.
- 8.3 All appropriate supporting evidence used and discussed in the initial investigation of the case (as per 8.2) should be made available to the Fitness to Study Panel to inform their decision making.
- 8.4 The Head of Student Experience (or designate) will convene a Fitness to Study Panel meeting following an initial investigation. This will take place within 5 working days of the initial investigation being concluded.
Any subsequent decision made by the panel will be communicated to the student within 3 working days of this course of action being determined (see Appendix 2).
- 8.5 In circumstances where it is deemed appropriate to convene a Fitness to Study Panel with respect to:
- a A hosted student notification should be provided to the relevant Head of Student Experience, or equivalent, at the home Academic Partner who can advise the Chair of the Panel on relevant local policy if required.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

- b A HE student, notification should be provided to the university's Dean of Student's Executive Office staff, who can advise the chair on relevant university policy if required.

8.6 The Panel will be convened and chaired by the Head of Student Services, or designate, within 10 working days of an initial investigation taking place and of any recommendation being made on the case.

8.7 The Panel will normally consist of 3 members as follows: and be clerked by the quality unit.

- Head of Student Services or designate, as Chair.
- A member of Corporate Management Team.
- Equality and Diversity Officer.

Note: Where we have a hosted student an appropriate member of staff from the home Academic Partner will also need to be involved as a panel member.

8.8 Panel members would be selected by the Chair but cannot be from the student's curriculum area.

8.9 The student will be notified in writing of their right to be present and accompanied by a friend or representative at the Fitness to Study Panel meeting. Under this procedure the definition of 'friend' or 'representative' does not include members of the legal profession engaged to act in their professional capacity. (See Appendix 2)

8.10 The Panel will consider the recommendation made by the initial investigation group. Recommendations may include: additional support strategies, suspension for a defined or undefined period, or exclusion. Where an undefined period is considered a student may need to be suspended from their studies until the next academic year. Where permanent exclusion is considered a student may be required to be withdrawn from their course of study. In either situation a student may need to receive guidance on the consequences. The decision of the Panel should be communicated to the student within 5 working days. (Appendix 2)

9 Appeals Panel

9.1 In the event that the student is dissatisfied with the Panel's decision they have a right to request a final appeal. This request should be submitted in writing to the Depute Principal Academic within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome.

- 9.2 The Senior Management at Perth College UHI (or where relevant to an HE student, the Chair of the University Court) will convene an appeals committee (of 3 Court members) to review the Panel's decision and the evidence provided to the Panel. This appeals committee will meet within 15 working days of receipt of appeal, and has the right to invite any relevant person to attend.
- 9.3 The outcome of the appeals meeting is conveyed in writing to all relevant parties within 3 working days. This outcome is the final stage of the process.

10 **Monitoring**

- 10.1 The Quality Unit must be informed of all Fitness to Study cases whether resolved at stage 8.2 or 8.5.
- 10.2 The College is responsible for recording the number and nature of Fitness to Study concerns that are formally reported, and how they are addressed. This information will be captured at the end of each academic year. With respect to Higher Education students this information will also be recorded and returned via the Fitness to Study Monitoring Form to the University's Dean of Students by the Quality Manager.

11 **Relevant Procedures or Guidelines**

Staff Guidelines on Dealing with a Student in Crisis
Mental Health Policy
Safeguarding and Vulnerable Young Person and Adult Policy/Procedure
Student Disciplinary Procedure
Perth College Student Charter/Code of Conduct

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Appendix 1 Indicative Evidence Checklist for Fitness to Study Panel

Fitness to Study: Initial Investigating Group

A lead 'Case Officer' (Student Services) will convene a meeting with relevant staff and collate the mandatory information and evidence required. (See checklist in pro-forma below).

At the meeting: the group will complete the **Appendix 1: Pro-Forma:** All sections need to be completed (below).

