



Policy name	Support to Study Policy (Formerly Fitness to Study)
Subject	A policy outlining how a student will be supported and the steps that should be taken when there are concerns about their capacity to undertake their studies.
Approving authority	QSC
Accountable person	Director of Student and Campus Life
Responsible Team	Student and Campus Life
First approved	May 2020
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Global application	UNUK
Version number	3

1. Introductory Purpose & Background

Students studying at the University attend on the basis that they are well enough to do so. It is assumed that students have the capacity to make and understand the impact of this decision and they are given full responsibility for their actions and decisions whilst studying at the University.

This policy is intended to support students in managing circumstances or incidents that impact upon their health, safety and/or wellbeing and that cause concern about whether they have the ability and/or capacity to engage appropriately with their studies and/or the University community.

The policy observes the principles of good practice identified by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and the Office for Students' (OFS) primary regulatory objective that "All students, from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education." The University will take into account relevant legislation; for example, the Equality Act 2010 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation when making decisions under this policy and associated procedure.

2. Scope

The Support to Study Policy applies to all students at the University of Nottingham UK campus, including those whose study is interrupted or suspended.

3. Definitions

Capacity relates to whether a student is able to make decisions about issues that affect them in relation to their University experience and daily life more generally. Someone lacking capacity would have difficulty doing one or more of the following things: understanding information given to them about an issue; retaining that information long enough to be able to make a decision about the issue; weighing up the information available to make a decision or communicating their decision.¹

The **University community** includes all students (at all levels and modes of study), all staff (with any form of contract to undertake work at or for the University), volunteers (those providing unpaid services for the University) and visitors to the University campuses.

4. Policy

4.1. Key Principles

The University of Nottingham is committed to providing a positive, inclusive and supportive environment for all.

The policy encourages a collaborative approach to finding ways for affected students to progress with their studies with appropriate support in place.

Decisions under the processes made under the processes supporting this policy will be proportionate, fair and reasonable.

4.2. Key Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Associate Director of Student Wellbeing (or their nominee)	Makes decisions within the Support to Study Procedure, including: The decision as to when a case will be escalated to Stage 2 or Stage 3. What level of meeting/panel is required after a period of interruption. The decision if sufficient contemporaneous evidence has been received following a period of interruption.

¹ Adapted from Mental Health Foundation: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/mental-capacity>

Panel members	<p>Make decisions as to whether a student is fit to study at a given point in time.</p> <p>Where a student's ability and/or capacity to study or engage appropriately with the University community is impaired, make decisions regarding the appropriate action.</p> <p>Act rationally, proportionately and reasonably and in accordance with the Support to Study Procedure.</p>
Registrar	<p>If a panel recommends that a student be interrupted, suspended or withdrawn, reviews the case and decides if they agree or not and takes appropriate action.</p>
Support and Wellbeing Team	<p>Manages and implements the Support to Study Procedure.</p> <p>Chair Support to Study meeting/panels.</p>
School and/or Wellbeing Representative(s)	<p>Provide information for panels/meetings held under the Support to Study Procedure, which set out the concerns, outline any support that is already in place and any recommendations.</p> <p>Attend the panels/meetings held under the Support to Study Procedure to provide answers to questions regarding the student's academic progress, engagement and current support.</p>
Senior Tutor (or their nominee) and/or Wellbeing Representative(s)	<p>Provide a written statement to the Review Panel setting out the concerns, an outline of support, any specific outcomes at Stage 1 or Stage 2, and any recommendations.</p> <p>They will attend the Review Panel to answer questions about the student's academic progress, engagement or current support but will not be involved in the decision-making process.</p>
Students	<p>Access and engage with the support available to them required.</p> <p>Where possible, be actively involved in shaping support and engage positively with any outcomes reached under the Support to Study Policy.</p>

	Inform the University promptly of any circumstances that arise that affect their ability to study and/or engage in university life.
All members of the University Community	Contribute to providing a positive, inclusive and supportive environment for all. Promptly raise any concerns that they have about a student under this policy with the Support and Wellbeing Team in the student's School or Department.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

4.3.1 When may the policy be followed?

The Support to Study Policy may be followed in circumstances where the student:

- a. is exhibiting behaviour that gives cause for concern for their own health, wellbeing and/or safety;
- b. is exhibiting behaviour that is causing significant disruption or serious risk to the University community or the University itself;
- c. has an underlying physical or mental health condition that is impairing their ability and/or capacity to engage appropriately with their academic studies and/or the University community;
- d. is regularly submitting extenuating circumstance claims as a result of concerns about their health, safety and/or wellbeing;
- e. has raised their own concerns about their ability and/or capacity to study or engage in university life appropriately due to concerns related to their health, safety and/or wellbeing;
- f. has lost the capacity to make decisions required to study and/or engage appropriately with the University community;
- g. is unable or lacks the capacity to engage appropriately with their studies and/or university life;
- h. is declining to engage with support being offered; and/or
- i. has engaged with support, but concerns remain about their health, safety, wellbeing, and/or academic progress.

The above is a non-exhaustive list and there may be other circumstances in which it is appropriate to enact the Support to Study Procedure.

4.3.2 Overview of Support to Study

Where concerns relevant to this policy are raised by or about a student or otherwise come to the attention of the University, the process set in broad terms below and in detail in the Support to Study Procedure should be followed:

a. Stage 1 Study Support Meeting

an informal meeting to discuss the concerns raised by or about the student and to explore any relevant and available support with the student. Where support is required, a Study Support Plan will be drawn up.

b. Stage 2 Study Support Panel

a Stage 2 Study Support Panel will consider concerns raised by or about the student that remain unresolved following consideration at Stage 1. This will, wherever possible, be undertaken in collaboration with the student. A formal outcome will be issued.

c. Stage 3 Review Panel

a Stage 3 Review Panel will consider concerns raised by or about the student that remain unresolved following consideration at Stage 2 or are exceptionally escalated directly to stage 3 as a result of the seriousness of the concerns. A formal outcome will be issued.

d. Appeal stage

a student may appeal a Stage 3 outcome on limited grounds. An appeal will be considered by a Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice-Chancellor and a formal outcome will be issued.

4.4 The consequences of non-compliance

Failure to follow the policy could result in a student not receiving the appropriate support for their individual circumstances.

This is not a disciplinary policy and its purpose is to ensure, wherever possible, that students may continue to study. However, in some cases this may not be possible and a student may be permanently withdrawn from study.

4.5 How compliance with the policy will be measured

Cases for consideration will be triaged and administered by the Student and Campus Life Team to ensure associated procedures and principles are adhered to.

4.6 Provisions for monitoring and reporting related to the policy

Student and Campus Life will produce an annual report for the Quality Standards Committee.

5. Review

The Support to Study Policy will be reviewed every 12 months.

6. Related policies, procedures, standards and guidance

[Support to Study Procedure](#)

Code of Discipline

Fitness to Practise Policy

Quality Manual

Policy on circumstances affecting students' ability to study and complete assessments

Safeguarding Policy

Policy on Communications with Third Parties