



**UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMY 92**  
MANCHESTER

**Support to Study  
Policy and Procedure**

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| <b>REVISION HISTORY</b> |             |  |   |
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| <b>Version</b>          | <b>Date</b> | <b>Revision description/Summary of changes</b>   | <b>Author</b>                           |
| 1.2                     | 2 July 2021 | Reviewed based on lessons learned from previous fitness to study cases. Changes include change of procedure to include more significant student involvement in | Student Well-being & Disability Manager |

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|     |              |  |   |
|-----|--------------|--|---|
|     |              | decision making process, amending panel membership, and more detail re return to study process, amending name of policy/procedure and addition of 'urgent situations' section.   |   |
| 1.3 | 30 June 2022 | Review of whole process - introduction of three stages, to improve speed and quality of support required immediately. Change of name to Support to Study to reflect the nature of support offered through this process/procedure.  | Student Well-being & Disability Manager |
| 1.4 | August 2023  | Amendments to role responsibilities to reflect changes. Reference to 'Student Support Service' updated from 'Student Well-being Service'. Addition of signposting to UA92 Safeguarding & Prevent Policy in relation to emergency/urgent situations. Updates made and additional options included to make Stages 1, 2 & 3 more supportive and inclusive for students. | Counselling & Mental Health Manager     |

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## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1 Outline what 'support to study' and 'fitness to study' is.
- 1.2 Identify when the support to study procedure should be used.
- 1.3 Provide a clear and supportive procedure to address concerns relating to a student's fitness to study.
- 1.4 Provide clear guidance in relation to emergency and urgent situations where individuals may be at risk (please also see 'Safeguarding and Prevent Policy').

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all registered students and apprentices registered on a UA92 course. Any reference to students from this point includes apprentices.
- 2.2 There is a potential overlap between this policy and other UA92 policies (see section 7; 'Related Documentation'). UA92 reserves the right to suspend action under this procedure if it considers that the matter would be more appropriately dealt with under another policy/procedure.
- 2.3 In this policy and procedure, any reference to named members of UA92 staff also includes reference to their nominee and named staff may delegate their responsibilities to other appropriate members of staff without invalidating the procedure.
- 2.4 Advice on how to use this policy and procedure is available from the UA92 Counselling & Mental Health Manager.
- 2.5 UA92 will keep a record of any Support to Study cases and evidence collated as part of the investigation into a student's fitness to study. Students or apprentices are advised to also keep their own records. Records will be retained in line with the UA92 retention policy.

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### 3. Policy statements

- 3.1 UA92 is committed to supporting students and apprentices and recognises the importance of their health and well-being in relation to their academic progress and wider student experience.
- 3.2 The support to study procedure is a supportive process, intended to be used when a student's health or well-being may be having a detrimental impact on the health, safety, well-being or learning of the student and/or others in the UA92 community.
- 3.3 UA92 is committed to providing a safe and comfortable environment for all and to respond appropriately where there are concerns relating to a student's fitness to study and the impact this may have on the student and/or others.

### 4. Definitions

- 4.1 This policy and the accompanying procedures are to be followed where a student's behaviour is giving cause for significant concern, and where it is believed either that there is an underlying physical or mental health condition, or that the use of the Student Disciplinary Procedures would be inappropriate or counterproductive.
- 4.2 Consideration of fitness to study is not a disciplinary process; it is not intended to punish breaches of rules but rather to support students in difficulty. The aim of the Support to Study process is to ensure a student does not withdraw from their studies unnecessarily; it is intended to support them to continue to study.
- 4.3 The terms 'support to study' and 'fitness to study' as used in this policy encompass all aspects of student life (including student accommodation) and not just the student's ability to engage with their studies.
- 4.4 A student is considered 'fit to study' when they are physically and mentally well enough so that, with any necessary and reasonable support and adjustments in place;
  - They can engage with their academic studies and submit assessments with a reasonable chance of obtaining the qualification they have registered for;
  - Their behaviour does not unreasonably disrupt other members of the UA92 community;
  - They do not put their own health and safety at risk, or that of others.

- 4.5 UA92 intends to 'support' a student to study as the initial stage of this process. If the supportive measures are not deemed successful, it will be necessary to progress to the second stage of the process to determine a student's 'fitness to study'.

## 5. Emergency and/or Urgent Situations

Although rare, there may be incidents where a student's behaviour is a cause for concern. In these instances, help may either be required urgently (but not imminently), or the situation will require immediate action. Within the UA92 opening hours, staff and students should follow the procedures as set out below (please see UA92 Safeguarding & Prevent Policy for more information). If the situation occurs out of hours, NHS or emergency services should be contacted as appropriate, as with the general population.

### 5.1 Emergency Situations

In extreme circumstances, where there is an imminent danger to the student concerned or to others, the most appropriate action is to contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), or the deputy DSO in their absence, who will contact emergency services if necessary. If they are not available immediately, emergency services can be contacted directly (in emergencies only).