- Recording the student's details: ie name, date of birth, and program and level of study.
- Highlighting, the concerns, circumstances or reasons for thinking the student may be unfit to study.
- Complete the checklist for mandatory information and evidence gathered and used.
- Record and describe the recommendation collectively agreed by the group. It is important that the rationale behind the recommendation is linked to the evidence used.

Case File: Once the Appendix 1 Pro-Forma form and process is completed, it is passed, along with all the information collated and used, to the 'Fitness to Study Panel' for a decision.

Any decision made by the 'Fitness to Study Panel' will be recorded, and their reasoning and rationale will be explained.

A copy of all paper work and any decisions will be passed to the Quality team for their records.

The following process and pro-forma has been compiled to help staff and the College carry out its duty of care and also ensure we are robust in our practice whilst supporting our staff and students. It should always be used in situations of this nature.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Name of Student: _____ Student Number: _____

Name of Course/
Qualification+ Level: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Please complete the box below: It is important that you highlight the circumstances and reasons behind why there is a fitness to study concern.

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Evidence Checklist: (# – denotes the mandatory information required)			
Documents	Who Completes	What Format	Tick box to indicate what information was available to the group.
# Risk Assessment Grid (RAG).	Student Counsellor.	Student completes standard RAG test sheet with Student Counsellor	
# BRAG report.	PATs/SLs.	Attendance and performance records from BRAG system on the specific student. Collation of any other relevant information about the student (eg non-attendance, missed deadlines, isolation, achievement, time keeping).	
# Lecturers Notes/PAT Meeting Notes.	PATs.	Formal written notes or records – of one to one meetings with the student (with dates and times recorded) any accompanying emails related to the situation or issues. Written records from informal activities undertaken as part of the normal personal tutor-student relationship. This is particularly important in relation to behaviour where there is known to be a link to an illness or disability. (eg – through a disclosure or a PLSP).	
Third party reports/information if relevant and applicable (Internally).	Relevant staff members as per situation.	Written information from non-academic internal sources that may be pertinent to the student and situation. eg – Information via Student Support Workers or the Student Transition Team. Including information from other staff/students if appropriate and relevant.	

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

# Third party reports/information (external). If applicable and pertinent.	Requested through Student Services if appropriate: Copies of appropriate documents, info, data, reports.	Evidence from a registered health practitioner; GP, CPN, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, OT, or from other relevant professions: eg Counsellor, Social Worker, law enforcement or a rehabilitation professional who has enough knowledge of the student's circumstances to be able to make an informed statement about the student's fitness to study.	
# Health Information (if applicable)	PATs, Student Services Staff. Student Support Team, Additional Support Team, or other support staff as relevant.	Formal written records held by College on health issues or conditions which may be affecting the student and/or the situation.	
# PLSP documents: if applicable	From Student Services.	A copy of the current PLSP highlighting the health, (including mental health) disability or condition that may be pertinent to the situation.	
The cultural Resources the student has within their own life. (ie Information on the students hobbies, interests, sports, fitness, family support etc.)	Academic departments, MIS College application records, Student Support records or notes. PATS, the student's family or the student themselves.	Information contained within PLSPs, Student Services records or notes, College Application records, PAT records, etc.	
Other.	Staff as per required.	Any other written evidence that staff feel is relevant to the situation or circumstances of the case.	

As well as the formal information used in making a decision, there are other key things important to the context of any situation of this kind – see these listed below.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Other key factors to be taken in to consideration:

- The impact to academic study.
- If student is suspended (prior to decision) – when does the student return.
- Academic Regulations – need to be referred to and taken into consideration and advise student support staff.
- Funding information if relevant to the student's situation.

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Note: The initial investigating group can make one of three recommendations (see below).

A	Suspend or withdraw the student – refer to Fit to Study panel.
B	Refer back to mainstream support structures and provision – no panel decision required.
C	A group collective agreement cannot be reached – refer to Fit to Study panel.

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

Panel Members: Please state and sign your name and work role below.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Date: _____

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
 Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Appendix 2 Master Letters

Informing a Student of a Planned Meeting Regarding a Fitness to Study Concern.

