

# CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

## Student Fitness to Study Procedure

### Version Control Statement

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# CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

## STUDENT FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE

1. Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) is committed to supporting students. CCCU recognises the importance of health and wellbeing in relation to a student's academic progression and student experience.
2. CCCU is an adult learning environment, and treats students as mature individuals able to study and live alongside people of all ages and backgrounds. There are however occasions when the University needs to intervene because a student appears to no longer be fit to study.
3. Fitness to study refers to the impact of a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour on their capability to participate fully and appropriately in the learning environment. It may occur when a student exhibits
  - a. Unacceptable conduct as set out in the Student Disciplinary Procedure, and/or
  - b. Does not engage with their programme through lack of attendance, use of the Learning Platform Suite or submission of assessments as set out in the Student Engagement in Learning Policy, and/or
  - c. Demonstrates an unsatisfactory record of assessment submission/completion of work or academic performance, as determined by the programme director.
4. Where it is clear there is an underlying health or wellbeing issue, action may be taken under this Procedure with the consent of the student, in all but the most serious cases as explained below:
  - a. Entry into the Fitness to Study procedure is normally voluntary for the student, with the student agreeing to take specified actions and identified support being put in place.
  - b. If there are persistent or serious concerns that threaten staff or students' wellbeing, the procedure may be applied without the voluntary engagement of the student. This will only be done following a full risk assessment and consideration of the use of other relevant University procedures, including the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
5. This Procedure sets out the process to identify the needs of the student, the support available and the implications for other students and members of staff.
6. This procedure applies to all registered students, both taught and research students. The term 'student' includes those registered or enrolled on a programme. It includes those on an interruption of study, temporary withdrawal or temporary exclusion or suspension, with the following exceptions:
  - a. where the provisions of a fitness to practice/professional suitability policy apply.
  - b. when the student is a member of the University staff and University Human Resources policies apply.

### What is the purpose of the Student Fitness to Study Procedure?

7. The intention of the Fitness to Study Procedure is to support and protect when a student's health, wellbeing and/or behavior has a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically and function at CCCU.
8. The aim is to ensure that students who cause concern can expect a considered and consistent response.

### How to use this procedure

9. There is an expectation that Schools and Professional Support departments use the Cause for Care and Concern Procedure in the first instance wherever possible. This Procedure is for use where there is a need for intervention beyond the Cause for Care and Concern Procedure overseen by Student Support, Health and Wellbeing.
10. Concerns should be acted on promptly once issues set out in paragraph 3 above are identified. Early intervention and support can result in better outcomes for the student and may avoid the situation becoming more complex.
11. Before initiating the Fitness to Study Procedure, the School or Department should seek advice and discuss their concerns with Student Support, Health and Wellbeing. To work within the boundaries of confidentiality, these initial discussions need to be undertaken without identifying the student. The purpose is to seek advice while preserving the confidentiality of the student.
12. When the decision is made to use the Procedure, the student is to have the opportunity for full engagement, including the optional assistance a disability adviser, mental health practitioner and CCSU representative and/or the support of a friend or family member.
13. The student can withdraw from this Procedure at any time up to the decision to proceed to Stage 3 (see below). In these circumstances, the University may act under other relevant procedures, including the Student Disciplinary Procedure, or utilise this procedure under section 4b above, without the voluntary engagement of the student.

### Structure of this procedure

14. **Stage zero: Initial concern raised**
  - With consent, student referred to the Student Support, Health and Wellbeing Department through Cause for Care and Concern Process.
15. **Stage one: Emerging concerns – beyond Cause for Care and Concern**
  - Informal meeting with student to set agreed outcomes and timescales
16. **Stage two: Continuing concerns**
  - Formal meeting with student to set agreed outcomes and timescales
17. **Stage three: Severe and/or persistent concerns**
  - Formal meeting with confirmed outcome, with or without the voluntary engagement of the student
18. **Please Note:** *Where there is a clear and present risk to the health and safety of the student, other students or staff, Stage 3 may be instigated immediately without the voluntary engagement of the student or recourse to an earlier stage of this procedure. This a University decision. Otherwise the stages should be followed sequentially.*
19. **Precautionary Action:** this is described in points 21-27 and should only be instigated in line with those specific criteria and processes. This could be without recourse to any of the above stages, and may be the first course of action taken where the need is identified by the Head of School/Department and agreed as appropriate by the Director of Student Experience, or their nominee.
20. **Student right to request Review of a Stage 3/Precautionary Action decision**