Situations that may constitute an emergency could include but are not limited to;

- If a student's behaviour is posing an immediate risk to themselves or others.
- There is a risk of a student attempting suicide.
- A student's behaviour is sufficiently out of the ordinary that the matter cannot wait until the next day e.g. severe agitation, disorientation, incoherence.

Steph Petrou (DSO)

- Email: [stephanie.petrou@ua92.ac.uk](mailto:stephanie.petrou@ua92.ac.uk)
- Mobile: 07870389580

In the absence of the DSO, the next point of contact is the Deputy DSO, followed by the alternative Deputy DSO

Gareth Smith (Deputy DSO)

- Email: [gareth.smith@ua92.ac.uk](mailto:gareth.smith@ua92.ac.uk)
- Mobile: 07738218004

Emma Kidd (Alternative Deputy DSO)

- Email: [emma.kidd@ua92.ac.uk](mailto:emma.kidd@ua92.ac.uk)

- Mobile: 07812509945

The UA92 Student Support Service should then be informed so that appropriate follow up support can be offered ([well-being@ua92.ac.uk](mailto:well-being@ua92.ac.uk)).

## 5.2 Urgent Help Required

If there are concerns about a student's well-being, but it is not felt the situation constitutes an emergency;

- Advise the student to contact their GP or NHS 111 who will be able to determine the best course of action.
- Advise the student to contact the Student Well-being Service directly and/or request permission to share information with the service yourself (you are only able to breach confidentiality if there is a significant risk to the student or others)
- Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or deputy DSO for advice. See section 5.1 for contact details.

5.3 Once imminent risk has been removed, the student should, as appropriate, be considered under the other sections of this policy/procedure.

5.4 In the event of an emergency and/or urgent situation, UA92 reserves the right to enforce a suspension with immediate effect for up to 21 days, to allow time for initiation of the Support to Study process. Suspension may also include suspension from UA92 buildings, placement providers and/or systems.

## 6. Procedure

6.1 An individual can report concerns about a student's fitness to study directly to the UA92 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and/or Deputy DSO via email or via the Student Support Service ([well-being@ua92.ac.uk](mailto:well-being@ua92.ac.uk)).

6.2 The DSO will appoint a Support to Study Chair which would typically be the Counselling & Mental Health Manager (or a nominee).

### Stage 1 – Supporting student to continue with studies

6.3 The Support to Study Chair should establish the exact nature of the concerns raised and gather any relevant information such as attendance records or evidence of what action has been taken already.

- 6.4 The Support to Study Chair should consider the information gathered and determine next steps to support the student to continue studying. If deemed appropriate, the Support to Study Chair may make the decision to move straight to Stage 2 without completing Stage 1. UA92 reserves the right to enforce a suspension with immediate effect for up to 21 days to allow time for initiation of the Support to Study Process.
- 6.5 The Support to Study Chair will invite the student to a 'Support to Study' meeting to discuss concerns raised and determine next steps. This meeting is intended to be a supportive meeting, to intervene at an early stage and prevent escalation to Stage 2 (determining 'Fitness to Study'), where possible. The student is invited to bring one person as a support to the meeting. Typically, this would not be permitted to be a UA92 staff member or UA92 student. The student will need to inform the Support to Study Chair of who they intend to bring at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
- 6.6 Possible outcomes of the Support to Study meeting could include but are not limited to:
- referring to GP for further support
  - time-limited counselling at UA92
  - creating a Learning Support Plan (LSP)
  - arranging regular well-being appointments for a limited period
  - discussing concerns with relevant parties e.g. course leader, Registry team etc.
  - temporary withdrawal from studies
  - escalation to Stage 2 of the Support to Study procedure
  - consideration of another UA92 policy e.g. Student Disciplinary Policy
  - suspension from UA92 campus and systems until Support to Study panel meets to determine next steps
- 6.7 The Support to Study Chair will establish a 'review date' to determine progress made and whether (a) the Support to Study process concludes or (b) whether it is necessary to progress onto Stage 2 of the process.

#### Stage 2 – Determination of fitness to study

- 6.8 Progress to Stage 2 of this process is necessary if (a) UA92 deems interventions at Stage 1 to not have been effective in adequately supporting a student to continue with their studies, or (b) a student is not engaging in support strategies suggested at Stage 1.



6.9 A formal 'Fitness to Study' meeting will be arranged to determine next steps, involving a panel of UA92 colleagues. The student will be invited to attend but is not required to and can provide information in writing, pre-recorded video or by other means if preferable. This must be provided to the Support to Study Chair at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. If the student chooses not to attend the meeting, they can arrange for someone to attend on their behalf. If the student chooses to attend the meeting, they are invited to bring one person as a support to the meeting. Typically, this would not be permitted to be a UA92 staff member or UA92 student. The student will need to inform the Support to Study Chair of who they intend to bring at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Details of an independent advice service can be provided to the student upon request.

6.10 The Fitness to Study panel would typically include:

- Support to Study Chair (or nominee)
- Academic colleague (in a different subject area to student)
- Registry colleague
- Student Experience Manager (or nominee)
- Secretary

6.11 The Fitness to Study panel will be an opportunity to discuss the outcome of Stage 1 and suggested next steps, taking into consideration the student's views.