Can be sent by email.

Dear XXXXX

As Head of Student Services – I am contacting you to inform you of a meeting to be held in College onto discuss concerns raised about your current fitness to study.

The decision to convene this meeting was taken and an initial investigating group will meet to discuss your situation following significant concerns being raised. The group will make a recommendation after reviewing your situation and case. Any recommendation made by the group will be explained to you by letter and will be based on a variety of formal information pertaining to yourself and your situation at College. The information used by the group will include information on your attendance, performance, and behaviour at College. It will include information recorded by your PAT at one to one or similar meetings and at meetings of those of a similar nature with specific support staff. It may also involve your PLSP (if appropriate) and or information from appropriate external agencies, such as those connected to your health and well-being.

It has been noted that (for example)

- You have not attended lectures since.....
- You have submitted 5 self cert forms this semester.
- There have been a number of concerns about your health and wellbeing since the start of the
- There have been on-going concerns raised within your department (and from support staff) around significant changes in you and your academic performance, emotional state, behaviour and demeanour.
- There are concerns that you present a significant risk to yourself and others at College.
- We have concerns around your own and others health and safety whilst in College.
- We are acting on our duty of care/safeguarding responsibilities.

(for further details about what may constitute concerns about a student's fitness to study, please refer to the Fitness to Study Guidelines.

The purpose of this meeting will be to establish whether there is need for further supportive action under the College's **Fitness to Study Guidelines**. In accordance with this process, recommendations **may include, withdrawal or suspension from your current course, (this may include alternative modes of study) more support or additional help from College support services or a decision to refer a decision to a Fitness to Study Panel.**

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Following the arranged meeting, I will write to you again to inform you of the recommendation that has been made.

I would like to highlight the seriousness of this matter. If there is a good reason to explain our concerns please submit a written statement, it would be helpful if this could be received in advance of the meeting.

The Fitness to Study Procedure is accessible at: **(insert link here)**

Yours sincerely

Richard Ogston
Student Services Manager
Perth College UHI

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

(Letter to Student: Confirmation of the Initial Group Recommendations: Meeting and Invitation to Fitness to Study Panel Meeting)

Can be sent by email.

Dear XXXXX

Following an initial investigation held on XXXX.

I am writing to you to provide a brief written record of what was discussed at our meeting concerning your fitness to study and the subsequent actions.

We discussed:

Example: Our main concerns were as follows.....

How your ill health during Semester One has affected your attendance. You were reminded of the student sickness procedures and the requirement of students to provide self-certification/medical evidence when unwell. We also talked about your module selection and strategies that you might use to try to catch up. You talked about how you have been feeling stressed and lonely and that this has made it difficult for you to interact in seminars.....

In advance of the meeting we gathered a range of information on your attendance performance, attainment, health, conditions etc etc in light of this information and context we discussed the concerns and issues of the group. The outcome from that meeting was that the group agreed the following recommendation was appropriate

If recommendation B or C is made that is, the student is not referred back into College support systems etc)

The recommendation made on your case situation will be forwarded to a Fitness to Study Panel where it be reviewed (by a separate group of staff) for the panel to make an decision.

A Fitness to Study Panel meeting has been arranged on your case at XXX on XXX in XXX (normally around one month after the initial meeting). You may want to attend this meeting in person. You may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter. Please report to XXX upon arrival.

The Fitness to Study Guidelines are accessible at**(insert link)**

Yours sincerely

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

(Fitness to Study Panel Meeting: Confirmation of Panel Decision to the Student.)

Can be sent by email.

Dear XXXXX

Following a Fitness to Study Panel meeting (which you attended ...) which was held on XXXX to further review your fitness to study.

Following our meeting on XXXX and the review meeting on XXXX.

I am writing to inform you that the following decision was made:

You will be withdrawn/suspended from your studies.

