Document Details

Document Reference	Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures
Document status	Approved
Document owner	Sarah Sweeney, Head of Student Support and Wellbeing
Review period	Every 2 years
Date of first approval	Approved by Student Experience Committee (SEC), May 2023
Date of next review	2025
Version number	1.1

Version control

Version	Date	Description of changes and name and job title of person responsible for making changes
1.1	24/01/2023	Sarah Sweeney, Head fo Student Support and Wellbeing. Changes include: i

Lancaster University

Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy

- 1. Aim
- 1.1 The aim of this Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy is to enable students to remain at University and successfully complete their programme of study (programme of study refers to all undergraduate programmes, postgraduate taught programmes, postgraduate research programmes and other programmes of study). The Policy aims to ensure consistent and fair treatment of students in situations where their health or wellbeing is at risk, presents a risk to the health and wellbeing of other students or staff. The policy enables the University to discharge its duty of care to all parties effectively and manage risk.
- 2. Context
- 2.1 Lancaster University is strongly committed to supporting its diverse body of students. Our in a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment.
- 2.2 We put in place reasonable adjustments and focused, appropriate support with dear boundaries to ensure students and applicants declaring disabling conditions or long-term mental or physical health issues have equal opportunities to succeed in all aspects of University life.
- 2.3 It is expected that departments and colleges will work with students to address any emerging problems as early as possible as a preliminary stage to this policy. We will seek to provide targeted and coordinated support from departments, colleges and Student and Education Services, with clear boundaries, and engaging with other external partners as necessary. This is to help the student stay or get back on track towards their academic goals, studying and engaging with the University with appropriate support in place.
- 2.4 This policy should only be implemented if the initial level of help and support is proved not sufficient and more structured support is needed requiring specialist or cross-institutional level intervention. It is normally in the best interests of the student to act early; this policy sets out the triggers that should be used to recognise where further actions are needed through the Supported Study Policy. The Fitness to Study procedures should only be used in exceptional circumstances when other approaches to support have not been effective or

- 2.6 This Policy is not disciplinary (where the student incurs disciplinary penalties) but designed to support students whose fitness to study is called into question or who need additional non-academic support in their studies or research. Where students do not wish to engage or fail to comply with conditions placed on them to safeguard their wellbeing or that of others, actions taken by the University under this policy may seem to be punitive but should not be confused with disciplinary penalties behaviour is in breach of the <u>Student Discipline Regulations</u>.
- 2.7 In the event where there is an overlap with other policies and procedures of the University, and an action or omission by a student could potentially be considered under more than one process, the University will determine how best to proceed in the best interests of the student/applicant, of expediency and of natural justice. Procedures may be combined, run in parallel or run in series. The Associate Director (Student Wellbeing and Inclusion) will consult with the Director of Student, Education and Academic Services (or nominee) to determine the best course of action and ensure that the student and relevant staff are advised of how the processes will be conducted.
- 2.8 Wherever possible we will work with the student in a spirit of support and collaboration and will seek to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.
- 2.9 All processes followed will meet the requirements for handling sensitive personal data, in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Process records, including risk assessments and minutes from panel meetings, will be stored confidentially by Student and
- 3. Definitions
- 3.1 , capacity and behaviour.
- 3.2 A student or applicant would typically be expected to:
 - (i) be able to function independently in the academic environment and the wider University environment; and
 - (ii) not exhibit any mental or physical health needs that unreasonably disrupt the learning/research/work of other students or staff; and
 - (iii) be able to benefit from the programme of study/research and pursue for the required period with a reasonable chance of academic progression; and
 - (iv) be able to concentrate for significant periods of time; and
 - (v) be able to undertake private and independent study/research; and
 - (vi) be able to engage with other students and staff in joint activities if required as part of their programme of study/research; and
 - (vii) be able to receive and respond appropriately to critical appraisal of work; and
 - (viii) be self-aware, able to maintain their own safety and seek support from appropriate services when required; and
 - (ix) be able to do the above and to follow policies and procedures with reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