If student is unhappy with Stage 3/precautionary action outcome, a letter or email setting out the reasons for their review request should be addressed to the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education, Enhancement and Student Experience), to be received within 20 working days of the date on which the order for suspension or the requirement to withdraw was made. The Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor will consider the request for review.

21. Final internal representation may be made in to the Vice-Chancellor within 20 working days following the decision of Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor.

#### Taking action under the fitness to study procedure in an emergency

22. Where there is a perceived threat to health and safety of the student or to other students, staff or visitors, the case may be referred by the Head of School or Department to the Director of Student Experience for an urgent response. In their absence, a nominated individual covering the role acts on the Director's behalf.
23. *Precautionary action* may be considered by the Director of Student Experience or their nominee. Precautionary action is not a penalty or sanction. It does not indicate that the University has concluded that the student is not fit to study.
24. The University will undertake a risk assessment on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriateness, the type and extent of precautionary action.
25. This may proceed without the consent of the student to secure their safety and that of the University community.
26. Precautionary action must be reasonable and proportionate to secure the health and safety of the individual and others, and may include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Imposing conditions on the student (for example, requiring the student to move accommodation)
  - b. Suspending the student<sup>1</sup>
  - c. Excluding the student<sup>2</sup>
27. If the Director of Student Experience decides that immediate precautionary action needs to be put in place, including requirement to suspend or exclude the student, they will refer the case to the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education, Enhancement and Student Experience), or in their absence another member of the Senior Management Team, for approval.
28. Any decision to take precautionary action will be reviewed by the Director of Student Experience after four weeks to consider whether there a need for it to continue. The Director decides whether the precautionary action remains in place, subject to a further review after four weeks, or whether to convene a Fitness to Study at Stage 3 to consider the case.

#### Resumption of study

29. In cases where the outcome of a decision by the University resulted in a suspension of study or an exclusion from the University, the procedure for considering a student's resuming studies should be made clear to the student at the time of communicating the decision to suspend/exclude.
30. In all cases the student may provide professional evidence of overcoming the original difficulties and that they are able to resume study. The nature of the evidence will depend on the student's circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Suspension means that the student is prohibited from participating in the academic activity of the University and the student's registration on his/ her course is put on hold. A qualified or partial suspension may be put in place where appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> Exclusion means that the student is prohibited from taking part in University activities, using University facilities and or/ entering University grounds or premises. A qualified or partial exclusion may be put in place where appropriate.

31. Consideration of resumption of study requests will be made with reference to the University's Resumption of Studies Policy. In addition to the process set out in that policy:
  - a. Where the decision to interrupt, suspend or exclude the student was taken at Stages 1 or 2, the resumption of study arrangements should be considered by a meeting of those who heard the original case, with the addition of colleagues from Planning and Academic Administration.
  - b. Where the decision to interrupt suspend or exclude the student was instigated at Stage 3, the Director of Student Experience, will ensure arrangements for resuming study are put in place.
  - c. In both of the above cases, consideration should be given to the support needs of the returning student. These support needs are to be set out in a statement for the student, together with identifying those responsible for providing the support.
32. For students suspended or excluded as a result of the Fitness to Study procedure, the Programme Director is to invite the student to a resumption of study review. The Programme Director is to schedule this before the student's return to University. This is to ensure support is in place and to identify expectations on the part of both the student and University.