6.12 Following the Fitness to Study panel, the panel should meet (without the student present) to discuss the concerns raised, in light of information and opinions presented by the student.

6.13 The panel may then agree a number of actions including, but not limited to;

- Temporary withdrawal from studies (intercalation)
- Requirements to seek NHS or external support
- Full mental health and/or medical assessment required
- Engagement in treatment over a set period of time
- Evidence of a period of stability prior to consideration of returning to study
- No further recommendation – progress to permanent withdrawal from studies

6.14 The decision will be communicated to the student in writing as soon as possible, and where appropriate the student will be invited to discuss the outcome with the most appropriate member of UA92 staff.

6.15 In cases where a suspension of studies has been agreed:

- A student's upcoming assessments will automatically be deferred, and Registry will contact the student to confirm this.
- Student's status will change to intercalated and this will be formally notified to Student Finance England.
- Clear information should be provided to the student about UA92's expectations of them during the suspension period e.g. if they are required to access appropriate external support before a return to study can be considered.
- The UA92 Student Support Service should suspend any in-house support provided for the duration of the suspension. However, if appropriate, the Counselling & Mental Health Manager can contact the student periodically to see how they are progressing in relation to panel recommendations.
- Suspension may also include suspension from UA92 buildings, placement providers and/or systems.
- The suspension should not be time-limited; return to study should depend on the student's access to and engagement in recommended external support during their suspension. However, an indicative return date should be agreed and this should (a) be communicated to Student Finance England, and (b) act as a point for a formal review of the student's progress in relation to their fitness to study.

### Stage 3 – Returning to study

6.16 Progression to Stage 3 is only required in cases where a suspension of studies has been recommended. The student will be invited to contact the Student Support Service when they feel they have completed actions recommended by the panel and feel well enough to return to study.

6.17 For a return to study to be considered, the student must provide written medical evidence, in English, from a suitably qualified medical professional, who is presently licensed to practice in the UK, to confirm (a) the student has accessed recommended support e.g., a full mental health assessment, and (b) they deem the student 'fit' to return to study at UA92 in relation to their physical and/or mental health.

6.18 The Support to Study Chair will consider the medical evidence provided. If they deem that it the evidence does not provide sufficient information, the student will need to provide the required information before a return to study can be considered.

6.19 Once appropriate medical evidence has been obtained confirming the student's suitability to return to studies (in the professional's

medical opinion), the Support to Study Chair should consider any support that may need to be arranged in order to support the student to return to study e.g. putting in place a Learning Support Plan, engagement with UA92 student support services etc. Where possible, this should be in place before the student returns to study.

6.20 If UA92 considers the student 'fit' to return to study, the Support to Study Chair should communicate this to the student in writing (and in person, if appropriate). The information the student receives in writing should include;

- The decision made
- Return to study date
- Information relating to outstanding assessments and teaching. For example, new deadlines for deferred assessments, support available from academic staff, and provisional dates for returning to 'block teaching' provided the student passes outstanding assessments and teaching
- Support offered/required in order to support the student's return to study e.g. disability support, counselling etc.

6.21 If UA92 does not consider the student fit to study, they may agree a number of actions including, but not limited to;

- i. Recommending further assessment and/or support
- ii. Extending a student's suspension of studies to allow more time for relevant support to be accessed or a longer period of stability before returning
- iii. Outlining a requirement for the student to access specified support before a return to study is re-considered
- iv. Withdrawing the student from their course if it is not deemed appropriate for the student to return to studies at UA92

6.22 The Support to Study Chair should communicate this to the student in writing (and in person, if appropriate). The information the student receives in writing should include;

- The decision made and clear reasons as to why
- Responsibilities of the student (if any) and the responsibilities of UA92 (if any) to allow for a re-consideration of the student's return to study

6.23 If there is sufficient concern about a student following the conclusion of their Support to Study process, UA92 is able to re-open the previous Support to Study process at any stage.

## 7. Appeals

- 7.1 The student may appeal against a decision made by UA92 in writing to the UA92 Registry team ([registry@ua92.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ua92.ac.uk)) within ten working days of the decision being communicated to the student.
- 7.2 If an appeal is made in relation to decision/s made during 'Stage 1' of the Support to Study process, the next step would be to progress to 'Stage 2' of the process.
- 7.3 If an appeal is made in relation to decision/s made during 'Stage 2' of the Support to Study process, the decision/s will be reviewed by the UA92 Head of Student Support, and the student will receive a response within one calendar month of UA92 having received the appeal.
- 7.4 If the student is not satisfied having completed UA92's appeals procedure, they will be entitled to request a review of the case under the rules of the scheme of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) as set out in the Completion of Procedures letter. Information about OIA and its processes can be found at [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

## 8. Related Documentation

- Student Code of Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Summary of Terms and Conditions for Students
- Exceptional and Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure
- Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Data Retention Policy
- Student Well-being Policy

Please see the following link for the above related documentation-  
<https://ua92.ac.uk/help-guidance/student-regulations/>