- 4. Scope
- 4.1 This policy applies to all students enrolled on an undergraduate programme, postgraduate taught programme, postgraduate research programme or other programme of study offered by Lancaster University with the Bailrigg campus as their primary affiliation; this includes students of the INTO University Partnership. Students studying through other partnership arrangements will be subject to local fitness to study or equivalent procedures.
- 4.2 This policy also applies to applicants with accepted offers to undergraduate, postgraduate taught/research or other programmes offered by Lancaster University with the Bailrigg campus as their primary affiliation, including applicants of the INTO University Partnership programmes.
- 4.3 The Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policies should only be used where students require support or intervention beyond the remit of standard procedures (e.g. reasonable adjustments, academic or college interventions).
- any member of staff, student, placement partner, or other agencies such as the Police or Social Services. Concerns should be raised by contacting Student Wellbeing Services at SCRT@lancaster.ac.uk or completing the referral form at https://forms.office.com/r/AFmOwXw3x
- 5. Supported Study

5.3

5.1 This Policy covers two processes.

Supported Study: where serious concerns have been raised about whether a student is

provided by

enable them to continue with their programme of study.

Fitness to Study: where very serious concerns have been raised about whether a ot considered sufficient to mitigate the

students and staff.

5.2 We shall normally engage with the student through the Supported Study procedures prior to initiating Fitness to Study procedures. However, depending on the nature/severity of

Study Procedures directly without any prior agreement from the student or any requirement to commence or exhaust Supported Study procedures first.

The aim of Supported Study is to enable the student to engage and progress without undue impact on their wellbeing or that of others, and to ensure that plans are in place for mitigation and management of risks where possible.

- 5.4 We shall initiate Supported Study procedures when we perceive that standard procedures (e.g. reasonable adjustments, academic or college interventions) are insufficient, and/or when the student is not engaging with the interventions offered by the University and/or external services.
- 5.5 The Supported Study Policy sets out the means by which the University exercises its authority, following due process, to change terms and conditions as set out in the <u>Student</u> Contract.
- 5.6 We shall inform the student when commencing Supported Study procedures and seek to involve them in the process.
- 5.7 Supported Study procedures will normally lead to a Supported Study Agreement, developed with the student and relevant others. This will record: support available; agreed actions; responsibilities; remits and boundaries. The Supported Study Agreement should also clarify the next steps if the student/applicant does not engage, or if concerns remain lbeing despite adherence to the Supported Study Agreement.
- 5.8 Supported Study requires the engagement, commitment and co-operation of the departments identifying concern, relevant central services, relevant colleges, the student/applicant and any external services/agencies.
- 5.9 Where a student or applicant refuses or is unable to engage with Supported Study at any stage, other procedures or policies (e.g. academic progress, accommodation regulations, discipline, Fitness to Study) may be initiated as appropriate.
- 6. Fitness to Study
- 6.1 Where a student or applicant:

does not meet the definition of fit to study above; and does meet the definition of not fit to study above; and Supported Study procedures have not been or would not be sufficient to allow them to be defined as fit to study.

The University has the authority to require deferral of enrolment, intercalation, temporary exclusion or permanent exclusion through the Fitness to Study process. The authority to approve such a decision rests with the Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel. Student and Education Services Division is responsible for managing the Fitness to Study process: Fitness to Study procedures.

- 6.2 Fitness to Study procedures must always include consideration of any appropriate support, reasonable adjustments or actions that might enable the student or applicant to meet the requirements of Fitness to Study.
- 6.3 All Fitness to Study cases are considered and discussed confidentially by a Fitness to Study Panel.