I am now satisfied that the concerns about your fitness to study have been significantly reduced/eliminated.

I have reached this decision because:

Summarise how the situation has improved. Review and sum up against the agreed action points following the initial meeting.

Example:

Your attendance has improved significantly and I have had no further reports from staff about erratic behaviour.

As agreed you have made contact with the Student Wellbeing Service and have provided evidence that you have registered with a local GP.

Please be aware that any future concerns about your fitness to study will also be considered in line with the University Fitness to Study procedure and that if concerns are particularly serious a higher level of the procedure may be invoked. It is advisable, therefore, to ensure that you keep the School informed of any personal or medical issues that may affect your ability to attend University or submit assignments. Provide contact details for reporting concerns of F2S.

The Fitness to Study Guidelines is accessible at **(insert link)**

Yours sincerely

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Appeal Panel Letter to Student

Letter should be prepared as a formal letter but can also be sent by email.

Dear XXXXX

Following our meetings on XXX and XXX both pertaining to your fitness to study, we subsequently received a letter from you appealing the decision agreed at these meetings.

Therefore, I am writing to inform you that your case, along with all appropriate information, (case file) will be forwarded to an appeal panel which has agreed to meet on

This Appeal Panel will meet to review the whole case and any recommendations and decisions made in accordance with the **Fitness to Study Guidelines**.

Your situation and our concerns about your fitness to study will now be given to the attention of the Assistant Principal (Academic) and the College Senior Management Team.

You will receive a further letter from the Assistant Principal (Academic) within a few days of that panel meeting and receiving your case; where you will be informed one final time of a decision and outcome from that meeting.

The Fitness to Study Guidelines is accessible at **(insert link)**

Yours sincerely

Richard Ogston
Student Services Manager
Perth College UHI

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Appendix 3 Guidance for Roles and Panel Members

Guidance for Key Roles (within the Fitness to Study process).

Lead Member of the Initial Investigating Group (initial meeting)

- A lead member of staff (from Student Services: eg Team leader for Additional Support Team or Student Support Team) will convene a meeting and invite relevant members of staff to attend (identified PATs, Student Support staff, Lecturers, Equality and Diversity Adviser, others as appropriate) these staff will form the initial investigative group.
- It is the role of the lead member to identify, request and collate all information required and as appropriate for the meeting (using and completing information as per checklist in appendix 1).
- At the initial investigative meeting the Lead of the group will encourage the members to discuss the case, considering the nature of their issues and concerns for the student. This will be done within the context of all information known, received and available to the group.
- At the meeting the Lead member will record and explain the collective concerns and issues of the group using the pro-forma in appendix 1. The Lead will ensure the reasons behind the fitness to study concern are recorded in full.
- The Lead will ensure (as far as possible) that to the best of their knowledge any recommendation made has the needs of the student at the forefront.
- The Lead will check that any recommendation made is fair, objective and the rationale is linked directly to the evidence and information gathered.
- Record the recommendation made (using the pro-forma appendix 1) – and explain in detail their thinking and rationale – linking it to the evidence.
- Ensure all group members sign and date the pro-forma appendix 1 on completion.
- The group will carry out responsibilities within a duty or care or safeguarding context.
- The lead member of staff will refer recommendation (if appropriate) to a Fitness to Study Panel along with all completed paperwork and evidence as a case file.
- Ensure all completed paperwork and case file information is passed to Quality Team for their records.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Role of the Group Members (Initial Meeting)

- Group members will prepare and submit all relevant information promptly: as requested by lead of investigating group.
- At the initial meeting each panel member will consider and discuss the nature of their issues and concerns for the student. This will be done within the context of all formal information collated and gathered with regard to making appropriate and reasoned decisions.
- The group will discuss the case and make a recommendation (collectively). The group can make one of 3 recommendations A, B or C: see pro-forma in Appendix 1.
- Agree a decision (collectively) that to their knowledge is fair, objective and uses rationale from the evidence and information gathered using evidence and information gathered and available to them.
- Abide by any subsequent decisions that may not fully reflect their own. The decision will be communicated to the student in writing (within 5 working days) highlighting any implications and consequences of that decision.
- If relevant, agree if it is beneficial for the student to take authorised leave – at this stage in the process.
- Carry out their responsibilities within a duty of care or safeguarding context.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Role of the Chair and Fitness to Study Panel