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Stages of the Procedure

		Who initiates	Action	Outcome	Further action
Stage 0	<b>Initial concern</b> Student causes concern (e.g. not attending, not completing work, disruptive in class or accommodation, causes concern to other students)	Academic or Professional Services staff. Student Support, Health and Wellbeing records reports, and advises Schools, Departments and the student if multiple reports of a serious nature.	Normal referral to support services through Cause for Care and Concern Procedures	Student engages with support services: 1. Issue resolves 2. Issue remains, move to Stage 1 Student does not engage with support services: 1. Issue remains, move to stage 1	No further action required
Stage 1	<b>Emerging concern</b> Student continues to cause concern, has not engaged with support services, is not engaging with their course as set out in the Student Engagement in Learning Policy, denies a problem or does not attend/engage with initial concern discussions	Member of staff who is closely involved in student support or academic progression, such as the Programme Director	Arrange informal meeting with student. There is a need to act promptly in arranging a meeting.	Discussions of concerns, plan of action if appropriate, with dates for review. Record of meeting of student, personal tutor/ Programme Director and SSHWB.	No further action if the outcome of the meeting and/or review by the School or Department after one month is satisfactory.  If there are continuing concerns, proceed to Stage 2, with the agreement of the student.  If the student does not agree, and there are continuing concerns, student may be referred to Stage 3, without their consent.

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<p>Stage 2</p>	<p><b>Continuing concern</b> Student has not responded to agreed action and concern continues or student does not agree to/attend meeting at Stage 1.</p>	<p>Programme Director and/ or Manager from Student Support, Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Student invited to attend meeting with Programme Director and a member of staff from Student Support, Health and Wellbeing. Student can be accompanied by a friend, family members, disability adviser or mental health practitioner or CCSU representative.</p>	<p>Discussions of concerns, plan of action if appropriate, with dates for review. Record of meeting of student, personal tutor/ Programme Director and SSHWB.</p>	<p>No further action if the outcome of the meeting and/or review by the School or Department after one month is satisfactory.</p> <p>If continuing concerns proceed to Stage 3. The University takes the decision to proceed to Stage 3, and can do so without the consent of the student.</p>
<p>Stage 3</p>	<p><b>Severe or persistent concern</b> Student has not responded to agreed action and concern continues, student does not agree to/attend meeting at Stage 2</p> <p>This stage also applies where the concern is so severe that immediate action at Stage 3 is required.</p>	<p>Head of School, Director of Student Experience, Head of Student Wellbeing</p>	<p>Student asked to attend a meeting with Head of School and senior member of staff from Student Support, Health and Wellbeing (Head of Student Wellbeing, Disability Services Manager or Student Wellbeing Services Manager). Student can ask to be accompanied by a friend, family members, disability adviser, mental health practitioner or CCSU representative.</p> <p>The meeting may proceed in the absence of the student unless the student requests a rescheduling of the meeting within a reasonable timescale.</p> <p>A representative may attend the meeting on the student's behalf, with the explicit written consent of the student.</p>	<p>Discussions of concerns, plan of action if appropriate, with dates for review. Record of meeting of student, personal tutor/ Programme Director and SSHWB.</p>	<p>No further action if the outcome meeting is satisfactory.</p> <p>If outcome of meeting and/or review is not satisfactory student may be suspended from studies for a specified period with re-entry, subject to review.</p> <p>Exceptionally, the student might be required to withdraw from the programme. The student would not be barred from reapplying for admission to the University under the Admissions arrangements.</p>

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<p>Review Process (Student Initiated)</p>	<p>If student is unhappy with Stage 3/precautionary action outcome</p>	<p>Student</p>	<p>A letter or email setting out the reasons for their review request should be addressed to the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education, Enhancement and Student Experience), to be received within 20 working days of the date on which the order for suspension or the requirement to withdraw was made.</p>	<p>The Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor will consider the request for review.  The Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor may nominate an appropriate person to undertake the review.</p>	<p>Final internal representation may be made to the Vice-Chancellor within 20 working days following the decision of Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor.</p>
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# Appendix 1 STUDENT FITNESS TO STUDY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

## Routes through the Fitness to Study Procedure