- 7. Management of Risk
- 7.1

- 2.2 The University can initiate Fitness to Study procedures where a student or applicant does not meet the definition of fit to study (above) and/or does meet the definition of not fit to study.
- 2.3 Academic progress is not in itself an indication that a student/applicant is fit to study (see definitions above); breaches in the student code of conduct are also not in themselves an indication that a student/applicant is not fit to study.
- 2.4 Staff or external agencies who have concerns that a student/applicant is not fit to study should raise their concerns with Student Wellbeing Services by emailing SCRT@lancaster.ac.uk and completing the referral form. The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will gather information and present the case to the Students of Concern Review Team and Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) for consideration with a clear proposal.
- 2.5 The Students of Concern Review Team and Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) will consider the case, reviewing any support already in place to establish whether Supported Study would be a more appropriate route. In addition, the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will explore whether the possibility of voluntary intercalation has been discussed with the student. If it has not, the Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will meet with the student to discuss both the concerns raised and the option of voluntary intercalation.
- 2.6 Consideration will be given at this stage to whether it is appropriate to temporarily remove the student from their ac7.95 Tm00.0(r)-7(a)(a)-3(c)615(o)-5(n)8()]THTQ0.000008872 0 595.4 841.8 re\

The Fitness to Study Panel should not include any members who have previously been involved in a Supported Study Panel for the student. At least one member of the Panel should be a person with appropriate seniority who has not been involved with the student case previously. The Panel should include a minimum of three members and not exceed more than five people, including the chair. A minute taker will also be present.

2.9 The student/applicant can attend the Fitness to Study Panel meeting if they wish and/or are able to engage in an appropriate manner. The Student Casework Officer (or nominee) will encourage the student to seek support from LUSU in all Fitness to Study cases. The student can nominate a support person to accompany them to t

- academic work and other situations in line with the definitions of fit to study above. The Panel will also consider and accommodation fees, and consider what financial support is available to the student.
- 2.15 The Panel may decide that Supported Study has a reasonable chance of resolving the issues identified and draw up a Supported Study Agreement as outlined in the procedures above.
- 2.16 Consensus is the preferred method of decision making. Where this is not possible, the Chair of the Panel will make the decision, based on the criteria of the policy and the advice of panel members.
- 2.17 If the Panel considers that a student/applicant cannot meet the definitions of fit to study with focussed, reasonable, appropriate and boundaried support, they may require deferral of enrolment, intercalation, temporary exclusion or permanent exclusion. The appropriate outcome will be determined based on the need to support the student and to minimise the risk of harm to self or others.
- 2.18 The Student Casework Officer or nominee will inform the student/applicant of the agreed outcome, usually within 5 working days of the original Fitness to Study Panel meeting. In some instances, for example where further guidance is needed, an outcome may take longer but the University will endeavour to communicate with the student throughout this process.
- 2.19 The Chair of the Fitness to Study Panel will sign a letter confirming the outcome to be emailed to the student/applicant. The University shall impose the deferral of enrolment/intercalation/temporary exclusion/permanent exclusion with immediate effect.
- 2.20 The relevant parties in the decision is carried out in a supportive manner.
- 3. Temporary Exclusion of a Student subject to Fitness to Study Procedure
- 3.1 The Fitness to Study Procedure contains provision for temporary exclusion of a student in an exceptional situation where, in exercising our reasonable judgement, the University
 - in serious or life and death situations; situations where significant harm to the student or others is likely to occur; situations where the student has been involved in, or that there is a risk of, an incident or an emergency situation where the University believes the student or others may come to serious or lasting harm.
- 3.2 In these exceptional situations where the University considers that a student is not fit to study and should be temporarily removed from accommodation and/or their programme of study/research, either in their own interest or to protect the health and wellbeing of other students or staff, the University can follow 14 841.8 1 2c2.0.000008872 0 595.4 841W*nBTTeptai

- (i) A risk assessment needs to be completed by an appropriately qualified member of Student and Education Services staff and approved by the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing or nominee. This risk assessment must evidence the need for a temporary exclusion.
- (ii) The risk assessment will be shared electronically and securely with the following two people or their nominees: the Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary and the Director of Student, Education and Academic Services.
- (iii) If both parties are not in agreement with the decision to temporarily exclude