- Head of Student Experience (or designate) will convene and chair the Fitness to Study Panel meeting and invite appropriately identified panel members (minimum of 3 – see Section 8 of the guidelines document) as appropriate College roles have been identified to constitute the panel.
- The chair will direct the panel through the previous recommendation process using the information provided and invite the panel to consider the recommendation made (by the Initial investigation panel).
- The role of the panel is to make decisions from recommendations received on each case.
- The Panel will either validate, overturn or change any recommendation made on the case.
- A recommendation may be for the Panel itself to make a decision due to the fact that the initial investigating group were not able to come to a collective agreement.
- The Chair will record all discussions and decisions made by the Fitness to Study Panel and explain in writing the rationale behind any decision.
- Ensure the Panel carries out its responsibilities under quality enhancement. Ensuring any recommendation made is fair, objective and to ensure the investigating group followed due process in making their recommendation.
- The chair will record any decisions of the panel and communicate that in writing to the student (within 5 working days) also highlighting any implications or consequences of that decision.
- The chair will be responsible for writing to the student informing them of the meeting and inviting the student to attend. The letter will also notify the student of their right to be accompanied by a friend or representative. (eg Student Association, Friend etc).
- The chair will ensure a copy of all paper-work, decisions and communications are copied to the Quality Team for their records.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Role of the Panel Members (Fitness to Study Panel Meeting)

- Become familiar with all the information and evidence contained in the original case file received from the initial investigation meeting.
- Review the information and evidence available, in connection with a recommendation proposed and its rationale, fairness and objectivity.
- Make a judgement (collectively) to validate, amend or change any recommendation proposed.
- If the panel are required to make a decision itself as a recommendation, then the panel will discuss the concerns and issues and use the evidence to help come to a decision. This will need to be recorded using the pro-form Appendix 1.
- Agree a new decision if appropriate and the reasons and rationale for the change.
- Record any decision made and rationale and reasons for it.

Role of Appeal Panel Meeting

- The Assistant Principal will convene any appeals panel to review a decision made by the Fitness to Study Panel. (See section 9 of Fitness to Study Guidelines document).
- Consider the decision made in light of all the information and evidence contained in the original case file and all completed records to date within the process.
- Review the decision made within the context of information and evidence available, (or any previous recommendation proposed) especially around its rationale, fairness and objectivity.
- Make a judgement (collectively) to uphold or change any decision made by the Fitness to Study Panel.
- Propose a new decision if appropriate and highlight the reasons and rationale for the change (based on evidence) record this decision for College and Quality Team records.
- Record any decisions made and rationale and reasons for it.
- Write to the student highlighting the decision of the appeals Panels.

Status: Final, Version 1.1
Approved By: College Management Team
Effective Date: August 2015

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic
Lead Author: Head of Student Experience
Student Services Manager
Impact Assessment Status: August 2015

Clerk (Supplied by the Quality Unit)

- To record the key details and points raised and discussed by the Fit to Study Panel members at the meeting.
- To keep a record of all Fitness to Study cases whether resolved at stage 8.2 or 8.5.
- Receive a copy (for quality records) of recommendations agreed by Initial Investigating panel and of subsequent Fitness to Study or Appeals Panel decisions and records.
- Receive a record of all correspondence sent to the student related to the case, and any subsequent decisions and outcomes.

Advice to Students Re-Implications of Decisions

- Information and advice on the implications or consequences of students will be communicated to the student in writing at decision stages.
- An offer a meeting to explain or explore these (not the decision itself) will be offered to the student in the letter.

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED