

## **STUDENT SUPPORT AND PROGRESS SYSTEM**

### **Supporting information and Guidance for Advisors, Academic Registry, Advice Centre and Senior Tutors**

#### **A: Summary of possible circumstances which may cause concern**

1. Student self-reports
  - a. Time limited illness (physical / mental health)
  - b. Other reasonable absence
  - c. Personal issues
  - d. Academic concerns
2. Concerns raised via academics, academic support services, placement feedback which may include,
  - a. Observed and concerning deterioration in
    - i. Health
      1. Sudden onset of physical difficulty or mental health problem
    - ii. Appearance
      1. Poor personal hygiene
      2. Signs of self-harm
    - iii. Attitude
      1. Emotional distress
      2. Social withdrawal
      3. Low mood
      4. Change in behaviour
  - b. Poor attendance
  - c. Lack of engagement with tutor / tutorials
  - d. Failure to respond to university communications
  - e. Failure to meet deadlines associated with course
  - f. Sudden deterioration in academic performance
  - g. Summative examination failure
  - h. Problems in accommodation
  - i. Relationship difficulties
  - j. An unusually high number of extenuating circumstances applications
  - k. Pattern of behaviour or communications which are inappropriate
  - l. Pattern of unreasonable demands which appear irrational, inappropriate or inconsistent
  - m. Failure to submit work or comply with other requirements of programme of study
  - n. Repeated interruptions of study
  - o. Complaints from other students or staff
  - p. General failure to engage with the College, its service providers and its policies and procedures
3. External reports
  - a. Police contact university
  - b. Drug / alcohol problems

## B: Staging of concerns

### Stage 1

- When there is a straightforward or emerging concern regarding a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, safety and / or ability to study and / or participate in placement and where their effect on others is considered minimal

### Stage 2

- When there is an intermediate concern regarding a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, safety and / or ability to study and / or participate in placement and their effect on others will merit a direct referral to Stage 2
- Failure of resolution at Stage 1
- When referral to the Misconduct and Professional Requirements and Fitness to Practise procedures are inappropriate

### Stage 3

- When there is a serious concern regarding a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, safety and / or ability to study and / or participate in placement and their effect on others will merit a direct referral to Stage 3
- Failure of resolution at Stage 2
- When referral to the Misconduct and Professional Requirements and Fitness to Practise procedures are inappropriate

### Risk matrix to help determine / categorise stage

		Risk to self		
		Low	Medium	High
Risk to others	Low	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
	Medium	Stage 2		Stage 3
	High	Stage 3	Stage 3	Stage 3

### C: Exemplars

Concern	Action by	Means of Discussion	Possible actions	Others to be informed
<b>Stage 1</b>				
<p><b>The student is ill and expected to be away for a defined period of less than one month and the student has no history of repeated illness. The student expresses no other worries</b></p>	<p>To be determined by Senior UG / PG tutor.</p> <p>Dependant on student and course.</p> <p>May be Course director, Year leader, Senior tutor, Research supervisor</p>	<p>Conversation between student and tutor and relevant body by email or phone or face to face or in a small meeting</p>	<p>Deferral of Assessments</p> <p>Short absence from study approved</p> <p>Deferral of placement or part of placement</p>	<p>Dependant on student, course and period of absence.</p> <p>Likely to be Student Records Exams Office if Assessment Graduate School if research degree student Advice centre if OH clearance required before return</p>
<p><b>A single incidence of low level sub-optimal behaviour has been reported by a College colleague or a placement. Examples might include;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Student is disruptive in DL group</b></li> <li>- <b>Poor placement feedback</b></li> <li>- <b>Unexplained absence from compulsory part of course</b></li> </ul>	<p>To be determined by Senior UG / PG tutor / Head of EMS placements</p> <p>Dependant on student and course.</p> <p>May be Course director, Year leader, Senior tutor, Research supervisor</p>	<p>The student is invited to a 1:1 / 1:2 meeting to give their perspective. The student will be given the opportunity to discuss any underlying worries in a supportive environment</p>	<p>The student will be given advice in the meeting and this will be confirmed in an email.</p>	<p>Copy email to students file via Registry / Graduate School</p>

Concern	Action by	Means of Discussion	Possible actions	Others to be informed
<b>Stage 2</b>				
<b>A single incidence of sub-optimal behaviour incompatible with normal expectations of the Charter, Research Integrity or other Professional Requirements has been reported by a College colleague or a placement.</b>	Meeting with the Student Support and Progress Group (SSPG) relevant to the students course and stage of study	Student required to attend a scheduled SSPG meeting Typically <30 mins. The student will be given the opportunity to discuss any underlying worries in a supportive environment	The student will be given advice in the meeting and this will be confirmed in an email.  OR  the matter is considered serious and needs to be referred on to a separate misconduct or professional requirements body  Should the meeting not be attended then a further opportunity to attend will be given before the matter is elevated to Stage 3	Copy email to students file via Registry / Graduate School  If elevation or redirection occurs then the Academic Registrar should be informed.
<b>A pattern of repeated illness is beginning to be shown by the student.</b>  <b>AND/OR</b>  <b>The student has shown some repeated struggle in meeting requirements of, Research Integrity or other Professional Requirements in</b>	Meeting with the Student Support and Progress Group (SSPG) relevant to the students course and stage of study	Student required to attend a scheduled SSPG meeting Typically 20 - 40 mins. The student will be given the opportunity to discuss any underlying worries in a supportive environment.  The student will be encouraged to be open about their situation. There will be discussion with the student about the	An agreement will be made with the student. Typically the student will be asked to consider and amend the proposed agreement.  A student might be referred to OH for advice on next steps to include in the agreement.  A student might be referred to Learning	Copy email and agreement to students file via Registry / Graduate School. Also include the Advice Centre

<p><b>placements or other clinical or work settings.</b></p> <p><b>AND/OR</b></p> <p><b>The student has shown some repeated struggle in meeting academic requirements. This includes all students who have recently received the result of 'automatic repeat year'.</b></p>		<p>best way forward given the requirements of their studies.</p>	<p>Development or Advice Centre Specialist services.</p> <p>A deferral of study or a deferral of assessments might be approved.</p>	
<p><b>The student has reportedly been involved in a fairly serious 'misconduct' type of incident in relation to the requirements of the RVC Charter.</b></p>	<p>A senior member of staff will investigate the incident which may involve interviews / obtaining further details from the student and relevant witnesses</p> <p>Meeting with the Student Support and Progress Group (SSPG) relevant to the students course and stage of study</p>	<p>Student required to attend a scheduled SSPG meeting Typically &lt;30 mins. The student will be given the opportunity to discuss any underlying worries in a supportive environment</p>	<p>The SSPG will decide if the student will be given advice in the meeting and this will be confirmed in an email.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>the matter be referred on to a separate misconduct or professional requirements body</p> <p>Should the meeting not be attended then a further opportunity to attend will be given before the matter is elevated to Stage 3</p>	<p>Copy email to students file via Registry / Graduate School</p> <p>If elevation or redirection occurs then the Academic Registrar should be informed.</p>

Concern	Action by	Means of Discussion	Possible actions	Others to be informed
<b>Stage 3</b>				
<p><b>The student has complex or long lasting health difficulties</b></p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p><b>The student has failed to engage with other processes or Levels of this Policy.</b></p>	<p>Referral to the Fitness to Study (FTS) panel by the SSPG</p> <p>A pre meeting OH report will be obtained.</p>	<p>The FTS panel will conduct a case review in private before any meeting to determine the key factors impinging on the students' future progress and take any necessary expert advice. The nature of any RVC requirements for the agreement with the student will be outlined.</p> <p>Student invited to attend a scheduled FTS meeting where concerns about the students fitness to study and progress will be discussed in a supportive environment</p>	<p>An agreement will be made with the student. Typically the student will be asked to consider and amend the proposed agreement.</p> <p>Depending on the circumstances additional requirements may include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The required health (physical / mental) health status that the student must maintain</li> <li>- A statement of other available routes should the agreement not be sustained until the student completes.</li> <li>- Long term deferral</li> <li>- Suspension with indefinite deferral with a readmissions consideration when the student has satisfied the College they are fit to study</li> </ul>	<p>Academic Registrar</p> <p>Copy email to students file via Registry / Graduate School</p>

## **D: Referral Process**

- Via standard referral form (online / paper) requesting a meeting
- Details to be included
  - Students name
  - Course and year
  - PG/UG
  - Study mode (FT / PT)
  - Who is referring
  - Reasons for concern
  - Actions taken so far and outcomes
  - Perceived risk to student and others (tick box matrix)

## **E: Suggested meeting plan**

### **Stage 1**

- Senior Tutor / Advisor / Nominee arranges to meet student as soon as practicable after a concern is raised
- Meeting held in private
- Meeting should be non-confrontational, supportive and aimed at encouraging open dialogue and fact finding
- Student should be made aware of the Student Performance and Development, including Fitness to Study policy
- Student should be advised where to find all other College regulations, policies and procedures, including the RVC Charter (<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/about/the-rvc/academic-quality-regulations-procedures>)
- The concerns should be outlined and specific examples provided where appropriate
- The impact on the student should be explained and where appropriate the effect on others
- Remind the student that fitness to study is essential for successful completion of their course and the College expects the student to cooperate and engage with help, advice and support to ensure they are fit for study and meet the relevant fitness to practise professional body requirements
- Discuss the extent of the Colleges duty of care and ability to make reasonable adjustments
- An action plan should be discussed and mutually agreed
- This may involve recommendations that the student seeks / is referred for additional diagnostics, support and advice, reflects on conduct, completes required activities / paperwork, avoids certain behaviours, areas or people for a period of time, submit a request to defer or withdraw
- The action plan should be sent to the student after the meeting via email or letter with a requirement that they confirm their agreement
- A date for review which may / may not involve a second meeting should be set.

## Stage 2

- The student is invited to a scheduled meeting of the Student Support and Progress Group (SSPG)
- It is suggested the meeting covers the following points
  - Identification/ explanation of the issue / concern (providing clear and specific examples), and any past relevant information
  - Opportunity for the student to give his/her perspective on the issues and if appropriate a history of events, past experiences and helpful strategies or support for managing these issues
  - Clarification of relevant College and Professional Body boundaries and regulations.
  - Clarification of the student's responsibility detailed in the RVC Charter and Professional Body Fitness to Practise guidance
  - Consideration of what would be helpful or make the difference to the student in relation to his/her support and in order to minimise the concerns
  - Further signposting the student to relevant Support Services
  - Clarification of agreed actions and support options to change and improve the current situation (e.g. extensions, taking some sick leave, deferral, interruption, part time study, accessing College Support Services)
  - Explicit clarification of the consequences of failing to complete the agreed actions, and/or a continuation of the cause for concern
  - Agreement of any interim monitoring or measures
  - Agreement of a date to meet again to review the situation

## Stage 3

- The student is invited to a scheduled meeting of the Fitness to Study (FTS) panel
- Where there is an indication that the student may be vulnerable and that the formal written invitation may exacerbate underlying health condition, steps should be taken to meet the student personally to explain why the meeting is necessary and reassure them of the intention to offer support. However, it is important to also indicate to the student that escalation to Stage 3 represents a serious concern about their health and wellbeing, and the impact this is having on their studies.
- In exceptional cases where there is a clear indication that attendance at a full formal panel meeting would be seriously detrimental to a student's health, the Chair of the panel may consider the possibility of arranging a two stage process, where the student has the opportunity to meet a smaller number of people in advance of the full panel hearing, which would then consider the case in the student's absence. However, the student would need to be made aware of and accept the fact that the panel may reach conclusions such as interruption or withdrawal in their absence.
- It is suggested the meeting covers the following points
  - Summary of presenting situation, concern(s) being raised, and past relevant information
  - Opportunity for the student to give his/her perspective of current issues and if appropriate history of events, past experiences and helpful strategies or support for managing the issues
  - Clarification of relevant College and Professional Body boundaries and regulations
  - Clarification of the student's personal and professional responsibilities
  - Identification of any further information which may be required
  - Clarification of the options available to the student at this stage e.g. part-time study with support, a period of interruption with repeating, or a recommendation for withdrawal of the student.



- Consideration of what would be helpful or make the difference to the student in relation to the options available.
- Signposting the student to any relevant Support Services
- Clarification of agreed options/actions and support options that the student is encouraged to access
- Explicit clarification of the consequences of failing to complete the agreed actions, and/or a continuation of the causes for concern
- Agreement of any interim monitoring or measures
- Agreement of a date to meet again to review the situation
- In cases where interruption is the outcome, the meeting should consider and make explicit what is required to happen before the student is permitted to return to study
- In cases where withdrawal is the outcome the student should be directed to the Advice Centre to receive further personal and careers support and advice.

## **F: Records and tracking**

### **Post meeting documentation for Stages 1 and 2**

- Via standard template (online / paper). If done electronically documents should be password protected and stored on shared drive with agreed limited access.
- Details
  - Students name
  - Course and year
  - PG/UG
  - Study mode
  - Stage 1/2
- Brief summary of discussions
- Completion of risk matrix
- Actions advised and deadlines
  - Referrals (eg OH, Learning support, GP etc)
- Date of review
- Copy of letters / emails detailing action and review plan sent to student, their tutor and other relevant parties dependant on circumstances. The other parties will comprise College support services involved in formulating the plan and deciding on an outcome and might include Senior Tutor, research degree supervisor, year leader, course director, graduate school, exams office, EMS / VN Placement team etc
- Kept by Senior Tutor (Stage 1), Chair of the SSPG (Stage 2) with copies held in student file by Advice Centre

### **Post meeting documentation for Stage 3**

- As above but copies also held by Registry as part of student file