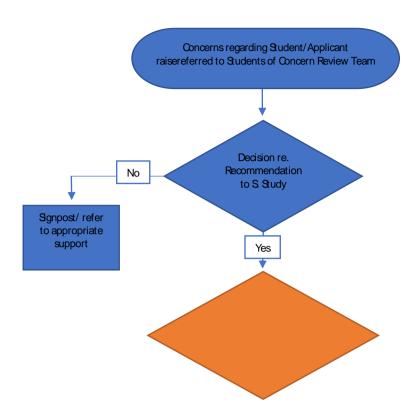
there is evidence that the judgement did not meet natural justice; or there is new material has emerged that was not previously considered. This must be made available in the 10 days following the original Supported Study/Fitness to Study/temporary exclusion outcome decision.

A member of the Student Wellbeing Services team will normally inform the student of the Associate Director decision in writing within five working days of the appeal submission.

6.3 If valid grounds of appeal have been evidenced, then the Associate Director of Wellbeing and Inclusion (or nominee) will convene a panel to consider the appeal. The appeal panel will be composed of a minimum of three people, all of whom have had no previous engagement with the student case. The appeal panel will only consider written submissions of evidence. The decision of the appeal panel will be final and will consist of one of the following decisions:

the confirmation of the original decision; referral back to Supported Study/Fitness to Study procedures (if the process has not been followed or if new evidence is made available).

- The student/applicant may not attend University during the period of appeal other than necessary meetings by appointment (where remote access is not possible). If the University has identified related problems in college/accommodation it can require the student to leave that accommodation during this period.
- The student/applicant can elect to defer enrolment/intercalate or withdraw at any point in the procedures.
- 6.6 Formal notification



Concerns

Appendix 3

Timeline and checklist for Supported Study procedures

Task	Responsibility	By when?	Complete? (Y/N)
Decision taken to initiate Supported Study procedures	Head of Student Support and Wellbeing		
Supported Study Panel organised	Student Casework Officer	Normally scheduled no later than 10 working days after the decision to initiate SS procedures	
Student informed of decision to initiate Supported Study procedures and invited to attend	Student Casework Officer	No later than 2 working days before the SS Panel meeting	
Risk assessment produced	Student Casework Officer	No later than 1 working day before the SS Panel meeting	

Supported Study Panel meets

Timeline and checklist for Fitness to Study procedures

Task	Responsibility	By when?	Complete? (Y/N)
Decision taken to initiate Fitness to Study procedures	Head of Student Support and Wellbeing		
Fitness to Study Panel organised	Student Casework Officer	Normally scheduled no later than 10 full working days after the decision to initiate FTS procedures	
Draft risk assessment produced	Student Casework Officeror nominated individual	No later than 2 full working days before the FTS Panel meeting	
Student informed of decision to initiate Fitness to Study procedures and invited to attend	Student Casework Officer	No later than 5 full working days before the FTS Panel meeting	
Student to submit evidence (if decides to)	Student Casework Officer	At least 2 full working days before the FTS Panel meeting	
Fitness to Study Panel meets			
Fitness to Study Panel decision letter drafted to inform the student of the recommendation and the appeal process.	Chair of FTS Panel/Student Casework Officer/Admin support	Usually within 5 full working days after the FTS Panel meeting	
Decision implemented	Student Casework Officer	As soon as decision confirmed	

Appendix 4: Nominated authorisers and alternatives in relation to the Supported Study and Fitness to Study procedures

Role	Alternative if unavailable (in order of preference)
Head of Student Support and Wellbeing	 Student Casework and Data Manager Head of Counselling and Mental Health Service Associate Director (Wellbeing and Inclusion) Academic Registrar Director of Student, Education and Academic Services Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)
Associate Director (Wellbeing and Inclusion) Director of Student, Education and	 Academic Registrar Director of Student, Education and Academic Services Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)
Academic Services	1.

Academic Services